



SECTION #552  
TITLE: STUDENT ATTENDANCE

# NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT

1	I. Purpose	The Neshaminy Board of Education believes that regular attendance in the	1
2		classroom is conducive to learning and that frequent absences of pupils from	2
3		regular classes disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The Board	3
4		believes that through daily attendance:	4
5		(1) Continuity of learning leads to improved student achievement;	5
6		(2) Regular school attendance that includes active and regular classroom	6
7		participation leads to improved student achievement;	7
8		(3) A level of responsibility will develop and prepare students for adulthood	8
9		and the workforce of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	9
10			10
11		The Board also believes that:	11
12		(1) Student attendance is a K-12 expectation;	12
13		(2) Clear expectations need to be established for students;	13
14		(3) Clear expectations need to be established for parents;	14
15		(4) Clear expectations need to be communicated to those in the medical	15
16		community;	16
17		(5) Specific time expectations need to be established and published;	17
18		(6) All available district and community resources need to be utilized to	18
19		encourage regular attendance;	19
20		(7) Opportunities to make up missed school/class time will be offered;	20
21		(8) Students and their parents are entitled to a review and appeal process.	21
22			22
23		Students in need of additional support may avail themselves of or be	23
24		referred to Pupil Services personnel (available in each building). The	24
25		Board believes that student services are an integral part of the	25
26		educational program.	26
27			27
28		Class participation is a factor in determining student achievement. The school	28
29		cannot teach students who are not present. Poor attendance may limit	29

1		#552 Continued	1
2		accomplishments and reinforce a habit which will handicap the individual	2
3		in future education or employment.	3
4			4
5		The Board urges all parents and guardians to stress punctuality and regular	5
6		attendance habits with their children.	6
7			7
8		Therefore, in accordance with the laws of the state, the Neshaminy Board of	8
9		Education requires the regular attendance each day that school is in session of	9
10		all school age children of the Neshaminy School District.	10
11			11
12	II. Authority	Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the	12
13		days and hours that the school is in session, except that a principal may excuse	13
14		a student for temporary absences or lateness when he/she receives satisfactory	14
15		evidence of such mental, physical, or other urgent conditions which may	15
16		reasonably cause the student's absence.	16
17			17
18		Upon receipt of a written request from the parents of the students involved,	18
19		students may be excused from school attendance to participate in a school	19
20		and/or family educational tour or a trip provided during the school term.	20
21		The Superintendent or his/her designee shall evaluate such tour or trip.	21
22			22
23		The Board shall, upon written request of the parents or guardians, release	23
24		from attendance a student participating in a religious instruction program	24
25		acknowledged by the Board. Such instruction shall not require the child's	25
26		absence from school for more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year, and	26
27		its organizers must inform the Board of the child's attendance record. The	27
28		Board shall not provide transportation to religious instruction.	28
29			29
30		All absences occasioned by the observance of the student's religion on a day	30
31		approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused, and no student	31
32		so excused shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an	32
33		award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday. An	33
34		excused absence will be granted only upon written request from the parents	34
35		of the child.	35
36			36
37		The Board will recognize other justifiable excused absences for part of the	37
38		school day. These will include but not be limited to medical or dental	38
39		appointments, court appearance, college visitations, and family emergencies.	39
40			40
41		Students shall be given the opportunity to make up missed class work or	41
42		assignments for those days legally absent.	42
43			43
44		Attendance need not always be within the school facilities. A student will	44

1	#552 Continued	1
2	be considered to be in attendance if present at any place his/her school is in	2
3	session or by authority of the Board, or at a place where the student is	3
4	receiving approved tutorial instruction or health care or at the place where the	4
5	student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised work-study or	5
6	career education program, or at home where the student is receiving approved	6
7	homebound instruction.	7
8		8
9	The Board may report to the appropriate authorities infractions of the law	9
10	regarding the attendance of students below the age of 17. The Board shall	10
11	issue notice to those parents and guardians who fail to comply with the	11
12	statutory requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions	12
13	will be prosecuted.	13
14		14
15	Repeated infractions of Board policy regarding the attendance of enrolled	15
16	students may constitute such misconduct and disobedience as to warrant	16
17	appropriate disciplinary action.	17
18		18
19	The Board shall excuse the following students from the requirements of this	19
20	District:	20
21	on certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence	21
22	and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable	22
23	to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical, or other	23
24	reasons so urgent as to preclude regular attendance;	24
25		25
26	students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and	26
27	activities prescribed by law are taught, except that such students and	27
28	students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in schools of this	28
29	district shall be counted as being in attendance in this district;	29
30		30
31	students sixteen or seventeen years of age whose enrollment in a private	31
32	trade or business school has been approved;	32
33		33
34	children fifteen years of age, and fourteen years of age who have completed	34
35	sixth grade, who are engaged in farm work or private domestic service under	35
36	duly issued permits;	36
37		37
38	children sixteen year of age regularly employed during the school session	38
39	and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.	39
40		40
41	III. Guidelines	41
42	<u>Excused Absences</u>	42
43	The school laws of Pennsylvania require children of compulsory school age	43
44	to be in attendance on all days school is in session. A student's excused	44
	absence may be for reasons that include but not be limited to:	
	1. Illness	

