

# New Bedford Public Schools

2021-2022 School Year



# Attendance Protocol and Procedures



Wraparound Services

# CONTENTS

- General Attendance Information.....2**
  - The Importance of School Attendance .....2
  - Roles.....2
  - Clarifying Questions/Definitions .....3
- Parent/Guardian Attendance Information and Impact.....6**
  - MA State Law Chapter 76 Regarding Attendance .....6
  - School Contact Information .....7
  - Parent/Guardian Template to Notify School of Child’s Absence.....8
- School Attendance Framework and Practice for School Staff .....9**
  - Overview .....9
  - 3-Tiered Approach to Improving School Attendance and Tardiness .....9
  - Sample School-Based Action Steps to Improving School Attendance and Tardiness .....10
  - School-Based Procedures for Unexcused Absences .....11
- Daily Acts and Incentives for Improving Attendance .....12**
  - Establishing School-Wide Incentives for Attendance .....12
  - Daily Acts to Improve Attendance Schoolwide .....12
- School-Based Attendance Documentation .....13**
  - Protocol for School-Based Attendance Team Meetings .....13
  - How Schools Record Extended Absences/Special Circumstances .....13
  - Reasonable Efforts Before Unenrolling a Student.....14
  - How a School Documents When a Student is at Risk of Unenrollment.....14
- Appendix A .....16**
  - Glossary of Terms.....16
- Appendix B .....18**
  - Attendance Contract .....18
  - Letter of Concern.....20
  - Letter of Warning .....21
  - Letter of Critical Status.....22
  - Letter of Unenrollment .....23
  - Attendance Flow Chart.....24
  - Attendance Outreach Checklist.....26

# General Attendance Information

## The Importance of School Attendance

There is a growing body of research that highlights the connection between school attendance and student achievement (Attendance Works, 2014). Our philosophy at New Bedford Public Schools is that we all own and impact school attendance. Everyone from our students' families to the classroom teachers, front office staff, support staff, administrators and all the other school employees have an opportunity to positively impact the lives of our students. When a student is absent from school, they cannot learn at the same rate as their peers. Absenteeism puts the student at risk of falling behind and missing out on achieving critical learning objectives to be successful in the future.

Consistent and regular attendance in all classes, every day, is essential for student growth and life-long achievement. Regular attendance is linked to higher graduation rates, lower drop-out rates, higher college attendance rates and higher paying jobs. It is therefore most important that a specific set of expectations be established to ensure a clear understanding of the conditions under which a student may have an allowable absence.

At the start of every school year, the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Protocol link will be distributed to all families in the NBPS district. This protocol is visible online on the NBPS website, [www.newbedfordschools.org](http://www.newbedfordschools.org) you may also find the link to this protocol in your school's handbook. A hard copy of this protocol will be available at any NBPS Family Engagement Center upon request.

Research shows that students who attend school every day are more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to be ready upon high school graduation, and more likely to be successful in their career. Students who miss school frequently are at greater risk for dropping out of school, incarceration, substance abuse and homelessness, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education defines chronic absenteeism as "any student who misses more than 10% of school due to excused and/or unexcused absences" (e.g., school is in session for 30 days and the student is absent a total of 3 or more excused and unexcused days). If a student is absent for 18 days out of the 180-day school year, this student is considered chronically absent by the DESE.

Tardiness is also detrimental to a child's education. A student who is 10 minutes late for school every day will end up missing 30 hours of instruction during the year, which equals a full week of school.

The NBPS is committed to helping all students reach their goals. Our School-based attendance teams work closely with school administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses, and community partners to ensure students are attending school regularly and following school rules.

# General Attendance Information

## Roles

### *The Role of Schools and School-Based Attendance Teams:*

All schools will create and sustain an attendance team to monitor and analyze student attendance data, attendance trends, and its impact on learning in order to build and support systems and relationships for improved school attendance. The attendance teams will work to ensure students are receiving the necessary supports and services in school to be successful.

School-Based attendance teams will monitor data on tardiness and attendance, review at-risk students, develop action plans for students, and engage families, resources, and interventions to support the student. Teams will meet at least 2 times per month to discuss progress, and or barriers to improving the attendance and evaluate what changes to interventions, support, or resources are needed. School-Based attendance teams may consist of support personnel such as school adjustment counselors, nurses, guidance counselors, wrap around coordinators, administrators, attendance officers and any other appropriate staff.

### *The Role of Attendance Officers:*

School Attendance Officers support schools in improving attendance, by intervening in cases of chronic absenteeism, addressing habitual school offences, and preventing truancy. School Attendance Officers are committed to the success of students, and maintain communication with families via telephone calls, letters, and other technology adopted by their assigned schools. Attendance Officers perform residency verification, outreach, perform home visits and attend CHIPS/TIP, Pre CRA school meetings with families.

Attendance Officers consult with Juvenile Court, work collaboratively with various community partners and agencies, such as the Family Resource Center and the Department of Children and Families, to offer support and assist families in ensuring their children are in school every day, on time. Attendance Officers utilize the NBPS Attendance Outreach process flowchart (page 23-24) for interventions and checkpoints while interventions are progressively intensifying. School Attendance Officers are mandated to take legal action if truancy continues, and children are being denied a consistent and comprehensive education.

