

**2015-2016
FITZGERALD HIGH SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This attendance policy is based upon following State of Michigan General School Law on compulsory school attendance, which states in part that “the child's attendance shall be continuous and consecutive for the school year fixed by the school district in which the child is enrolled.” (380.1561 M.S.A. 15.41561)

PHILOSOPHY

School attendance is a major factor related to academic success. The students of Fitzgerald High School are expected to attend school on a regular basis. Students must be present if they intend to take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them in the classroom. Regular attendance at school teaches self-discipline and responsibility, which are characteristics of reliable and employable adults. It is the responsibility of the students, parents, faculty, and administration to recognize the importance of school attendance and its impact on academic achievement.

Although a student may be absent from school with the approval of his/her parents, nevertheless, students must fully understand that it is the responsibility of the school to adhere to attendance guidelines.

The focus of the attendance program will be on maintaining accurate attendance records, identifying and resolving problems before they become of a serious magnitude and guiding students toward more responsible attendance attitudes and habits. Communication and cooperation will be imperative on everyone's part.

ATTENDANCE POLICY GUIDELINES (Grades 9-12)

A student will lose privileges to participate in extra-curricular events sponsored by Fitzgerald High School if his/her attendance meets any of the following:

- *An accumulation of 11 or more unexcused absence days per class per semester.*
- *11 or more tardies per class per semester.*

Once a student reaches maximum amount of absences or tardies, *extra-curricular activities will be suspended until the end of the semester, as determined by the building administrator:*

Tardies are counted separate from unexcused absences.

After a student loses his or her privileges as result of violating the attendance policy, he or she may elect to perform (2) hours of approved school based service and/or attend an equivalent number of school study hall hours to waive one absence or tardy and become eligible again for the privileges listed. Any specific community service hours used for this cannot be used also for credit towards any club or school-related community service requirement such as graduation requirements or school activity or club requirements. Students who demonstrate an unwillingness to conform to established absence guidelines will be subjected to progressive school discipline.

ABSENCES (Grades 9-12)

- **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

It is critical that any absence be verified within forty-eight hours of a student's return to school following an absence. Absences cannot be waived after that time unless good cause is shown for failing to provide timely verification

All verified absences from school **are** counted in determining if a student has exceeded the attendance guideline. Verified absences such as illness, professional appointments, family trips, including hunting, religious holidays and obligations, etc., must be verified by contacting the attendance/main office on or before 10:00 am the day of the absence or in advance by completing an "Advanced Absence Request" form. Parents and students are encouraged to complete Advanced Absence Request forms whenever possible.

Students are expected to be in school the entire day in order to participate in extra-curricular activities scheduled on that day. Exceptions to this rule and special arrangements for absences must be approved in advance by the building administration.

- **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

All unexcused absences from school **are** counted in determining if a student has exceeded the attendance guideline. Any time a student misses school unbeknown to his/her parents, it will be treated as truancy. The skipping of one day or one class period is considered serious, and the student will be disciplined. Students may not receive credit for work missed during truancy, but may have the work provided, upon request, for future reference. Legal authorities will be contracted regarding persistent truancy as required by law.

DEFINITIONS (Grades 9-12)

Attendance Requirement: Having no more than six (6) absences in a single term. Waived absences are **not** charged against the six absences per term limit.

Bereavement Absences: Bereavement absences are absences due to the death of an immediate family member. Bereavement absences will be excluded from the six-day limit. Immediate family is defined as parents, brother, sister, grandparents, aunts, uncles and first cousins. Students **may** be asked to provide documentation.

School Business Absences: Any school related activity such as field trips, athletic competitions, student group meetings, etc. sanctioned by the principal is not charged against the six absences. Students are responsible for making up work missed in other classes while participating in the activity.

Tardy: A tardy is counted for any student that is not inside the classroom when the final bell rings for each class.

Suspensions: Students are responsible for making up work missed in classes while on suspension. An out of school suspension is considered a school related event and there by cannot be counted negatively on a student's attendance. Also, any student work missed due to a suspension must be accepted and counted for full credit, (double jeopardy rule).

TARDINESS (Grades 9-12)

- Being more than 10 minutes late to class without a valid pass signed by authorized school personnel will result in a tardy absence (TAB). Missing class for an unexcused block of time exceeding more than 10 minutes will also result in a student being marked TAB. Appropriate disciplinary measures may be used by teachers in dealing with students late for class. In addition, a cumulative tardiness record for all classes will be maintained by the administration.
- Arriving late for school: Students arriving within the first ten minutes of the school day should report directly to their 1st hour class and will be marked tardy. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late must report to the attendance/main office and will be marked absent to their first hour class. Oversleeping and mechanical difficulty to a privately owned vehicle are not considered a valid excuse for being tardy or absent.
- Students who demonstrate an unwillingness to conform to established tardy guidelines will be subjected to progressive school discipline.