

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 1 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1. **General.** The laws regarding school attendance in Delaware are contained in Delaware Code/TITLE 14/Chapter 27. This policy supplements state law and is specific to the Lake Forest School District.

2. **Types of Absences.**

a. Excused absences - absences will be considered excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness, attested by a physician if necessary.
2. Medical or dental appointment.
3. Contagious disease in the home of the child.
4. Quarantine.
5. Head lice (maximum 2 days per event).
6. Death in the immediate family, including grandparents (maximum 2 days unless approved by Principal or designee).
7. Religious holidays .
8. Subpoenaed court appearances.
9. Serious family emergency (Principal's judgment).
10. Events and activities, with prior approval of the Principal.
11. Other legal reasons approved by the Principal.

b. Unexcused absences - absences will be considered unexcused for any reason not listed above. Some examples of unexcused reasons are indifference of parent/guardian or student, uncertified illness, missing a school bus, illegal employment during school hours, and truancy.

3. **Elementary/Middle Grades K through 8.** The Lake Forest School District administration and staff places the highest emphasis on academic learning time. All students are expected to attend school each day of the school term. Any student in grades K through 8 who has in excess of 20 days of absence, excused or unexcused, after the appeal process, may fail for the year and be retained. Half-day absences due to tardiness or early dismissals will be included in the total number of absences. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing throughout the school year when their child's absences are becoming a problem.

a. Tardiness and Early Dismissal.

1. Students who report to school late, but within one hour of the school's start time, will be considered tardy and documented as such. Students who report to school late and beyond one hour of the school's start time, will be charged with a half-day or full day absence. When a student accumulates a total of 8 incidents of being tardy (excused and unexcused), contact will be made with the parents/guardians by the visiting teacher, Principal or designee. Repeated incidents of being tardy may result in disciplinary action as per the Lake Forest School District Discipline Policy.

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 2 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

2. If a student is dismissed during the first hour of the school day, and does not return the same day, a full day absence will be charged.
3. Early dismissals must be accompanied by formal documentation. Formal documentation shall be defined as a doctor's note, dentist/ orthodontist's note, court subpoena, etc., of which are on official letterhead with student's name, date/time of appointment, and signature of on-site official. Parent/Guardian notes do not meet the formal documentation definition. Students who are dismissed for more than two hours of a school day will be charged with either a half-day or full day absence. Students who are dismissed during the final hour of the school day will not be charged with an absence provided that formal documentation is presented to the school upon the students return. If formal documentation is not provided, the early dismissal will be considered unexcused and documented as such. When a student accumulates a total of 8 incidents of an early dismissal (excused and unexcused), contact will be made with the parents/guardians by the visiting teacher, Principal or designee. Repeated incidents of unexcused early dismissals may result in disciplinary action as per the Lake Forest School District Discipline Policy.
4. At the beginning of the school year, each school will provide in writing to parents/guardians and post in the school office and on the school's web page, the school day start, mid-point, and end times.
 - b. Written Excuses - Upon returning to school from an absence, a child, regardless of grade level, is required to bring a written note from the parent/guardian stating reason for the absence. School personnel will review parent/guardian notes and a determination will be made whether the absence is excused or unexcused. If the note is determined to be unexcused, the parent/guardian must be notified. Notes are to be presented to the school office or the child's teacher within two school days of the absence. If the note is not presented within two days of the student's return from absence, the absences will be counted as unexcused. Written excuses must be presented for excused tardies and excused early dismissals. The district reserves the right to require formal documentation at any time.
 - c. Denial of Credit for Graded Work (grades 6 – 8 only) - Students are expected to complete any work that is missed because of absence. Notes are to be turned in within two days of a student's return to school. Previously assigned work that was to be turned in on a day of absence must be turned in upon return to school.
 - d. Appeals - Parents/Guardians may only appeal excused absences that are due to family crisis, legal obligations and prolonged medical matters. Appeals will be approved at the discretion of the building principals or their designee. Appeals will be accepted for each marking period. Deadlines for appeals are as follows: ten (10) school days after the end of marking periods 1, 2, & 3 and ten (10) school days prior to the end of the final marking period. Parents/Guardians wishing to request

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 3 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

an appeal must do so in writing to the building principal and include the specific dates requested.