1	#552 Continued	1
2	2. Quarantine	2
3	3. Death in immediate family	3
4	4. Absence for religious holidays	4
5	5. Exceptionally urgent reasons that may affect the child and ordinarily do not	5
6	include work at home	6
7	6. Religious instruction	7
8	7. Health Care	8
9	8. Tutorial Work	9
10		10
11	Upon written parental request, a student may be excused during school	11
12	hours for the purpose of receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in	12
13	the district's curriculum. The excused absence shall not interfere with the	13
14	student's regular program of study and the qualifications of the instructor	14
15	shall be approved by the Superintendent.	15
16		16
17	<b><u>Absence Notes</u></b>	17
18	Absence notes are expected to be submitted to the appropriate school office	18
19	within three (3) school days upon the student's return to school and will not	19
20	be accepted more than ten (10) school days after the student's return to	20
21	school. If the note is not submitted within the ten (10) day grace period,	21
22	the absence will be declared illegal/unexcused.	22
23		23
24	Upon written parental request, a student may be excused during the school	24
25	hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service.	25
26		26
27	<b><u>Unexcused or Unlawful Absences</u></b>	27
28	"Unexcused absence" is the absence of a student for any of the following	28
29	reasons:	29
30	1. Absence through parental neglect;	30
31	2. Illegally employed;	31
32	3. Truancy.	32
33		33
34	"Unlawful absence" is unexcused absence for all students in first grade and	34
35	through 16 years of age.	35
36		36
37	<b><u>Follow-up to Unlawful Absences for Students Who Are of Compulsory</u></b>	37
38	<b><u>School Age</u></b>	38
39	1. The principal or designee shall make the decision declaring an absence	39
40	as "unlawful" based upon information received from all available	40
41	sources.	41
42	2. The principal or designee shall record the unlawful absence on the	42
43	student's attendance record and notify the parents/guardian.	43
44	3. In the event a student accumulates three (3) days of unlawful absence	44

#552 Continued

in a school year, the principal shall send a first offense notice to the parents/guardian and a copy to the Home and School Facilitator.

4. For each incident of unlawful absence after a first offense notice has been sent, the principal shall direct, in writing, the Home and School Facilitator to issue a citation to the parents/guardian of the student and file a complaint with the District Magistrate.
5. The principal or designee and the Home and School Facilitator shall attend citation hearings as scheduled by the District Magistrate.

Chronic Cases of Unlawful Absenteeism for Students Who Are of Compulsory School Age

1. If, after the first citation and hearing, additional unlawful absences occur, the principal shall consult with the Home and School Facilitator to formulate a plan for improving the student's attendance pattern.
2. Simultaneously, the Home and School Facilitator may refer the case to one (1) or more of the following agencies:
  - a. Bucks County Children and Youth Social Service Agency
  - b. Family Services
  - c. District Magistrate
  - d. Other agencies
3. The Home and School Facilitator shall report the status of cases to the appropriate principal on an ongoing basis.

Follow-Up to Unexcused Absences for Students Who Are Not of Compulsory School Age (Kindergarten students and students who are seventeen (17) years of age or older)

1. The principal or designee shall make the decision declaring absences as "unexcused" based upon information received from all available sources.
2. The principal or designee shall record the unexcused absence on the student's attendance record and notify the parents/guardian and/or student.
3. In the event a student accumulates three (3) days of unexcused absence in a school year, the principal shall send a letter to the parents/guardian and/or student.

For each day of absence from class judged as unexcused or unlawful by school authorities, the student shall receive a failing grade for the daily work in class. The student shall forfeit the right to make up any written work or take any written examinations or tests missed during such absences.