## Clarifying Questions/Definitions

### *Constructively Present (CP):*

Excused absence due to school-based field trip, religious holiday, inclement weather, verified medical reasons, buy back or academic work completed, while absent, during a hospitalization or during a suspension, for example, as approved by the School Principal.

# General Attendance Information

## What is an excused absence?

### Excused absences may include:

- An illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school.
- A death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal or family crisis.
- Court appearances: Students should present evidence of the requirement of the court appearance.
- Medical or psychological tests during the school day: The parent must show evidence (such as a note from the health care center) that the tests could not have been scheduled outside of school hours.
- Religious holy days: In order to accommodate the religious beliefs of students, such absences will be marked “constructively present” upon submitting a valid note signed by a parent or guardian **authorized by the School Principal**.
- Visits to special education schools for students with disabilities.
- Dismissal from school by a nurse: If a school nurse dismisses a student from school due to illness, this student is excused from school for 24 hours.
- Students of active-duty personnel shall have additional excused absents at the discretion of the District for visitations relative to a leave or deployment.
- Other situations: From time to time, situations over which the school, parent, and student have little, or no control may cause absences (for example, transportation that does not operate during inclement weather). These absences are excusable.
- Not a school day for the student, such as in Preschool - use other code = X
- The principal may determine that a student in these situations shall be marked “Constructively Present.”

## Is a suspension considered an absence?

Suspension from school is not an absence. In cases of suspension, the school will provide an opportunity for the student to maintain academic standing in school by being provided a list of assignments and homework. Students will be expected to use the time out of school constructively. Suspensions will be recorded as other code OSS.

## What is an unexcused absence?

### Unexcused absences may include:

- Family vacations: School vacations and holiday periods allow ample time for family vacations. Each absence for this reason is unexcused. School-based rules will regulate make-up work.
  - Please note – after 15 consecutive days of an unexcused absence the district / school has the right to unenroll any student. Additionally, we highly encourage families to work with their local school and not schedule any extended vacations / time away as it negatively impacts academic consistency and performance.

# Parent/Guardian Attendance Information and Impact

- If a student is unenrolled, the Guardian will have to re-register their child at the family registration center at the time of return. Return to the same school and class placement cannot be guaranteed at the time of registration.
- Babysitting
- Skipping school
- Other situations: From time to time, situations such as “illness of members of an extended family,” or “conflicts with parents’ work schedule may develop. These are viewed as unexcused absences.

## What is truancy?

Students are considered truant by the DESE when they have an unexcused absence. Students are not able to buy back absences that are marked Truant. Students may be marked Truant if they are found to be absent without parent or guardian permission.

## What do I do if my child is absent?

A student must be in attendance at least half the school day in order to be considered present. If the student arrives to school later than the times listed below, they will be considered absent- tardy=AT:

- Elementary School: 11:30 AM (except Pulaski School)
- Pulaski School: 12:00 PM
- Middle School: 10:55 AM
- New Bedford High: 10:57 AM
- Whaling City Jr/Sr High/ Trinity Day Academy/ Parenting Teen Program: 10:30 AM

Similarly, if students are dismissed with more than half the school day remaining, they will be considered absent-dismissed=AD. If a student is absent, they must submit a note of explanation for absences. Written explanations must comply with existing school policies. The note must include dates of absences and the reason for the absences. Additionally, it should be written in ink and signed by the parent or guardian. The teacher or any staff who receives Dr. note or parent notes for an absent student must forward all parent and Dr. notes received via dojo, email, or in person etc. to the clerk for accurate recording in ASPEN and filing.

# Parent/Guardian Attendance Information and Impact

Parents and guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is in school every day school is in session. It is a high priority for the NBPS District to monitor attendance and address the reasons why some students are chronically absent. In addition, it is the mission of the NBPS to work with families and community partners to ensure students arrive at school on time, every day and ready to learn. All absences must be verified with proper documentation. Failure to submit proper documentation will result in an unexcused absence. A parent/ guardian note does not excuse an absence if the absence does not meet the criteria to be excluded.

## MA State Law Chapter 76 - Regarding Attendance

- Massachusetts State Law states that parents are required to ensure children between the ages of 6 to 16 attend school.
- Educational professionals are mandated to report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if they suspect a child is suffering from educational neglect.
- If truancy persists, School Attendance Officers are mandated to file a Child Requiring Assistance application with Juvenile Court. If a student is in elementary school, a criminal complaint is filed for Failure to Cause School Attendance will be filed against the parent.
- Families that receive benefits under Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children are subject to specific attendance requirements. Clerks, please notify Attendance Officer which students submit the DTA Attendance Verification.
- Families in housing are subject to specific attendance requirements.



