

Danvers High School Absences/Dismissals/Tardies

Attendance Rationale

A student's daily attendance at school is mandated by Massachusetts General Laws (Chapter 76, Section 1). The process of education requires continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for the student. The Danvers High School policy of attendance emphasizes that students actively participate in the process of learning.

The intent of the attendance policy at Danvers High School is to maximize the time students are in class. We aim to maximize our overall attendance and also minimize the number of students who are chronically absent from school. The term "chronic absenteeism" is defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) as missing 10% or more of the school year, or 18 school days during a 180-day school year.

Absences

Documentation for all excused absences must be brought to school within two days of returning to school. If documentation is not brought into school within two days of returning, the student's absences will be considered unexcused. Other examples of **unexcused absences** include caring for siblings, oversleeping, missed bus, car problem, parent notes, and family trips or vacations.

Examples of **excused absences** include approved college visits, school-sponsored field trips, illness, family bereavement/illness, observation of religious holidays and other absences pre-approved by school administration.

What are your responsibilities as a Parent/Guardian?

- Ensure your child attends school every day on time.
- Parents/Guardians must call the school the night before or on the morning of a student's pending absence or tardiness. Voice mail is available twenty-four (24) hours a day at 978-777-8925 for this purpose. Press 3 for parent notification.
- In addition, in order for the absence to be excused, documentation must be brought to school within two days of returning to school.
- If you experience challenges in getting your child to school (either for physical complaints, mental health concerns, or school avoidance/refusal), please call the school at 978-777-8925 as soon as possible to communicate concerns and develop a plan with the school based team.
- Families are encouraged to plan vacations around the academic year calendar and are discouraged from taking vacations during non-vacation time.
- If, due to extenuating circumstances, it becomes impossible to plan a vacation during school vacation time, parents must submit a written request to the principal explaining the situation.

- In the event of a long-term absence, the parent/guardian should provide documentation for the reason for the extended absence. Additionally, the parent/guardian should contact the student's guidance counselor at 978-777-8925 to make arrangements for the counselor to gather the student's work from teachers and to coordinate a time to pick up that work.
- In a case where the long-term absence appears to be indefinite, the parent/guardian should contact the guidance counselor about **home tutorial services**. Medical documentation is required for home tutorial services.

What will the school's action steps be to address absenteeism?

- If a student has not been called in by a parent/guardian, an automated call will be made with the request of a parent/guardian contacting the school to confirm the absence.
- If a student reaches five (5) or more absences, the student's Guidance Counselor will meet with the student to develop an *Attendance Action Plan* and share the plan with the parent/guardian.
 - The *Attendance Action Plan* can include, but are not limited to, summer school, Saturday School, and/or a schedule of days and mandatory times to stay after school to make up the work with teachers and/or administrators.
 - The *Attendance Action Plan* will include identifying the reason(s) for absences, as well as support for the student and/or the family with the goal of improving school attendance.
- If a student reaches five (5) or more absences, a formal letter will be sent to the parent/guardian per Massachusetts law (G.L. c. 76, §1B).
- If a student reaches eight (8) or more absences per semester (either whole school day or a class) or sixteen (16) or more absences for a full year course, students will receive an **AF - Failure due to Attendance**.
 - An in-person meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian, student, Assistant Principal and relevant staff to create an *Attendance Intervention Plan* to restore credit for the class(es).
 - Students and/or the parent/guardian may request a waiver for the AF due to extenuating circumstances. The waiver will be submitted to the DHS Principal via email, and the decision will be made by the Principal or designee, with input and feedback being taken into consideration from at least the student, the parent/guardian, teachers and guidance counselors.
 - Students will need to meet the conditions set in an individualized *Attendance Intervention Plan* to restore credit for the classes.
 - Course grades will be restored once a student successfully completes the *Attendance Intervention Plan*.

*Note: Absences that are excused for the following reasons will not count toward the implementation of an Attendance Action Plan or Attendance Intervention Plan:

- Documented absences due to medical reasons
- Family bereavement
- Observation of religious holidays

Dismissals

A student must bring a note from home on the day of a dismissal and give it to our greeter at the front desk.

The note must explain the reason for dismissal, time of dismissal, **a telephone number that will be called** in the morning to verify the dismissal, and the signature of a parent/guardian.

If a student is dismissed for an appointment, a note from the office where the student was seen must be presented to the main office the following day so the class absence(s) can be recorded as **excused** if appropriate.

Tardy Rationale

Students need to be at school on time to take full advantage of the educational opportunities at Danvers High School.

The intent of our tardy policy is to encourage students to be at school on time and also provide opportunities to practice real-world skills around punctuality and preparedness for the careers they embark on later in life.

Tardiness:

The expectation is that students are in class **ready to learn** by **7:30 am**. Any student who arrives to school after 7:30 am must sign in with the front desk greeter.

Being “tardy” to school will be defined in this handbook as arriving to school late without medical documentation or verified extenuating circumstances. Students may be tardy three (3) times per quarter without consequence. Upon the fourth (4th) and all subsequent “tardies,” a Saturday school detention will be assigned.

Excessive tardiness may result in school suspension and/or loss of parking privileges.