

**CRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CRANFORD, NEW JERSEY**

POLICY: UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FOR CRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL

OBJECTIVE

One of the main functions of the Cranford School District is the establishment and maintenance of an atmosphere in each of the schools that is most conducive to the learning process. Daily student attendance is essential if the maximum benefits of a thorough and efficient education are to be realized. The interaction of teacher with student and students with students, as well as participation in group discussions, are activities that are a vital part of the classroom experience and cannot be "made up" at a later date. Regular attendance is vital and anything that interferes with the regular attendance and participation detracts from the maximum education benefits available to the district's students.

The objective of this policy is to stop the practice of class cutting thereby increasing period-by-period student attendance. Increased attendance in conjunction with the carefully planned, delivered and evaluated lessons should certainly play a significant part in providing a thorough and efficient education to each of our students.

IMPLEMENTATION

For purposes of this policy, an unexcused absence shall be defined as:

- A. **A cut:** The absence of a pupil from any scheduled class or study hall during a day in which the pupil is legally present in school shall be defined as a cut of such class or study. To work with another staff member, a student must obtain the permission of his/her subject teacher PRIOR to missing class.
- B. **Truancy:** The absence of a pupil from school for reasons that do not meet the criteria of an excused absence as outlined in Policy 5113.
- I. First cut of school year - graded subjects.
- A. The assignment of one central detention.
 - B. Teacher notified in writing that cut has occurred.
 - C. School administrator records cut in his office and has conference with student.
 - D. Parents/guardian notified by letter that cut has occurred and penalty for this and subsequent cuts.
 - E. A "0" for all class work during the time of the unexcused absence.
- II. Second cut of the school year (same subject) - graded subjects.
- A. The assignment of one Saturday School or assignment of 2 to 4 central detentions.
 - B. If the Saturday School assignment or detention is cut, one day out of school suspension results.
 - C. Notification and recording as above.
 - D. In addition to C (above) there will be an attempt made to contact the parents/guardians by telephone when possible or conduct a face-to-face meeting. Inability of the administration to accomplish this shall not affect the due process aspects of this policy. This is simply a courtesy to the parents/guardian and student in an attempt to solve the attendance problem.
 - E. A "0" for all class work during the time of the unexcused absence.

III. Third cut of the school year (same subject) - graded subjects.

- A. A student charged with a third cut will have a hearing before a school administrator at which time he/she will be given an opportunity to explain his/her absence. The school administrator will make a decision concerning the alleged cut based upon the information submitted by the teacher, the information provided by the student and any other relevant information. If the assistant principal decides the absence is a third cut, he/she will inform the student, inform the parents/guardian via telephone and by Certified Mail, Restricted Delivery, Return Receipt Requested.
- B. The student and his/her parent/guardian will be notified that academic credit for the class will be lost. A student who administratively loses credit may elect to remain in the class with no credit or drop the class with parental approval. If the class is dropped, a student may repeat the course in the next school year or take it for original credit in summer school.

IV. Study Hall, Homeroom, and Lunch Cuts

- A. First cut - one central detention and notification of parents/guardians.
- B. Second cut - one Saturday School assignment or 2 central detentions.
- C. Third cut - three Saturday School assignments or 3 central detentions.

V. Truancy/Unexcused Absence

- A. Truancy is defined as any absence not covered by personal illness, death in the family, religious observance, or other absence for good reason arranged with school officials in advance.
- B. Each Truancy constitutes a cut in each class, study hall, homeroom, and lunch for each day of truancy with above penalties (I to IV) to apply.
- C. Truancy of students over 18 years of age is to be determined by school administration.
- D. In the event that the administration has reasonable belief that students planned a "cut day," the following actions may be imposed:
 - 1. Proof of a doctor's visit
 - 2. Zero for all class assignments
 - 3. Suspension from school sponsored activities including prom and graduation
 - 4. Other action determined by administration

VI. Lateness

- A. Definition: A pupil is late to class or homeroom when he/she enters the room after the signal beginning the class or homeroom has sounded. The appropriate school administrator shall determine if a lateness is excused or unexcused.
- B. TARDINESS TO GRADED SUBJECT CLASSES
 - Unexcused lateness is defined as being five minutes (or less) late to class.
 - Unexcused lateness of more than five minutes will be considered a cut.