# Parent/Guardian Attendance Information and Impact

## School Contact Information



New Bedford Public Schools  
455 County Street, NB, MA 02740  
Phone: 508.997.4511

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

#### **Charles S. Ashley**

*Principal: Christine Pugliese*  
122 Rochambeau Street, NB, MA 02745  
508.997.4511 Ext. 40500

#### **Elizabeth Carter Brooks**

*Principal: Jennifer Medeiros*  
212 Nemasket Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 41550

#### **Elwyn G. Campbell**

*Principal: Lisa Wheelden*  
145 Essex Street, NB, MA 02745  
508.997.4511 Ext. 42550

#### **Carney Academy**

*Principal: Maria Reidy*  
247 Elm Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 43550

#### **James B. Congdon**

*Principal: TBA*  
50 Hemlock Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 44550

#### **John B. DeValles**

*Principal: TBA*  
120 Katherine Street, NB, MA 02744  
508.997.4511 Ext. 45550

#### **Alfred J. Gomes**

*Principal: Ellyn Gallant*  
286 South Second Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 46550

#### **Ellen R. Hathaway**

*Principal: Alexander Pella*  
256 Court Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 48550

#### **Hayden-McFadden**

*Principal: Tammy Morgan*  
361 Cedar Grove Street, NB, MA 02746  
508.997.4511 Ext. 49552

#### **Irwin M. Jacobs**

*Principal: Timothy McLaughlin*  
47 Emery Street, NB, MA 02744  
508.997.4511 Ext. 47550

#### **Abraham Lincoln**

*Principal: Lina DeJesus*  
445 Ashley Boulevard, NB, MA 02745  
508.997.4511 Ext. 51550

#### **Carlos Pacheco**

*Principal: Nicole Brine*  
261 Mt. Pleasant Street, NB, MA 02746  
508.997.4511 Ext. 52550

#### **John A. Parker**

*Principal: Amy Bousquet*  
705 County Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 53550

#### **Casimir Pulaski**

*Principal: Melissa Rego*  
1097 Braley Road, NB, MA 02745  
508.997.4511 Ext. 54550

#### **Renaissance Community School for the Arts**

*Principal: Daniel Somes*  
286 South Second Street, NB, MA 02744  
508.997.4511 Ext. 55550

#### **Thomas R. Rodman**

*Principal: Kim Marshall*  
497 Mill Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 56550

#### **Jireh Swift**

*Principal: Tonya Vitorino*  
2203 Acushnet Avenue, NB, MA 02745  
508.997.4511 Ext. 57550

#### **William H. Taylor**

*Principal: Rafaela DeFigueiredo Spence*  
71 Portland Street, NB, MA 02744  
508.997.4511 Ext. 58550

#### **Betsey B. Winslow**

*Principal: Carolyn Pontes*  
561 Allen Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 59550

### MIDDLE SCHOOLS

#### **Keith Middle School**

*Principal: David Mather*  
225 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 2286

#### **Normandin Middle School**

*Principal: Sean McNiff*  
81 Felton Street, NB, MA 02745  
508.997.4511 Ext. 2281

#### **Roosevelt Middle School**

*Principal: Daniel Bossolt*  
119 Frederick Street, NB, MA 02744  
508.997.4511 Ext. 2291

### HIGH SCHOOLS

#### **New Bedford High School**

*Headmaster: Bernadette Coelho*  
230 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 20500

#### **New Bedford High School**

*Asst. Headmaster: Joyce Cardoza*  
230 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 20504

#### **New Bedford High School – Grade 9**

*Asst. Principal: Marco DeBrito*  
230 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 20502

#### **New Bedford High School – Grade 10**

*Asst. Principal: Jose Edwards*  
230 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 20505

#### **New Bedford High School – Grade 11**

*Asst. Principal: Jeffrey Longo*  
230 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 20507

#### **New Bedford High School – Grade 12**

*Asst. Principal: Kathryn Rezendes*  
230 Hathaway Boulevard, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 20506

#### **Trinity Day Academy**

*Principal: Christopher Oliva*  
181 Hillman Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 23550

#### **Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School**

*Principal: John Tweedie*  
455 County Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 38550

### PROGRAMS

#### **Parenting Teens Program**

*Director: Wendy Andrade*  
181 Hillman Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 34550

#### **Adult & Continuing Education**

*Manager: Bernice Jensen*  
181 Hillman Street, NB, MA 02740  
508.997.4511 Ext. 33550



# Parent/Guardian Attendance Information and Impact

## Parent/Guardian Template to Notify School of Child's Absence

Parents: This is a helpful template that you may use anytime you need to submit a note regarding your child's absence. Please refer to pages 5-6 for a list of excused absences.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Street)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (City, Zip Code)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Home Telephone)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Dear Principal \_\_\_\_\_,

The purpose of this letter is to request that you excuse the absence of my child,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Student), on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date(s) of Absence)

My child was absent from school for the following reason:

- An illness or injury
- A death in the immediate family
- Significant personal or family crisis
- Court appearance
- Medical or psychological test
- Religious holy day
- Visits to special education school
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief explanation: (Additionally please attach any medical or other necessary documentation).