- e. For Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) events, a half-day absence is any arrival after the mid-point of the school day. Students who miss a full day of school or more than a half-day of school may participate in practice or games if the absence is due to: funeral, college visitation, court, medical appointment, religious reasons, or any absence due to any reasons approved by the principal or designee.
- 4. High School Grades 9 through 12.** The Lake Forest School District administration and staff places the highest emphasis on academic learning time. All students are expected to attend school each day of the school term. For courses covering a full school year, students with 20 or more absences, excused or unexcused, may be denied credit. For courses covering one semester, students with 10 or more absences, excused or unexcused, in a given semester may be denied credit. Notification of credit denial will be made in writing. If credit is denied, parents/guardians may appeal the decision to the building principal or designee.
- a. Tardiness and Early Dismissal.
 - 1. Students who report to school late but within one hour of the school's start time will be considered tardy and documented as such. Students who report to school late and beyond one hour of the school's start time will be charged with a half-day or full day absence. When a student accumulates a total of 8 incidents of being tardy (excused and unexcused) contact will be made with the parents by the visiting teacher, Principal or designee. Repeated incidents of being tardy may result in disciplinary action as per the Lake Forest School District Discipline Policy.
 - 2. If a student is dismissed during the first hour of the school day, and does not return the same day, a full day absence will be charged.
 - 3. Early dismissals must be accompanied by formal documentation. Formal documentation shall be defined as a doctor's note, dentist/orthodontist's note, court subpoena, etc., of which are on official letterhead with student's name, date/time of appointment, and signature of on-sight official. Parent/Guardian notes do not meet the formal documentation definition. Students who are dismissed for more than two hours of a school day will be charged with either a half-day or full day absence. Students who are dismissed during the final hour of the school day will not be charged with an absence provided that formal documentation is presented to the school upon the students return. If formal documentation is not provided the early dismissal will be considered unexcused and documented as such. When a student accumulates a total of 8 incidents of an early dismissal (excused and unexcused) contact will be made with the parents by the visiting teacher, Principal or designee. Repeated incidents of

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 4 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

unexcused early dismissals may result in disciplinary action as per the Lake Forest School District Discipline Policy.

4. For Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) events, a half-day absence is any arrival after the mid-point of the school day. Students who miss a full day of school or more than a half-day of school may participate in practice or games if the absence is due to: funeral, college visitation, court, medical appointment, religious reasons, or any absence due to any reasons approved by the principal or designee.
5. At the beginning of the school year, each school will provide in writing to parents/guardians and post in the school office and on the school's web page, the school day start, mid-point, and end times.

b. Procedures for Early Dismissal

1. Students will be excused from school early for medical appointments, legal appointments, job interviews, appointments for counseling, or other reasons as approved by the principal or designee. Early dismissals that are not deemed excused as per these criteria will be deemed unexcused.
2. A student must present a note to the Attendance Clerk prior to getting dismissed early from school. The note must contain a reason for the dismissal, date, time, parent/guardian signature, and a telephone number where parent/guardian may be contacted before the dismissal. In cases where the student has an appointment, the student is required to bring a note back from the appointment confirming that it was kept. Students will not be released to individuals other than parents/guardians unless indicated in the note for release.
3. Parents/Guardians must come into the Main Office to sign out students when a student does not have a prior parent/guardian note that has been approved by the Attendance Clerk.
4. Telephone calls will only be accepted in case of an emergency.
5. Students may not leave school with other students during the day without a verified note from both sets of parents/guardians agreeing to this arrangement.
6. Students who leave the building without administrative approval and/or being properly signed out will be considered truant and will receive a disciplinary referral.

c. Procedures for Late Arrivals.

1. Students are required to sign in at the Main Office immediately upon arriving at school. Students are to present a note signed by a parent/guardian to be excused for being late.

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 5 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