Tardiness shall be defined as "the occurrence of a student arriving after the bell rings signifying the beginning of the official school day." Habitual tardiness for reasons that clearly constitute unjustified partial absence from

1	#552 Continued	1
2	school will be treated with the same seriousness as an unexcused or unlawful	2
3	absence with similar consequences. An accumulation of time missed from	3
4	school due to tardiness can equate to whole days of truancy. Punitive	4
5	measures can result for habitual tardiness. These punitive measures shall	5
6	be in accordance with established building discipline code guidelines and	6
7	procedures.	7
8		8
9	<u>Absences Due to Family Trips During the School Year</u>	9
10	1. Requests by parents for permission to have children absent from school	10
11	for family trips should be made in writing and processed by the principal	11
12	or his/her designee. The request must be received by the principal at least	12
13	ten (10) days prior to the anticipated absence. Absences approved by the	13
14	principal will be considered an "excused absence."	14
15	2. Before approving the absences due to family trips, the principal or his/her	15
16	designee will review the current academic and attendance status of the	16
17	student and will review Neshaminy School District's attendance policy-	17
18	especially with respect to the ineligibility for credit or promotion to the	18
19	next grade level if a student is absent 15 days or more in a single course	19
20	semester course or 30 days or more in a two semester course-even if the	20
21	absences were excused. The attendance policy will be published in all	21
22	student handbooks and received by each student at the commencement	22
23	of the school year. The student and the student's parents will receive	23
24	another copy of the attendance policy upon making the request to be	24
25	excused for a family trip.	25
26	3. The student shall be held responsible for making up missed assignments	26
27	and tests.	27
28		28
29	<u>Absences Due to College Visitations-Campus Visits</u>	29
30	1. Requests by parents for permission to have children be absent from school	30
31	for college/campus visits should be made in writing to and	31
32	processed by the principal or his/her designee. The request must be	32
33	received by the principal or his designee at least 5 days prior to the	33
34	anticipated absence. Absences approved by the principal will	34
35	be considered an "excused absence."	35
36	2. Before approving the absences due to college visitations the principal or	36
37	his/her designee will review the current academic and attendance	37
38	status of the student and will review Neshaminy School District's	38
39	attendance policy-especially with respect to the ineligibility for credit	39
40	or promotion to the next grade level if a student is absent 15 days or more	40
41	in a single semester or 30 days or more in a two semester course-even if	41
42	the absences were excused. The attendance policy will be published in all	42
43	student handbooks and received by each student at the commencement	43
44	of the school year. The student and the student's parents will receive	44

1	#552 Continued	1
2	another copy of the policy when making the request to be excused for	2
3	for college visitations.	3
4	3. The student shall be held responsible for making up missed assignments	4
5	and tests.	5
6		6
7	<u>Request for Early Dismissal</u>	7
8	All cases of early dismissal should be preceded by a note from the parent/	8
9	guardian stating the time, date, and reason for dismissal.	9
10		10
11	The parent or guardian should report to the school office to request that his/	11
12	her child be dismissed. When the parent or guardian comes to the school	12
13	office for his/her child, he/she must sign a registry stating the reason for	13
14	dismissal and the date and time of dismissal. A signature must be placed	14
15	on the registry. If the student legally drove to school, the student must	15
16	report to his/her grade level office and sign out.	16
17		17
18	Student absences that result from early dismissal shall be treated in accordance	18
19	with attendance laws. A student who is released from school with a note will	19
20	be recorded as present.	20
21		21
22	Upon his/her late arrival, the student must present a written excuse signed	22
23	by a parent or guardian. The note must clearly indicate the reason for the	23
24	late arrival.	24
25		25
26	<u>Make Up Work Due to Legal Absences</u>	26
27	Student shall be permitted to make up work and/or examinations missed	27
28	while legally absent from school. Arrangements for making up work shall be	28
29	made between the individual student and his/her teacher(s), in consultation	29
30	as needed with the building principal or his/her designee. It shall be the	30
31	building principal's responsibility to insure that an effective procedure is	31
32	established for making up work between the student and teachers.	32
33		33
34	The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop procedures for the	34
35	attendance of students which:	35
36	Insure a school session which is in conformity with requirements of	36
37	the State Board;	37
38		38
39	Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with rules of	39
40	the State Board;	40
41		41
42	Impose on truant students such incremental disciplinary measures as may	42
43	be appropriate for infractions of school regulations, but no such penalty	43
44	may have an irredeemably negative effect on the student's record beyond	44