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I understand that he/she must make up any class work and homework missed as a result of this absence. If you have any questions, I can be reached either at work \_\_\_\_\_ (Telephone Number) OR at home \_\_\_\_\_ (Telephone Number)

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Parent/Guardian)

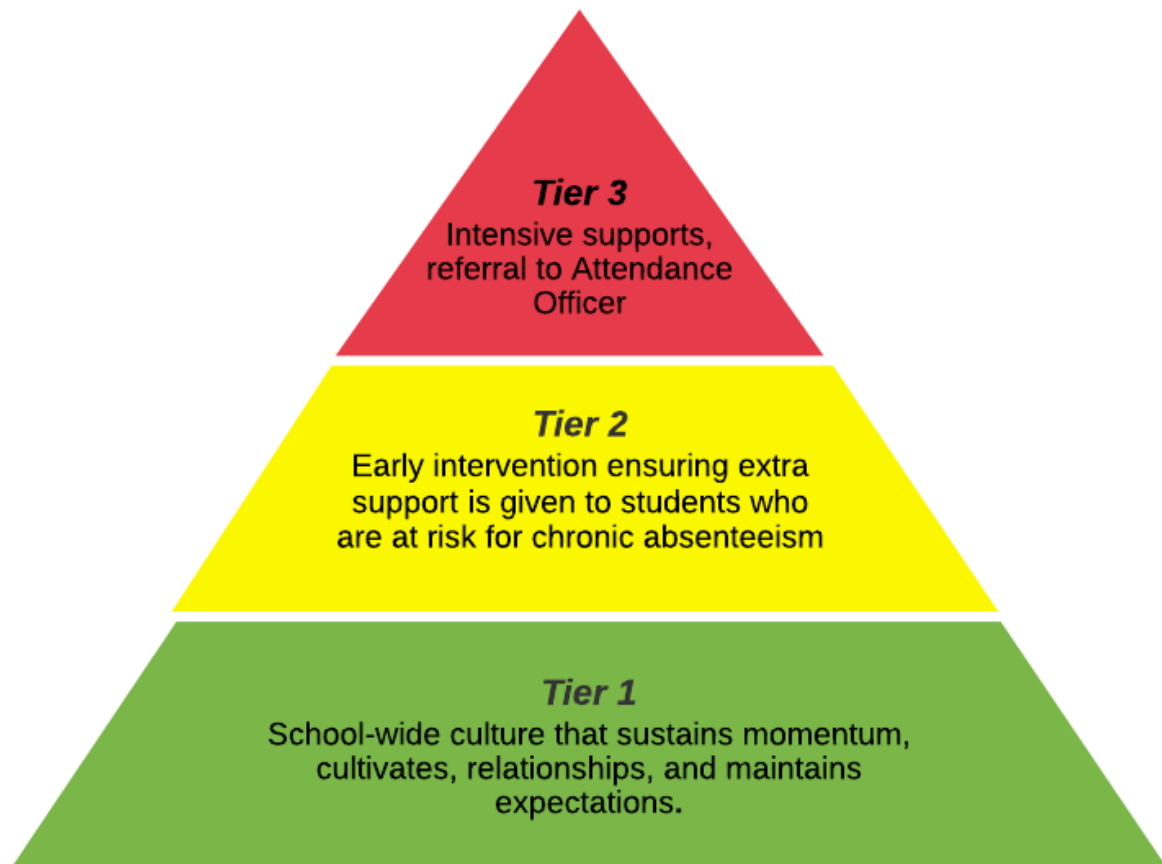
# School Attendance Framework and Practice for School Staff

## Overview

Attendance is the key factor in the success of the students in New Bedford Public Schools. It is the responsibility of each school to maintain accurate, timely records on the attendance of our students. Accordingly, all staff must recognize the importance of record keeping related to student attendance and achievement. The accuracy of data gathered in all phases of attendance-record management is central to the notification process for all students and parents concerning penalties and rewards for certain attendance patterns.

Principals and Building Administrators bear the final responsibility for attendance in their schools.

