

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Athol High School expects all students to be in attendance daily. Not all the learning that goes on in a classroom is reflected in makeup work. Many of the experiences, working situations and group activities cannot be made up outside the classroom. Emphasis on regular attendance serves to teach a valuable life skill as it reinforces values critical to the work place. The law requires that parents/guardians of mandatory school age children (age's six through fifteen inclusive) ensure attendance of their children in accordance with Athol High School Policy.

-Parents/guardians are advised to contact schools at least ten (10) days in advance of any planned absences, including vacations, for proper guidelines.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Athol High School recognizes that excessive absenteeism from school is potentially detrimental to students' ability to perform successfully in school. It is expected that students should be absent from school only when conditions or circumstances render them otherwise unable to attend. In the event a student is absent in excess of eight (8) days in **any one semester** official written verification, documenting the need for absence must be submitted. These exempt notes must be turned in at the high school office within five (5) days of students' return to school. Students who have undocumented absences in excess of **eight (8) days per semester** may be subject to denial of course credit or promotion.

Physical Education, health, bands and chorus groups will be granted four (4) absences because they alternate meeting days.

In order for an absence to be considered an exempt absence (in relation to the present attendance policy), it must be documented by a note written or signed by a physician (for an illness), the court system, DYS, DSS or college representative.

Documentation for any exempt absences must be submitted within five (5) days of the student's return to school after the subsequent absence.

The following are the only legitimate reasons for an exempt absence:

1. Illness: medical excuse, a signed doctor's note is required. Appointment cards will not be accepted. Doctor's appointments should be made outside of the school day.
2. Bereavement.
3. Family or catastrophic emergency.
4. Observation of major religious holidays or participation in required religious instruction.
5. Necessary court appearance signed court document is required.
6. DYS confinement
7. DSS commitment
8. Suspension
9. Weather related conditions so serious as to pose a threat to health or safety.
10. Meetings with recruiters
11. Permit/driving test **(not to imply absence for an entire day is acceptable or exempt)**
12. Approval of the Principal of Athol High School.

Students in attendance at school sponsored activities (i.e. field trips) or attendance in approved alternative educational programs are considered present at their school of enrollment.

Students who are absent from school may not participate in any school related activity the day of their absence, without securing permission from an administrator.

Athol High School encourages open channels of communication between the home and school as the key to understanding and resolving problems that may occur regarding attendance.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

The parent/guardian of the student has the right to appeal all cases of loss of credit to the school's Appeals Committee. The appeal must be in written form and submitted no later than the date indicated on the loss of credit letter the parent/guardian/student has received. A request for an appeal must be sent to the: Appeals Committee, Athol High School, 2363 Main Street, Athol, MA 01331

The committee will schedule an appointment. If a hearing is not requested in writing by the specified date, the matter will be closed and the loss of credit will stand.

The Appeals Committee has three options in response to an appeal hearing. They may recommend one of the following:

1. Restoring a student's credit
2. Placing the student on attendance probation with relevant terms and conditions
3. Upholding the denial of credit.

PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

1. Following an absence of three consecutive days without notification from home or anytime a questionable situation or pattern of absenteeism occurs, the principal or designee will contact the parent/guardian informing him/her of the student's absence. Parents/guardians are required by law to provide the school with a phone number at which they can be contacted or accessed during school hours.
2. Parents and or guardians of students who exceed the allowed number of absences per semester will be notified in writing of the need to supply appropriate documentation. Such documentation will continue to be mandated for all absences for the remainder of the semester.
3. Warnings will be written following four (4) absences in a semester course and eight (8) absences in a full-year course.
4. In cases of chronic truancy of students under age sixteen (16), court action may be taken against those students as well as their parents/guardians.

CREDIT/PROMOTION IMPLICATION

When a student's absenteeism exceeds the number of allowed absences in each course the school may act to deny credit or promotion.

- a. When a decision to deny credit or promotion is made, the school will notify the parents in writing of the intended action.
- b. The parent/guardian and or student have the right to appeal loss of credit/promotion decisions. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the school within the time frame (ten days) noted on the loss of credit notification.
- c. A hearing by the school's Appeals Committee can be requested by the parent/guardian, at which point the parent and/or student will have the opportunity to provide documentation for the absences under discussion or to explain extraordinary circumstances.
- d. A letter stating the decision of the Appeals Committee will be sent to the parent/guardian within five (5) school days of the Appeals Committee meeting.
- e. The parent/guardian and or student may appeal the decision to the principal. The appeal must be in writing and must be submitted no later than ten (10) school days after the loss of credit notification has been issued. A hearing will be conducted by the principal or his/her designee and a written decision provided. The decision of the principal will be the final decision of the school.

ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE

The Attendance Committee will be responsible for tracking and monitoring attendance. The attendance secretary should be contacted in cases when a student has questions regarding his/her attendance.

ATHOL HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE POLICY GRADES 9-12

What happens in the classroom is essential to the educational process. Time lost from the class can never be really regained. This is especially true as it relates to teacher explanations and the interaction among students and between teacher and student. Surely, those subjects calling for laboratory experiences, subjects such as science, business, industrial arts, and home economics demand student presence. Consequently, classroom attendance is considered to be an integral part of the student's achievement. Since the classroom is the primary area of learning, it is apparent that attendance is a valid, reasonable requirement. It is the purpose of this policy to promote more positive student and community attitude toward the educational opportunities offered to our students.

Therefore, the policies and procedures cited in this publication will apply to the classroom, in addition to school absenteeism.

Absences from class in excess of **eight (8) days per semester** must be followed by written professional documentation, within five (5) days of a student's return to school, citing the need for the absence from class. Health officials estimate that a normal absentee rate should not be over 7 to 9 days for any student in a school year.

In addition to the acceptable absence excuses listed in this publication, Athol High School adds the following to its class absence policy: School related meetings/conference, i.e.: Peer Education, Peer Mediation, guidance meetings.

RELEASE TIME FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Absences may be permitted for religious education at such times as the school committee may establish, provided that such time shall be no more than one hour per week and provided that no public funds are utilized for such education or related transportation.

EXCUSES FOR THE 18 YEAR OLD

It is the policy of the school to expect a written excuse for absence from the parent or guardian of a student regardless of age. This is consistent with what the school considers an obligation to parents relative to their son/daughter's attendance. The student who has reached the age of majority (eighteen) has the right, provided by statute, to assume this responsibility. The student so doing should sign a form obtained from the principal's office. The principal or his/her designee will notify the parent of the student's intent. If a student is not living with parent or guardian, the written excuse (signed by the student stating name, address, and date of absence, reason for absence) will be required.

DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

When a dismissal is necessary and is known in advance:

1. Request for dismissal must be brought to the main office before 7:40 a.m.
2. The request must state student's name, grade, and reason for dismissal and time to be dismissed.
3. Verifications for exempt absences should be brought to the main office the following day.

TARDINESS TO SCHOOL/CLASS

Any student not in his or her seat at the 7:40 bell will be considered tardy to school. A telephone confirmation will be required in those cases of tardiness to school because of illness or scheduled appointments. All students who are tardy must sign in at the main office.

Unexcused tardiness to school will be handled as follows:

1. Four unexcused absences cumulative will result in an office detention.
2. Each subsequent tardy will result in an office detention.
3. Excessive tardiness may result in school suspension.

Missing the bus and oversleeping are not acceptable excuses.

Students must be in their classroom seat when the bell marking the end of the passing period stops ringing, so that the teacher may start work immediately, otherwise, they will be marked as tardy. They are also expected to be on time for all classes, assemblies and programs during the regular school day, and detention after school.

Three (3) unexcused tardies to class per semester will equal one absence to class.

1. Teachers detention will be assigned the first three times a student is tardy per term.
2. Teachers will notify the assistant principal on the student's fourth tardy per quarter.
3. Teachers will call the parents to notify them of their children's chronic tardiness.

19J POLICY SOLICITATIONS BY STUDENTS

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District shall strive to safeguard the students and their parents from money raising plans of outside organizations, commercial enterprises and individuals.

This policy applies particularly to ticket sales and sales of articles or services except those directly sponsored or handled by the school authorities.

School sponsored or school approved activities must have the approval of the principal who will submit the proposal to the school committee in advance for information. Door to door sales projects are discouraged by the committee, but may be conducted by individual parent or student groups. Students in grades K-8 are required to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Students in grades 9-12 need not be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Such sales will be limited to family and friends only and solicitation will not take place in public places (e.g. stores, malls, post offices, etc). Administrators and

teachers will not be responsible for the distribution of materials or the collection of funds. Any such project shall be for the benefit of the students enrolled in schools only. The secondary students shall be involved in determining how the money raised shall be spent.

All participants shall be voluntary with written parent consent. On all school committee approved projects, published information related to advertising, tickets, and other materials must carry the name of the sponsor. The use of the title, Athol-Royalston Regional School District, shall not be used on any materials, notices or advertising without the specific consent of the school committee.

The administrators of the school sponsoring the fund raising activities shall be responsible for the proper administration of each project in accordance with the provisions of the state law and appropriate accounting practices and procedures. All monies collected shall be deposited in the proper school account, subject to the administration of the regional school treasurer, such as, high school revolving account; junior high revolving accounts, elementary trust fund.