

## **THOMASTON HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Connecticut State law requires parents to make sure that their child between the ages of 5 to 18 attends school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor to student success; thus, any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism and improve student performance while providing students the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed due to a legitimate absence.

### **ABSENCE**

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school (283-3030). If staffing and time permit, the school will call the parent/guardian to check on the absence. A student should not be absent from school without the parents' knowledge and consent. **Written explanations of all absences are required and shall be submitted to the main office for each student on the day that the student returns to school. The final decision as to whether an absence is excused or unexcused rests with the school administration.**

### **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED**

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCE:**

Attendance is required in every class every day. For the purpose of this policy, ALL absences will count and be considered unexcused except for:

1. Illness – Any prolonged or frequent illness which causes a student to be absent from class more than five (5) times consecutively or more than five (5) times in one marking period must be confirmed by a physician
2. School-sponsored activity
3. Suspension
4. Religious holidays
5. Court appearance/probation appointments with documents provided
6. College visits/interviews and other post-secondary plans with verification provided
7. Bereavement (Death in the family)
8. Absences as approved by the administration

#### **PROCEDURES:**

Recognizing that absences from class reflect negatively upon the quality of education received by students, the following procedures are established:

1. Parents are required to call the school each morning by 9:30 a.m. to indicate the absence of their child.
2. Parents are required to provide a written explanation for each absence due upon the student's return to school.
3. If a student has five (5) absences from school, or a class in a marking period, telephone contact with the parent will be held with the parent to discuss the situations and secure corrective action. The telephone conversation will be followed by a letter to the parent from the school administration. If the absences do not diminish, the Principal may convene a Study Team meeting to discuss the situation and recommend corrective action. The parent may request a meeting with the school administration at any time to discuss the attendance problem.
4. Any student who is absent from school or a class (20) days in any one school year will be referred to the Superintendent to have the situation assessed. The administration will notify the parent that the maximum number of days has been reached. This notification is to be in writing and will include a statement that a referral to the Superintendent has been made.

#### **MAKE-UP WORK:**

It is the student's responsibility in grades 7-12 to complete work missed due to excused absences. The following guideline will be considered:

- A. Fewer than five (5) absences from school or a class - the student will have one (1) week to complete the work.
- B. Five (5) consecutive or greater absences from school or a class – the student will have two (2) weeks to complete the work.

#### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:**

All excused absences will be justified according to the four established categories listed above.

Work from unexcused absences may not be made up

A student may not accumulate more than five (5) unexcused absences from a given class each marking period. Upon the sixth unexcused absence from class a student will receive a grade no higher than F+ (55) for that marking period.

A warning letter will be sent to a parent/guardian after the third unexcused absence.

Family trips and vacations will not generally be regarded as reasons for exceeding the absence limitation. Parents are strongly discouraged from scheduling vacations during times when school is in session.

#### **DISMISSAL**

No student will be allowed to leave the school for any reason without the approval of the administration or dismissal due to illness **by the school nurse only**. Any student who leaves the building without permission is subject to suspension.

1. **Dismissal from school for special appointments** (doctors, dentists, college visits): The student must provide the office with a note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the dismissal. The student must bring the note to the administrator who validates the note and explains the procedure for dismissal. Students will only be dismissed for reasons listed under the excused absences. Parents are strongly urged to not to schedule appointments during school hours. Students may not be dismissed from school without permission of the main office.
2. **No student will be dismissed from school without a written note from a parent or guardian.**

### **Early Dismissal:**

Students obtaining a permanent early dismissal must be in a senior homeroom.

If an eligible student has a study hall the last period of the day, the student will be permitted to leave at that time. Students may not leave prior to 1:17.

In order to be academically eligible for early dismissal, students are not allowed any failing grades, incomplete grades, or grades of a "C-" average for the previous quarter report card in the current academic year.

**A complete and approved early dismissal form must be on file in the main office, signed by a parent or guardian. Signed forms are due by September 8, 2003.**

**Students must sign out in the office before leaving the building. Failure to do so will result in a referral to administrator.**

### **Class Cuts:**

A cut occurs when a student chooses not to attend an assigned class/study hall without prior permission of the teacher, nurse, or administrator.

Class cuts will be recorded in the attendance taking process and will count toward the final five (5) class absences allowed for each quarter of the school year.

Class cuts will result in the following discipline:

The first class cut will be handled by the classroom teacher. A referral form will be filled out by the teacher and handed in to the administrator and a detention will be issued.

The second class cut will be handled by the classroom teacher. A referral form will be filled out by the teacher and handed in to the administrator and one in-school suspension will be issued.

The third class cut will be handled by submittal of a completed referral form to the administrator, who will assign the student two in-school suspensions.

Any further cutting will result in additional days of suspension, to be determined by the administrator. After two days of suspension, a conference will be held with Administration and the parent to review the student's attendance record and to establish a plan of remediation.

## **TARDINESS POLICY:**

### **Tardiness to School:**

Tardiness to school interferes with the learning of the student and disrupts the learning environment for others.

Students that are not in their homeroom by 7:42 a.m. are considered tardy.

Students who are tardy to school must sign in at the office and receive a late pass to class.

A student discovered on school grounds, who has not reported to homeroom or the office, will also be considered tardy.

Excessive tardiness will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension and referral to administration. A tardy to school is only considered as being excused when the reason for the tardy falls under the excused absence criteria and is verified by a note.

Chronic tardiness will result in the loss of student driving privileges.

### **Tardiness to Class and Study Hall**

Students are expected to attend all classes and study halls.

An unapproved tardiness occurs when the student arrives to class or study hall late without a pass signed by a faculty/staff member, nurse or administrator.

**During each marking period, two unexcused tardies to class will be equal to one unexcused absence.**

**Any unexcused tardy to class in excess of twenty (20) minutes will count as an unexcused absence to class.**

## **ATTENDANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Upon the sixth unexcused absence from class during any marking period, a student will receive no grade higher than an F+ (55). Parents and/or guardians will be notified via certified mail that their child has exceeded the allotted absences and will be receiving an F+ for that marking period.

Every parent has a right to a hearing with the Attendance Review Committee regarding any student's failure based upon absences. In order to request a hearing, the parent should contact the school principal. Parents should bring all documentation and explanations of absences with them to the hearing.

The Attendance Review Committee consists of an administrator, classroom teacher, nurse, and a school counselor.

Decisions of the Attendance Review Committee may be appealed to the Board of Education.

### **TRUANCY:**

Pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes, school superintendents have the authority, and in some cases, the duty to file written complaints with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters alleging that the acts or omissions of a juvenile are such that the juvenile's family constitutes a "Family With Service Needs" (FWSN). This includes juveniles who are truant and habitually truant.

Truancy referral to the court is appropriate only when the school has exhausted all administrative and social service remedies and has reasonable cause to believe that the absenteeism constitutes truancy. In addition to that, referrals must provide documentation of at least 4 days of unexcused absences in one (1) month or ten (10) days during the current school year to meet the definition of truancy, or 20 days during the current school year to meet the definition of habitual truancy.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute (17a-101), the failure by parents or guardians to assure that a child attends school may constitute educational neglect and may be reported to the Department of Children Families (DCF).