## 3-Tiered Approach to Improving School Attendance



# School Attendance Framework and Practice for School Staff

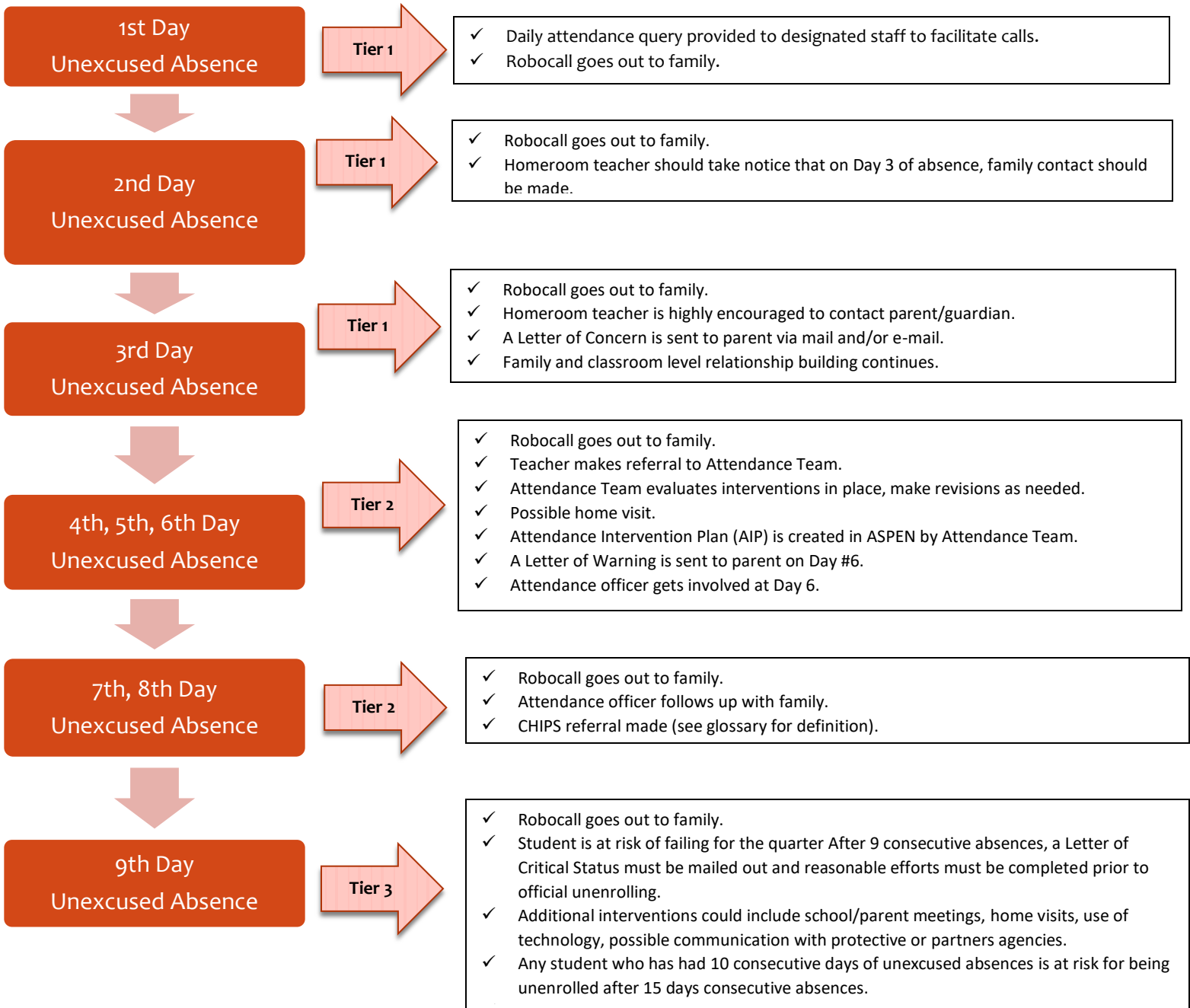
## Sample School-Based Action Steps to Improving School Attendance

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Point of Contact	Teachers, Admin	Teachers, SAC, Support Personnel, Admin	Attendance Officer, SAC, Admin, Support Personnel
Monitoring Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers to take daily and classroom attendance in Aspen for safety (fire, COVID, accuracy) and monitoring.</li> <li>Routinely- review data on tardiness and attendance.</li> <li>Identify which students and how many fall into the different tiers.</li> <li>Establish a plan to improve the attendance.</li> <li>Follow up on each absent day with a phone call (daily robo-calls, robo-texts, and robo-emails).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely review attendance weekly for Tier 2 students</li> <li>Identify underlying causes for continued absenteeism.</li> <li>Identify early intervention supports or academic standing (i.e., nurse supporting medical needs/ issues)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely identify students who have chronic absenteeism.</li> <li>Review attendance daily</li> <li>Identify academic standing.</li> </ul>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send letter of concern.</li> <li>Create and maintain a school climate that encourages students to come every day.</li> <li>Focus on the culture of attendance (i.e., warm greeting in the morning, positive experiences in front office)</li> <li>Strengthen relationships with every student.</li> <li>Inform parents of procedures for reporting an absence and the attendance policy.</li> <li>Increase family engagement through culturally competent activities and opportunities to build relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send letter of warning and call to inform family about student's attendance/ tardiness.</li> <li>Work together to remove barriers.</li> <li>Help parents understand that attending school is the law.</li> <li>Teachers should reach out to the parents when student is absent.</li> <li>Identify family needs, coordinate with Wraparound Coordinator.</li> <li>Maintain contact with parents to ensure support is provided.</li> <li>Identify academic needs and supports.</li> <li>Bring Parent/ Guardian in for a Parent Meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sent letter of critical status.</li> <li>Referral form is completed by SAC, guidance, or admin for attendance officer.</li> <li>At least once per month Attendance Officer Meets with school attendance team (admin, support staff, etc.)</li> <li>Assess student and family needs, intensify outreach.</li> <li>Communicate with family and wraparound coordinator to determine which community supports and services student is involved with.</li> <li>Refer families as needed to additional community partners.</li> <li>Maintain communication with family.</li> <li>BBST/SST/ WCST referral</li> </ul>

# School Attendance Framework and Practice for School Staff

## School-Based Procedures for Unexcused Absences

**\*Record all efforts to contact in ASPEN**



# Daily Acts and Incentives for Improving Attendance

## Establishing School-Wide Incentives for Attendance

NBPS are actively working to provide school-wide incentives for attendance. Positive rewards for attending school on time everyday can be an effective way to improve school-wide attendance. Schools may adopt ideas like the ones below or may implement other creative ways of engaging the school community in rewarding and incentivizing school attendance.