2. Students are excused for being late to school for illness, medical appointments, legal appointments, job interviews (with prior permission from the principal), and/or appointments for counseling. (See page one “Types of Absences”)
3. Students who do not sign in upon arrival will receive a disciplinary referral.
- d. **Written Excuses** - Upon returning to school from any absence, students, regardless of grade level, are required to present a written note from the parent/guardian stating reason for the absence to the Attendance Clerk. School personnel will review parent/guardian notes and determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused. If note is determined to be unexcused, the parent/guardian must be notified. A note is to be presented within two (2) school days of the student’s return from absence. If, after two days, a note is not presented, the absences will be counted as unexcused. Written excuses must be presented for excused tardies and excused early dismissals. The district reserves the right to require formal documentation at any time.
- e. **Denial of Credit for Graded Work** - Students are expected to complete any work that is missed because of absence. Notes are to be turned in within two days of a student’s return to school. Previously assigned work that was to be turned in on a day of absence must be turned in the next time the scheduled class meets.
- f. **Appeals** - Parents/Guardians may only appeal excused absences that are due to family crisis, legal obligations and prolonged medical matters. Appeals will be approved at the discretion of the attendance committee. The attendance committee must consist of a minimum of five (5) individuals, a building administrator, the visiting teacher, and three (3) other members of the high school staff. Appeals will be accepted for each marking period. Deadlines for appeals are as follows: ten (10) school days after the end of marking periods 1, 2, & 3 and ten (10) school days prior to the end of the final marking period. Parents/Guardians wishing to request an appeal must do so in writing to the building principal and include the specific dates requested.
5. **Student Attendance Accounting.** Each Principal will assure that a centralized daily record of attendance, including absences, tardiness, and early dismissals, is kept for all students enrolled in the school. In addition to the centralized record, all teachers will keep official records of attendance for their assigned students.
6. **Student Dismissal Precautions.** No staff member will excuse any student from school prior to the end of the school day, or into any person’s custody, without the prior approval and knowledge of the principal or designee. The principal or designee will not excuse a student before the end of the school day without a request for the early dismissal from the student’s parent/guardian. In situations where a parent/guardian desires that a third party pick-up their child, the parent/guardian must contact the school in writing or by phone and provide the third party’s name. Telephone requests for early dismissal will be honored only in emergency situations and providing that the caller can be positively identified as the parent/guardian. Every parent/guardian or third party who comes to school to pick-up

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 6 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

a student for early dismissal must sign the sign-out sheet. All persons picking up students must provide valid photo identification.

7. Attendance Referral Procedures.

a. Elementary/Middle Schools.

1. When a student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences, the school will notify the student's parents/guardians by letter. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Visiting Teacher.
2. When a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences, the school will prepare a Truancy Referral and forward it to the Visiting Teacher. The Visiting Teacher will send a Truancy Referral letter to the parents/guardians and to the student (if the student is age 12 or older.) The Visiting Teacher will follow-up with the family by phone or home visit, as appropriate. Truancy charges will be filed if the problem continues.
3. Students will be referred to the Principal or designee after 15 cumulative days of absence. The principal or designee will schedule and conduct an attendance meeting with the parents/guardians and the Visiting Teacher.
4. After 20 days cumulative absence, the school will notify the parents/ guardians that the student may be retained in his/her grade due to attendance. The decision regarding promotion or retention will be made by the Principal based on an evaluation of the student's final grades, state test scores, attendance record, and other pertinent information. Parents/Guardians may appeal to the Superintendent if they disagree with the Principal's decision.
5. When a student accumulates five (5) tardies, the school will notify the student's parents/guardians by letter. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Visiting Teacher.
6. When a student accumulates five (5) early dismissals, the school will notify the student's parents/guardians by letter. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Visiting Teacher.

b. High School.

1. When a student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences, the school will notify the student's parents/guardians by letter. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Visiting Teacher.
2. When a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences, the school will prepare a Truancy Referral and forward it to the Visiting Teacher. The Visiting Teacher will send a Truancy Referral letter to the parents/guardians and to the student (if the student is age 12 or older.) The Visiting Teacher will follow up with the family by phone or home visit, as appropriate. Truancy charges will be filed if the problem continues.

LAKE FOREST BOARD OF EDUCATION	Last Reviewed: August 27, 2015
Board Policy: JE Page 7 of 7	Next Review: August 27, 2018

3. Students will be referred to the principal after 15 cumulative days of absence. The Principal or designee will schedule and conduct an attendance meeting with the parents/guardians and the Visiting Teacher.
 4. For courses covering a full year, after 20 days cumulative absence, the school will notify the parents/guardians that the student may not receive course credit. For courses covering one semester, after 10 days cumulative absence, the school will notify the parents/guardians that the student may not receive course credit.
 5. When a student accumulates five (5) tardies, the school will notify the student's parents/guardians by letter. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Visiting Teacher.
 6. When a student accumulates five (5) early dismissals, the school will notify the student's parents/guardians by letter. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Visiting Teacher.
8. **Mandatory Summer School and Extra Instruction.** Any day of summer school or any session of after school or Saturday extra instruction which a child is required to attend as an academic improvement activity shall be considered a school day for purposes of this policy.
 9. **Absences Due to Events and Activities.** Student absences due to events or activities may be excused if prior approval is obtained from the Principal. These days are counted toward a student's total number of days absent. Parents/Guardians should obtain and complete a Prior Approval Form at least two weeks prior to the trip and submit the form to the Principal. Absences for scheduled events and activities that are not pre-approved will be considered unexcused absences.
 10. **Attendance Incentives.** Each school level, elementary, middle, and high school, will develop attendance incentives to recognize and reward students for attendance rates of 94% or higher on a marking period or yearly basis.