

# Northwestern High School Attendance/Absence Policy

Improving attendance is a Northwestern High School priority. Although the State of Maryland has a compulsory school attendance law which guarantees an educational opportunity for its youth, admittance and continued attendance in a public school are privileges dependent upon the student's compliance with the laws of the State of Maryland, the Prince George's County Public School System, and the school. It follows that when a student does not comply with the law, policies, or rules, the privilege of attending class at Northwestern High School may be suspended or revoked.

As Northwestern's mission is to prepare our students for the world of work, the student's role becomes that of the worker. Therefore, daily attendance and punctuality is a work ethic that is encouraged, rewarded, and required for success.

The Maryland State Department of Education standard for "Satisfactory School Attendance" for secondary students is 94%. **To meet this standard, every Northwestern student is expected to attend school 169 days of the 180 days scheduled.** Every student, with the assistance of his or her parents, must make the effort to attain this standard. Students will begin their day in first or fifth period where the official daily attendance will be taken.

**When you are absent,** you must bring in a note from your parent or guardian and present it to your first or fifth period teacher who will issue you an attendance form to be signed by all your teachers. The attendance form will remain with the last period teacher.

The following information must be on all absence/tardy/early departure notes: student name and ID number, date of note, date(s) of absences/tardy/early dismissal, reason for absence/tardy/early dismissal, current work and home phone numbers, parent/guardian name, and parent/guardian signature. **A physician's note is required for any absence of five (5) or more days due to illness.**

If you forget your note, you will receive an attendance form marked "unexcused," and you should take this to all your teachers, get an unexcused absence slip to take to your teachers. You must bring in a note the next school day. **If after 48 hours a note has not been received, the absence will be recorded as unlawful.** Lawful absences (excused) as defined by the State of Maryland and as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct are limited to the following:

- Death in the immediate family-absences for this reason should not exceed three days.
- Illness of the Student-the school may require the certificate of a doctor.
- Court Summons-a note from the court will be required.
- Observance of a Religious Holiday
- School authorized activity or work
- State Emergency
- Suspension

Any absence, including absences for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed to be unlawful and may constitute truancy.

## Make up Work

Upon returning from an absence, students must make arrangements to complete make-up work. The amount of time allotted for completion of the make up work is equal to the number of days missed. Work not completed in a timely manner will not be accepted. Teachers are not obligated to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

## Excessive Absenteeism-No Credit/No Grade

Students with five (5) unexcused absences in a semester course or ten (10) unlawful absences in a yearlong course, will receive an "N" grade if they otherwise would be passing the course. Students with five (5) lawful absences in a semester course, or ten (10) lawful absences in a yearlong course, may also receive an "N" grade if they do not complete make-up work for missed time or receive home teaching. **In an attempt to improve student attendance and achievement, Northwestern will fully implement the "N" grade policy.**

## Tardiness

Although the **Student Code of Conduct** clearly defines most offenses and prescribes procedures for handling these violations, the area of student tardiness is dependent on established individual school policy. The following definition and consequences for repeated tardiness to class are predicated on the belief that a cooperative effort of students, parents, teachers and school officials should resolve the problem.

A student is tardy to class if she/he is not physically present within the confines of the classroom when the bell rings. Teachers may require that students be seated and ready to work when the bell rings. Punctuality is a work ethic that is encouraged and rewarded. Therefore, it is among our best expectations of all Northwestern students.

Students arriving late to school after first or fifth period are to report to the Attendance Desk to sign-in and be issued an attendance form. A note from the parent/guardian is expected at the time the student signs in, and it should state the reason for the tardiness, to determine whether it is lawful (excused) or unlawful (unexcused). Lawful tardies are defined the same as for lawful absences.

Following the issuance of the attendance form, the student is to report to his/her scheduled class and is to present the attendance form to his/her teachers during the remainder of the school day.

## Late Buses

If a bus is late in arriving to school, students will be issued a late bus pass that should be presented to the first or fifth period teacher. If a student is tardy to class because of a late bus but does not have a late bus pass, the student will be marked as an unexcused tardy.

## Early Departures

(The Main Office will handle all early departures.)

Students who wish to leave school early must bring a note from a parent or guardian requesting an early departure from school. It is preferable that such requests be submitted 24 hours in advance. The request must state the date, time, and reason for the dismissal. The request must also show a telephone number where the parent/guardian can be reached for verification. If a parent has a short notice, emergency need, for taking a child out of school, the parent **must** speak to the student's administrator either by telephone or in person before the student will be excused from school. If at all possible, medical appointments should be scheduled before or after school hours.

If a student shows a pattern of excessive early departures, the early departure may be denied or the absence marked as unexcused. Early departures follow the same guidelines outlined in the attendance policy herein. Unless the student shows proof of a lawful reason, the early departure will count as an unexcused absence.