- If schools have school wide PBIS, Climate and Culture, and Family Engagement Teams they can all be utilized to positively support, message, and review attendance trends and think through systemically how they can impact improved attendance and decreasing of chronic absenteeism.
- City-wide Champions Cup or schools with overall improved or excellent attendance.
- School certificates awarded to students for excellent attendance throughout the month or year.
- Extra “free” time, such as recess, homework passes, or time at the end of class for students with excellent attendance.
- Interclass competition and a reward, such as a pizza party on Friday, for the class with the best monthly attendance.
- Attendance: A dance open only to students with excellent attendance. A great way for student to encourage their peers!
- Recognition for improved, or excellent, attendance- not perfect attendance.
- Timeliness awards for students who show up on time to school or have improved in tardiness.
- Positive notes or phone calls home to families with students who have improved attendance.
- Name on the “Attendance Wall” in the hallway or classroom
- Drawing for “Principal for the day” to the student who/s attendance improves the most by the end of the year.

## Daily Acts to Improve Attendance School-Wide

Improving school-wide attendance is an ongoing and daily process. There are many things that all school staff strive to do to improve school attendance:

- Greet each student by name every day.
- Acknowledge growth, improvement as cornerstones of change for students who may struggle with attendance, while also acknowledging those with “good, sustained attendance as well.”
- Aim to have every student feel connected to an adult in the school.
- Inform students that when they are not in school, they are missed.
- Ask students for ideas on attendance incentives.
- Consider building a small student group to drive and think through incentives and build enthusiasm.
- Form positive relationships with students’ families with communication and engagement.

Please refer to your local attendance officer for additional positive attendance incentives.

Resources from [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# School-Based Attendance Documentation

## Protocol for School-Based Attendance Team Meetings

Attendance must be the focus of the school-based attendance team meetings.

- Principal presents Attendance Team with a list of 15-30 highest need students based on current quarterly attendance.
- Note: ALL documentation of attendance, and behavioral concerns MUST be recorded in ASPEN.
- Structure: First 1.0-hour, discussion of highest need students related to attendance
- Structure: Remaining time may be spent discussing behavioral concerns
- Attendance Team members when discussing or documenting students with attendance concerns, state the presenting problem / concern, barriers, the identified reason for non-attendance, plan of action, and Plan if action plan does not change what are the next steps that will be taken such as outside agency referrals, Pre CRA and CRA.

## How Schools Record Extended Absences/Special Circumstances

Verified medical reasons: The student should be recorded as absent, but if the student is receiving academic Curriculum during the excused absences, then the student should be recorded as constructively present (CP) on those days.

- Truancy: If the student is absent, it is inexcusable and the parent or Guardian was unaware of the absence, the student will be recorded as absent with other code Truant.
- Student is expected to be enrolled in school but does not show up at the start of the school year: The student will be recorded as absent. If the student does not show up by October 1, he/she will be unenrolled and recorded as a dropout. For students under 16 years of age, the student will be unenrolled. If the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) finds the student reported as enrolled in another district, the dropout will not be counted for the first district.
- Student is withdrawn due to non-attendance with no alternative education plan: Student should be reported as a dropout. If the student is younger than 16 years old, the student should be treated as truant (not a dropout). If student is withdrawn for non-attendance and does not enroll in another form of education, Massachusetts Truancy Law still applies.
- Student has moved to another city/town or state and no documentation has been provided that the student has enrolled elsewhere: the student is reported as a dropout. If they return to school,



# School-Based Attendance Documentation

- or the school receives documentation that the student is enrolled somewhere else, the enrollment status must be updated by clerical.
- Student receives in-school-suspension: Student is not recorded as absent but in School suspension (ISS)
- Student receives out of school suspension: Student is not recorded as absent, but as other code OSS.
- Students who are excluded and still receive Curriculum will remain enrolled.
- Student leaves MA public school system to attend an adult education program. The program leads to a high school diploma, the student should be reported as transfer to adult education program.

## Reasonable Efforts Before Unenrollment

### **Schools must make reasonable efforts before unenrolling a student.**

The following efforts are considered “reasonable efforts.” All efforts must be documented in ASPEN journal.

- Phone calls to families and all contacts in Aspen and in the Cumulative Record.
- Home visits, with a purpose of establishing a relationship with the family to determine barriers that lay in the way of attendance.
- Should include all stakeholders and staff directly connected to the student as, but not limited to, staff that directly supports special education, English language learners, McKinney-Vento and any other appropriate staff and stakeholders that might be connected to the student and or family.
- Contacts to collaterals, such as:
  - DCF
  - Community partners, DTA, FRC, Housing Authority
  - Service providers and counseling agencies
- Use of technology to contact student and or family.

