

# **ATTENDANCE AT TAPA**

Classroom activities are purposeful and essential to the learning process. The daily exchange between and among students and teachers is essential to student learning. Therefore, students are required to be at TAPA, on time, every day. Parental influence is critical to supporting regular school attendance. It is a joint responsibility of the families/guardians of students and the students themselves to ensure regular daily attendance.

A student's attendance is an important portion of their course grade. Students who miss 10 or more days of any class within a semester (or five or more days during a quarter) due to class absences, and/or habitual lateness, will see a negative impact on their grades and may lose credit for that class.

## **Excused Absences and Tardiness**

The most common reason for a student to be excused from school is illness. If a student is seriously ill, their parent/caregiver should contact the office after 8:00 am to inform the school of the student's absence. For illnesses longer than 2 consecutive days, TAPA will require more formal documentation, such as a doctor's note. Without a doctor's note, the student's absence will be considered an unexcused absence.

Other acceptable reasons for a student to miss school are: court dates, college visits, religious holidays, or bereavement. If a parent/guardian wishes for a student to miss school for reasons other than these, advance approval is required. The parent/guardian must submit a *Request to Miss School* form, available in the main office, to the Dean of Students at least two weeks prior to the scheduled absence. The Dean of Students will consider the student's grades, attendance history, adherence to the request protocol and other factors when deciding whether to approve or deny the request. The Dean of Students will then communicate the decision to the student, family and TAPA staff (Head of School, Admin Team, Main Office Staff, and the student's teachers).

Absent students may not participate in rehearsals, events, or afterschool activities on any day they are absent, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

## **Unexcused Absences and Tardiness**

An unexcused absence occurs when a student is not present at school without acceptable cause. School begins at 8:00am. Students who arrive after 8:05 must get a late pass in the office. Students who arrive 30 minutes or later to school, have missed more-than-half of any given class, and will be considered to be unexcused absent from that class.

The consequences for being tardy and/or unexcused absent increase based on the number of occurrences:

### **Step 1:**

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|------------------------------|---|
| 1st Unexcused Absence/Tardy: | Warning   |
| 2nd Unexcused Absence/Tardy: | Detention and a Call to parent/guardian   |
| 3rd Unexcused Absence/Tardy: | The Dean of Students will notify parents/guardians through telephone calls, letters, and/or conduct school conferences to discuss student's attendance. |
| 4th Unexcused Absence/Tardy: | ISS. Call to parent/guardian and mandatory conference.<br>Possible beginning of truancy referral  |

## Step 2:

Five (5) unexcused absences, tardies, and/or early dismissals will prompt a telephone call, written letter to the parent/guardian and a mandatory parent conference requesting an explanation. In addition; 2 days (minimum) of ISS will be assigned. An internal review by the Dean of Students and Administration, may occur depending upon circumstances. Beginning stages of truancy referral will begin depending on circumstances.

## Step 3:

After more than five (5) cumulative unexcused absences, tardies, and/or early dismissals, a letter will be sent and/or a conference will be scheduled with families/guardians, the student, the Dean of Students, Administration, Guidance and other professionals, as needed. Detention and ISS will be assigned per the DOS and Administration recommendation.

**If student continues to be truant and or tardy after it is brought to both the parent and child's attention, and the school has tried various interventions, additional consequences, including academic consequences and a truancy petition will be filed with Truancy court in accordance with the RI General Laws.**

## CHAPTER 16-19: Compulsory Attendance/Attendance required.

- (a) Every child who has completed, or will have completed, six (6) years of life on or before September 1 of any school year, or is enrolled in kindergarten, and has not completed eighteen (18) years of life, shall regularly attend some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town in which the child resides.
- (b) Every person having under his or her control a child, as described in this section, shall cause the child to attend school as required by this section, and for every neglect of this duty, the person having control of the child shall be fined not exceeding **fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day, or part of a day, that the child fails to attend school**, and if the total of these days is **more than thirty (30) school days** during any school year, then the person shall, upon conviction, be imprisoned not exceeding **six (6) months or shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500), or both**

## Make-Up Work

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange with his or her teacher to make up all academic work missed due to an excused absence. Upon returning to school, the student will have five school days to make up any missing work. **Make up work will not be provided by any teacher for an unexcused absence.**

## Early Dismissals

By Rhode Island State law, dismissals from school for any reason are considered part of a student's attendance record. In keeping with our efforts to maximize instructional time, early dismissal from school is discouraged, and will be granted only for business that cannot be conducted after the close of school. Reasons for early dismissal shall be limited to: illness, doctor's appointment, court appearance, family emergency verified by the parent/guardian, educational reasons given prior approval by the school administration.

A written request for early dismissal signed by the student's parent/guardian must be presented to the office on the day of the early dismissal. This request must contain the student's full name, date, time, reason for dismissal, telephone number, and parent/guardian signature. The nurse is responsible for early dismissals due to illness, and parent/guardian verification prior to dismissal is required. Parental phone calls requesting an early dismissal are discouraged and will be approved by Administration only in the event of emergencies.