C.	<u>LATENESS</u>	<u>CONSEQUENCE</u>
	1 st & 2 nd Lateness	Personal Detention(Teacher Discretion)
	3 rd Lateness	Teacher Contacts Parent
	4 th Lateness	Teacher-Assigned Central
	5 th Lateness	Refer to Administration; Guidance to Contact Parent; 2 Central Detentions
	6 th Lateness	Refer to Admin; Loss of credit in Semester course

	2 Central Detentions
7 th Lateness	Refer to Admin; 3 Central Detentions
8 th Lateness	Refer to Admin; Guidance to Contact Parent-4 Central Detentions
9 th Lateness	Refer to Admin; Loss of Credit-Full Year Course

Corrective Action Plan

The school shall implement the following once a student has accrued four (4) cumulative unexcused absences:

1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following day;
2. Conduct an investigation of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the student's parents;
3. Develop an action plan in consultation with the student's parents designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
4. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
5. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies.

For between five (5) and nine (9) cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall "revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the student's needs and specify the intervention for achieving the outcomes, supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance that may include any or all of the following: (A) refer to consult with the building's PAC Team; (B) conduct testing, assessments or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral and health needs; (C) consider an alternative educational placement; (D) make a referral to a community-based social health provider agency or other community resource.

Any student who gets a third cut or a ninth lateness in a resource room or any remedial course such as H.S.P.T. which requires attendance for the entire school year by the New Jersey State Department of Education will remain in the class and receive no credit for the course. Saturday School will be given for additional cuts or tardiness in the class.

C. Lateness to Study Hall, Homeroom, and Lunch (Refer to Student Code of Conduct Book)

<u>Legal References:</u>	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:11-1	General mandatory powers and duties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:35-4.9	Pupil promotion and remediation; policies and procedures
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-14, -15, -16	Religious holidays; absence of pupils on; effect ...
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19a	Newly enrolled students; records and identification
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-24	through -26 Missing children; legislative findings and declarations
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-25	Attendance required of children between six and 16; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-26	Days when attendance required; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-27	Truancy and juvenile delinquency defined
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-31	Violations of article by parents or guardians; penalties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-32	District and county vocational school attendance officers
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-7	Exclusion of pupils who are ill
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-8	Exclusion of pupils whose presence is detrimental to health and
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-9	Failure of parent to remove cause for exclusion; penalty
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-10	Exclusion of teachers and pupils exposed to disease
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-11	Exclusion of pupils having communicable tuberculosis
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-12	Closing schools during epidemic
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:54-20	Powers of board (county vocational schools)
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 52:17B-9.8a through -9.8c	Marking of missing child's school record
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-5.1	Graduation requirements

<u>N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1 et seq.</u>	Programs to support student development.
<u>N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1 et seq.</u>	Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts
<u>N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.1 et seq.</u>	Student Attendance and Accounting
<u>N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3</u>	Student attendance

Wetherell v. Board of Education of Township of Burlington, 1978 S.L.D. 794

Wheatley v. Board of Education of City of Burlington, 1974 S.L.D. 851

C.R., on behalf of J.R., v. Board of Education of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional School District, 1988 S.L.D. (June 22)

Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts

Possible

Cross References:

*5020	Role of parents/guardians
*5111	Admission
*5114	Suspension and expulsion
*5124	Reporting to parents/guardians
*5125	Pupil records
*5141.2	Illness
*5141.4	Child abuse and neglect
*5142	Pupil safety
*6146	Graduation requirements
*6146.2	Promotion/retention
*6147	Standards of proficiency
*6147.1	Evaluation of individual student performance
*6154	Homework/makeup work
*6171.4	Special education
*6173	Home instruction

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.

Adopted: September 10, 1984

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Revised: October 18, 1993

Revised: March 23, 1998

Revised: October 22, 2007