## How a School Documents When a Student is at Risk of Unenrollment

- Any student who has had 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences is at risk of being automatically unenrolled after 15 days of consecutive absences.
- Referral to attendance officer must be made when a student is at risk of being automatically unenrolled.
- Student is at risk of failing for the quarter at 9 unexcused absences, 11 for the trimester.

# School-Based Attendance Documentation

- After 10 consecutive absences, a letter regarding risk of unenrollment must be mailed out and reasonable efforts must be completed prior to officially unenrollment.
- Please see attached Reasonable efforts form for a full list of reasonable efforts to be made when a student is at risk of unenrollment.

Principal must sign the reasonable efforts form **including documentation in Aspen Journal** before final approval of unenrolling students.

**Please complete the NBPS Unenrollment form to record reasonable efforts made and document these in ASPEN.**

**Submit all responses to [unenrollment@newbedfordschools.org](mailto:unenrollment@newbedfordschools.org)**

**Final authorization to unenroll MUST be approved and signed off by Principal.**

# Appendix A

## Glossary of Terms

**Chronic Absenteeism:** Percent of students absent more than 10% of the days they are enrolled in school.

**Constructively Present (CP):** Excused absence due to school-based field trip, religious holiday, inclement weather, verified medical reasons, buy back or academic work completed, while absent, during a hospitalization or during a suspension, for example, as approved by the School Principal.

**Truancy:** When a student has an unexcused absence, and the parent or guardian are unaware of the absence.

**Excused Absence:** When a student is absent from school with valid documentation deemed appropriate by the school district, such as Dr. appointment, college visit, Court appearance and bereavement.

Unexcused Absence: When a student's absence does not meet the criteria for an excused absence (see above).

**In-School Suspension (ISS):** When student is given a mandatory punishment in school during which the student should expect to learn and conduct all school activities under the supervision in ISS. Student should not be marked absent.

**Tardy:** When a student is late to school, they must arrive at school before half the school day is finished.  
**Out of School Suspension (OSS):** When a student is given a mandatory leave from school as a form of punishment. Students will be marked other code OSS, the student receives academic instruction to complete missed schoolwork.

**Robocalls:** Robocalls are daily automatic calls generated by the school system to notify parents that a student is not in school. Robocalls should be recorded in the voices of School Administrators or designee and should be delivered in multiple languages. If a student is tardy, a robocall will still go out to the family daily.

**CHIPS (Child in Need of Possible Services):** Team comprised of Attendance Officer, parent/guardian, may include Court liaison and may include support personnel, such as school guidance counselor, school adjustment counselor and wraparound coordinator. Student must be in violation of the CRA law to be eligible for a CHIPS/TIP meeting. Absent at least 8 days in the current quarter, or 11 days in the current trimester depending on the marking periods of the identified school. Schools must document in ASPEN all interventions used to address absences. Please see Flow Chart for Guidance.

## Appendix A

**Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP):** An Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP) is a tool to help families, students, and schools remain in communication about a student's goals for attendance during the school year. This plan is a working document, shared between school staff, student's family, and attendance officer. The Attendance Intervention Plan will be generated by the school-based attendance team after the student's 6<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence in the current quarter or trimester.

**Buy Back:** 3 hours of supervised time during Saturday School, afterschool or with academic programs such as Apex to buy back one day.

# Appendix B

## Attendance Contract



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

**NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
PAUL RODRIGUES ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
455 COUNTY STREET  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740  
www.newbedfordsschool.org

(508) 997-4511

*"We are committed to developing a community of learners who are academically proficient, demonstrate strong character and exhibit self-confidence."*

**KAREN A. TREADUP**  
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

**ANDREW O'LEARY**  
ASSISTANT  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
FINANCE & OPERATIONS

**HEATHER EMSLEY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
HUMAN CAPITAL SERVICES

**JENNIFER FERLAND**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES & PARTNERSHIPS

**MATTHEW KRAVITZ**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT SERVICES

**SONIA WALMSLEY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & PATHWAYS

### Attendance Improvement Contract

\_\_\_\_\_, in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade at the \_\_\_\_\_ school has been identified as having excessive unexcused absences. The New Bedford Public Schools believe that they will benefit from the directives in this attendance contract. It is agreed, by both student and parent, that the following Attendance Improvement Program directives will be followed.

#### THE STUDENT SHALL:

- Attend school each day school is in session.
- Arrive at school on time each day and remain at school for the full time assigned.
- Abide by all school rules and regulations and maintain appropriate behavior while at school.
- Other:

#### THE PARENT/GUARDIAN(S) SHALL:

Know their legal obligation to ensure the student: a) attends school each day it is in session; b) arrives on time; c) is prepared to learn (i.e. student is clean, fed, and with required homework and classroom materials).