1	#552 Continued	1
2	that which naturally follows absence from school activities;	2
3		3
4	Insure that students absent for any legitimate reason have an opportunity	4
5	to make up work they missed.	5
6		6
7	Issue written notice to any parent or guardian who fails to comply with the	7
8	compulsory attendance statute within five (5) days of any proceeding brought	8
9	under the statute. Such notice shall inform the parent or guardian of the	9
10	date(s) on which the absence occurred, that the absence was unexcused and in	10
11	violation of the law, that the parent must be so notified and informed of his/	11
12	her liability under law for the absence of the student and, that further violation	12
13	during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.	13
14		14
15	The Board supports all attempts to make it possible for all students to graduate	15
16	from the schools. The Board recognizes that some students repeatedly disobey	16
17	the rules designed to operate an efficient school. Therefore, the Board makes	17
18	provisions for withholding credit and/or promotion to the next grade level as	18
19	a means of aiding such students to change their behavior and foster	19
20	achievement.	20
21		21
22	If the <u>unlawful/unexcused</u> absences total more than <b>6 days</b> for a semester	22
23	course or <b>12 days</b> for a full year course on the last day of the semester or year,	23
24	the student shall not be granted credit toward graduation or promotion to the	24
25	next grade level for any of the semester courses or yearly courses in which	25
26	he/she is enrolled.	26
27		27
28	Absence shall be interpreted to mean non-attendance in school, for the	28
29	full day or any portion of the day.	29
30		30
31	Subject to the preceding paragraphs, a student who has missed <b>15 days</b> or	31
32	more of school <u>whether excused or unexcused or unlawful</u> , in a single	32
33	semester shall be ineligible for credit in a single semester course being taken	33
34	at that time. In the case of a senior planning to graduate at the end of the first	34
35	semester such absence shall be sufficient reason to deny graduation.	35
36		36
37	Absence shall be interpreted to mean non-attendance in school, for the	37
38	full day or any portion of the day.	38
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1		#552 Continued	1
2		Subject to the preceding paragraphs, a student who has missed <b>30 days</b> or	2
3		more of school <u><b>whether excused or unexcused or unlawful</b></u> , in a school	3
4		year shall be ineligible for credit in a two-semester (full year) course being	4
5		taken at that time or promotion to the next grade. In the case of a senior	5
6		planning to graduate at the end of the school year such absence shall be	6
7		sufficient reason to deny graduation. In addition, such absence shall make the	7
8		student ineligible for promotion to the next grade.	8
9			9
10		Absence shall be interpreted to mean non-attendance in school, for the	10
11		full day or any portion of the day.	11
12			12
13	V. Attendance	A student or parent may, at any time, request a waiver of the preceding	13
14	Violation Appeal	provision by informing the student's principal <u>in writing</u> . The <b>Attendance</b>	14
15		<b>Violation Appeal</b> must be submitted to the principal by the student and or	15
16		parent within ten (10) days after receipt of the written Notification of	16
17		Attendance Policy Violation from the principal. After communicating with the	17
18		parent and student, the principal may grant the waiver.	18
19			19
20		In the event the principal does not grant the waiver, the appeal shall then be	20
21		reviewed by the <b>Attendance Review Committee</b> . At the time of the	21
22		Attendance Review Committee's hearing, the student and the parent may be	22
23		present to afford the opportunity to present evidence justifying the	23
24		absenteeism of the student.	24
25			25
26		The committee's primary function shall be to determine, by consensus,	26
27		whether or not the student's excessive absences were legitimately attributable	27
28		to the reasons listed under "EXCUSED ABSENCES" and to decide whether	28
29		to grant credit for courses where credit has been forfeited due to excessive	29
30		absenteeism or to grant promotion to the next grade where promotion has	30
31		been forfeited due to excessive absenteeism.	31
32			32
33		This task shall be accomplished by a thorough review of past attendance	33
34		patterns, present circumstances, and testimony from the student and parent.	34
35		At the request of the parent, the committee shall request that the teacher(s) be	35
36		present at the hearing. The parent and student may request additional people	36
37		be present and the principal will make a final determination of that request to	37
38		attend. These people are not part of the review committee.	38
39			39
40		Once the committee has made a decision, the parent and the student shall be	40
41		notified within ten (10) days by certified mail as to the outcome of the hearing	41
42		with explicit reasons explaining the committee's decision.	42
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1	#552 Continued	1
2	The committee's decision may be appealed to the district's Superintendent or	2
3	his/her designee. If the parents appeal the decision of the Attendance Review	3
4	Committee to the Superintendent of Schools, they must do so in writing	4
5	within ten (10) days after having received the Attendance Review Committee's	5
6	certified mail written decision.	6
7		7
8	<b>The Attendance Review Committee shall be comprised of:</b>	8
9	1. Building principal*	9
10	2. Grade level assistant principal for student (secondary)	10
11	3. Building and District resource staff who have familiarity with the student's	11
12	attendance patterns as determined by the principal.	12
13	4. Selected faculty member*	13
14	5. School counselor for student	14
15	*Standing Members	15
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39	Approved: 6/26/01	39
40	Reviewed: 9/2003	40
41	Rev/App: 5/2008	41
42	BMW/ef	42
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