

## **COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **POLICY: STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS**

**DATE ADOPTED: November 19, 2013**

### **INTRODUCTION**

VT state law requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school. In addition to this legal responsibility, regular school attendance is important for a number of reasons. First, it is critical to the academic, social and emotional growth of all children. Second, regular and punctual attendance is important to the development of responsible and effective work/study habits.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

All children between the ages of 6 and 16 whose parents or legal guardian reside in Colchester are required to attend public school unless they are enrolled in an approved independent school, a home study program, or excluded according to law. The following procedural guidelines apply to the attendance of all children in Colchester schools.

### **BELIEF STATEMENT**

It is the belief of the Colchester School District that each child should be entitled to the maximum instructional time each day, each period; therefore, a tardy policy has been implemented which supports and reinforces this philosophy. Attendance to school is the responsibility of the parents/guardians and student. Further, it is ultimately the responsibility of the student and/or parents to keep track of the number of days a student is absent or tardy to school. The Colchester School District provides bus transportation for all students daily. Those students who do not use this transportation are still expected to arrive on time, ready to participate and learn.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential if a student is to receive maximum benefit from an instructional program. Absences and tardiness contribute to the lack of educational success of a student. Students who are absent from or tardy to school/class may infringe upon the rights of those students in attendance and their teachers by disrupting the normal flow of an instructional program resulting in the loss of information, instructional time and attention. For these reasons, it is further essential that students attend school on a regular basis and that absences are caused by legitimate and compelling reasons only. The district recognizes that students may be tardy for legitimate reasons. As such, a tardy may be excused if a parent accompanies his/her child into the school building to sign him/her in with a valid reason written by the parent or a doctor who indicates an appointment. Other important matters may also be considered sufficient reason for an excused absence as approved by the principal (court appointment, family crisis, etc.).

Date Warned: November 1, 2013  
 First Reading: November 5, 2013  
 Second Reading: November 19, 2013

Legal Reference: Title 16 § 821  
 Title 16 § 1121  
 Title 16 § 1073

- **Entrance Age:** Children must be five (5) years of age before September 1 in order to be eligible to attend public kindergarten in Colchester.

Children must be six (6) years of age before September 1 in order to be eligible to attend first grade in Colchester unless a child has attended a public school kindergarten in Vermont or another state.

- **Enrollment:** No person other than a regularly enrolled student of the Colchester public schools who is counted in the school's average daily membership shall be permitted to enroll in any course of instruction or use classroom facilities except as otherwise provided by law and/or approved by district policy/practice.
- **Transfer Students:** Children transferring from schools outside of Colchester will be placed according to the best interests of the child and at the discretion of the school principal. The child's former grade level shall be a general guide to placement, although consideration will be given to the child's age and record of achievement, as well as his social, emotional, and physical maturity.
- **Non-Resident Students:** Colchester School District accepts non-resident students when such placement is deemed to be in the best interest of the student, district, and/or the family and if the enrollment allows for additional students. (See district policy NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS for specific procedures and tuition payments.)
- **Attendance:** All students must regularly attend school except for any one of the following excused absences: personal illness; religious holidays; family death; medical/dental treatments; school suspensions; school sponsored trips and/or other reasons requested by the parent and approved by the superintendent of schools or his/her designee.
- **Homebound and Hospitalized Students:** According to state regulations, students are eligible to receive instruction at home or in a hospital whenever they are unable to attend school for ten or more consecutive days because of a medical disability or pregnancy. (Refer to individual school handbooks for specific procedures.)
- **Student Dismissals:** Students may be dismissed from school early or arrive at school late according to individual school procedures. No student may leave the school grounds during the day without the approval of the administration. (Refer to individual school handbooks for specific procedures.)
- **Consecutive Absences:** For excused absences of ten consecutive days or less, students are carried on membership rolls and provided assignments for schoolwork. Principals may withdraw students with unexcused absences of more than ten consecutive days; no school assignments will be provided to these students.

- **Intermittent Absences:** School administrators will contact the parents or guardians of any student who is absent for a total of seven (7) days per semester. Twenty-one (21) non-consecutive days of absence within one year defines truancy according to the school district. Such absences may result in retention and/or loss of course credit. (Refer to individual school handbooks for specific procedures.)
- **Tardiness:** If a student is tardy, then they owe themselves time for learning. Depending on the amount of time, students may be assigned to in-school or after-school times to complete their work.
- **High School:** Students at Colchester High School are marked present/absent/tardy for each class period. CHS does not record all daily attendance; we record all attendance data on a class by class basis.
- **Credit and Eligibility:** Students at Colchester High School may lose credit in a course and/or their athletic eligibility if they exceed the allowable number of absences/tardies.