SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education of the Schuylerville Central School District recognizes that student attendance in school is an important component of student success. Student interaction with teachers and other students in class helps to enhance the academic learning experience and provides a basis by which students can demonstrate mastery of subject matter.

In this regard and pursuant to Section 104.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the Board of Education adopts this comprehensive attendance policy containing the following components:

1. overall objectives of the policy;
2. specific strategies to accomplish these objectives;
3. excused vs. unexcused student absences and tardiness;
4. coding system identifying reasons for absence or tardiness;
5. student attendance and course credit;
6. notice to parents or persons in parental relation;
7. parties responsible for student attendance in each school; and
8. review of policy by the Board.

All staff will be provided with a copy of the comprehensive attendance policy and any amendment to such policy following initial adoption or amendment of the policy. New staff members shall receive a copy of the comprehensive attendance policy upon commencement of employment with the District.

The Building Principals of each school shall promote community awareness of this district comprehensive attendance policy by providing a plain language summary of the policy to the parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and taking such other steps deemed necessary to promote the understanding of such policy by students and their parents or persons in parental relations. Copies of the complete comprehensive attendance policy shall be available in the central office and the principal’s office in each school building and will be provided to any member of the community upon request.

**Overall objectives of the policy**

The major objectives of the comprehensive attendance policy are to:

a. ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law;
b. establish a practical mechanism for each school in the district to account to the parents or persons in parental relation enrolled in the school for the whereabouts of such children throughout each school day; and
c. ensure sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities to permit such pupils to succeed.

Specific strategies to accomplish these objectives

The Board of Education charges the Superintendent or designee to develop a system of pupil attendance recordkeeping in each school in a register of attendance that shall provide an accurate record of each pupil’s presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure. The register of attendance shall set forth the following for each pupil: name, date of birth, full names of parents or persons in parental relation, address where the pupil resides, phone numbers where the parents or persons in parental relation may be contacted, date of the pupil’s enrollment, and a record of the pupil’s attendance on each day of scheduled instruction.

All entries regarding attendance shall be made by the teacher of the class in which the pupil is enrolled. The principal of each school shall have the responsibility of supervising the keeping of the register of attendance. The principal shall also be charged with reviewing pupil attendance records periodically for the purpose of initiating appropriate action to address pupil absence, tardiness and early departure.

Beginning in the 2012/2013 school year, attendance in each school building shall be recorded as follows:

a. in the elementary schools (K-5), after taking of attendance once per school day;
b. in the middle school (6-8), after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction; and
c. in the sr. high school (9-12), after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.

Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused. In the event that a pupil at any instructional level arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with this policy.

Excused vs. unexcused absences and tardiness

The following reasons for pupil absences, tardiness and early departure shall be considered by the Board of Education to be excused:

a. illness;
b. illness or death in the family;
c. unsafe travel conditions;
d. religious observance;
e. medical appointments;
f. quarantine;
g. required court appearances;
h. participation in a school sponsored activity;
i. approved college visits;
j. approved cooperative work programs; and
k. other activities as pre-approved by the building principal.

Any other pupil absence, tardiness or early departure is considered by the Board of Education to be unexcused. Each absence, tardiness and early departure shall be accounted for by the teacher in the register of attendance and shall be entered as excused or unexcused.

It is the responsibility of the parents or persons in parental relation of the pupil to notify the office by telephone on the morning of the absence or tardiness or at the time of early departure as to the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure. As a follow-up to any oral notification, parents or persons in parental relation to the pupil may be required to provide a written excuse confirming the date of the absence, tardiness, or early departure and reason for such.

**Coding system identifying reasons for absence or tardiness**

The Board of Education shall charge the Superintendent or designee to develop a coding system that will be used by all teachers in recording pupil absences, tardiness or early departure in their registers or attendance.

For any absence, tardiness or early departure that is excused, the coding system shall identify the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure. An absence, tardiness or early departure shall be assumed to be unexcused until the attendance clerk receives either oral or written confirmation that such absence, tardiness or early departure is in fact excused with appropriate reason.

Along with coding for whether an absence, tardiness or early departure is excused or unexcused and, if excused, the reason for such, the attendance clerk shall record the time of entry of a student due to tardiness and the time of exit of a student due to early departure.

**Student attendance and course credit**

The Board of Education recognizes that regular attendance in classes is essential to the total learning process. Although some class absence may be unavoidable, each student is expected to make every effort to attend each assigned class. The underlying rationale for an attendance policy that denies course credit for non-attendance is based on recognition of the vital role classroom attendance and participation plays in academic achievement.

A student shall be regarded as being absent from class under this section of the policy if he/she misses more than one half (1/2) of class due to tardiness or early departure. The student shall perform the necessary make-up work within the allotted time for the purpose of determining the student’s eligibility for course credit under this policy.
In-school suspension for which the student is doing work related to his/her particular classes, and out of school suspension where the student takes advantage of alternate educational services provided by the district, shall not count as absences from class under this section of the policy.

Any pupil absence that is both properly excused and for which the student has performed any assigned make-up work shall not be counted as an absence for the purpose of determining the student’s eligibility for course credit under this policy. It shall be the student’s responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his/her teacher(s) immediately upon the student’s return to school. The student shall have the same or similar amount of time to make up the same or similar work they missed as other students who were not absent. Failure to turn in the make up work in a timely manner or not at all may lead to an incomplete or failure in the class. It is the teacher’s responsibility to determine the amount of time and how the make up work will be graded. For unexcused absences, the teacher should determine how the missed work will be made up, if at all, and how it will be graded. However, if a student or his/her parents feel that the teacher has not treated the student in a fair and equitable manner, they may appeal the teacher’s decision to the building principal. The building principal’s determination shall be deemed final.

Notice to parents or persons in parental relation

As noted in this policy, any pupil absence, tardiness or early departure other than those specified in the policy is considered by the Board of Education to be unexcused. It is the responsibility of the parents or persons in parental relation of the pupil to report any absence, tardiness or early departure by notifying the office by telephone on the morning of the absence or tardiness or at the time of early departure as to the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure.

As a follow-up to any oral notification, parents or persons in parental relation to the pupil may be required to provide a written excuse within three (3) school days which shall include the following: date of the absence, tardiness, or early departure and reason for such.

If proper written excuse for the pupil absence, tardiness or early departure is not received by the school from the parent or person in parental relation after three (3) school days, a telephone call shall be made to the parent or person in parental relation to the pupil notifying him/her of the need for proper excuse of their pupil’s absence, tardiness or early departure. If the written excuse is not received by the school after two weeks, the absence, tardiness or early departure shall remain unexcused.

Parties responsible for student attendance in each school

The principal of each school building is charged by the Board of Education to be the person responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and initiating appropriate actions at the building
level to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure consistent with the comprehensive attendance policy of the district.

**Review of policy by the Board**

The Board of Education shall periodically review the Comprehensive Attendance Policy. If the Board of Education is considering amending the policy, they shall hold a public hearing prior to adopting the changes. As outlined in this policy, the staff, parents and students shall be notified of any amendment to the Comprehensive Attendance Policy.

Date of Adoption – January 24, 2008
Date of Amendment – May 21, 2012