- Attend all meetings and conferences concerning their student.
- Cooperate with school staff by doing the following:
  - Provide updated contact information, including new phone numbers.
  - Provide required documentation and medical verification for any absence.
  - Contact the school by 8:00 am each day the student is going to be absent.
- Initiate/agree to the following referrals for supportive services:
  - Department of Children & Family
  - Youth Court (508-979-1580)
  - CHIPS/TIP Intervention Program
  - Other:

#### THE SCHOOL SHALL:

- Verify the student’s attendance on a daily / weekly / monthly basis (please circle one).
- Review the student and parent’s compliance with the contract directives on \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)
- Refer the family to the appropriate community agency for further action, should these directives not be followed.
- Hold a FACTS Team to discuss available resources and additional interventions.
- Notify Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) / Probation Officer / \_\_\_\_\_ if student’s attendance does not improve within twenty (20) school days.
- Other:

**TO THE STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN(S):**

*We encourage you (the student) to be an active participant in this team effort to assist you in improving your attendance. Our ultimate goal is to see you graduate from school and become a productive and successful adult. We will provide you with the support and resources necessary to attain this goal, as available. Without your cooperation, the only other alternative will be to refer this matter to the Juvenile Court Department.*

**I/We have read and understand the above, and I/We agree to the recommendations stated above.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Attendance Officer / Student Success Team**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



# Appendix B

## Letter of Concern



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & PATHWAYS

### LETTER OF CONCERN

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has a total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused absences.

This letter is being sent to make you aware of these absences. School attendance is an important part of every student's success and is necessary in order to gain the greatest benefit from the student educational experience.

Students who are frequently absent from school miss direct instruction and regular contact with their teachers. Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. Chapter 76) and the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy requires daily attendance. When absences accumulate, it may result in untimely academic difficulties for your child.

In addition, we are reminding you that each absence must be accompanied by a documented excuse. Each documented excuse can be either sent in with the student and/or emailed to your student's teacher. Only eligible excuses will result in an excused absence. If the documented excuse is not received within three (3) days of the absence, then the absence becomes an unexcused absence. This may result in your student repeating their current grade.

Your student's academic success is important to us. Please contact the school by calling \_\_\_\_\_ and letting us know how we can assist you in helping your student improve their attendance. For more information on the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy please visit: [http://www.newbedfordschools.org/parents\\_students/wraparound/attendance](http://www.newbedfordschools.org/parents_students/wraparound/attendance)

Sincerely,

Attendance Officer

Cc: Cumulative Folder; Support Personnel

# Appendix B

## Letter of Warning



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

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### LETTER OF WARNING

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has a total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused absences.

Your child is currently not complying with the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy. If this issue is not addressed, it may result in your student repeating their current grade.

In addition, we are reminding you that each absence must be accompanied by a documented excuse. Each documented excuse can be either sent in with the student and/or emailed to your student's teacher. Only eligible excuses will result in an excused absence. If the documented excuse is not received within three (3) days of the absence, then the absence becomes an unexcused absence or truancy.

To rectify this situation, please contact the school within five (5) days of the date on this letter and speak directly to the Attendance Officer. Our district has additional supports and resources that are available to you and your family to support our shared goal of academic success for you student.

Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ extension \_\_\_\_\_.

For more information on the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy please visit:

[http://www.newbedfordschools.org/parents\\_\\_\\_students/wraparound/attendance](http://www.newbedfordschools.org/parents___students/wraparound/attendance)

Sincerely,

Attendance Officer

Cc: Cumulative Folder; Support Personnel

# Appendix B

## Letter of Critical Status



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

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### **LETTER OF CRITICAL STATUS**

(3<sup>rd</sup> letter of notification)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has a total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused (in-person/virtual) absences.

Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. Chapter 76) and the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy require daily attendance.

Your student has reached CRITICAL STATUS due to their number of unexcused physical and/or virtual absences, which means **they may be retained in their current grade**. To avoid grade retention or the filing of a civil action, specifically a C.R.A, Child Requiring Assistance Truancy petition against your student, you must respond **within five (5) days** of this letter to schedule a meeting with you and your student.

Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ extension \_\_\_\_\_.

We look forward to working with you to improve your student's school attendance. For more information on the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy please visit: [http://www.newbedfordschools.org/parents\\_\\_\\_students/wraparound/attendance](http://www.newbedfordschools.org/parents___students/wraparound/attendance)

Sincerely,

Attendance Specialist

Cc: Cumulative Folder; Support Personnel

# Appendix B

## Letter of Unenrollment



### NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL ADDRESS

SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER

Month Day, Year

Student Name

Address

Address Line 2

Dear Guardian Name,

Your student, Student Name, has been absent from School Name without authorization or documented excuse for the past fifteen (15) consecutive days from **Start of absence to End of absence**. Such extended absences are, unfortunately, often indicative of the intent to permanently withdraw from school. In accordance with M.G.L. c.76 s.18, I am writing to notify you of your right to meet with a New Bedford Public Schools designated representative to discuss your student's educational plans.

New Bedford Public Schools wants to see your student succeed. There are other alternative educational programs available to your student that can provide them with the education they need to be successful. I strongly encourage you to schedule a meeting to discuss your student's situation. If your student is having difficulty at school or there is a serious documented medical condition that inhibits your student's attendance, please let us know as soon as possible.

To schedule a meeting, please contact Name at Contact phone number.

**Please note that if we do not hear from you within the next five (5) business days, your child will be considered to have withdrawn from School Name.**

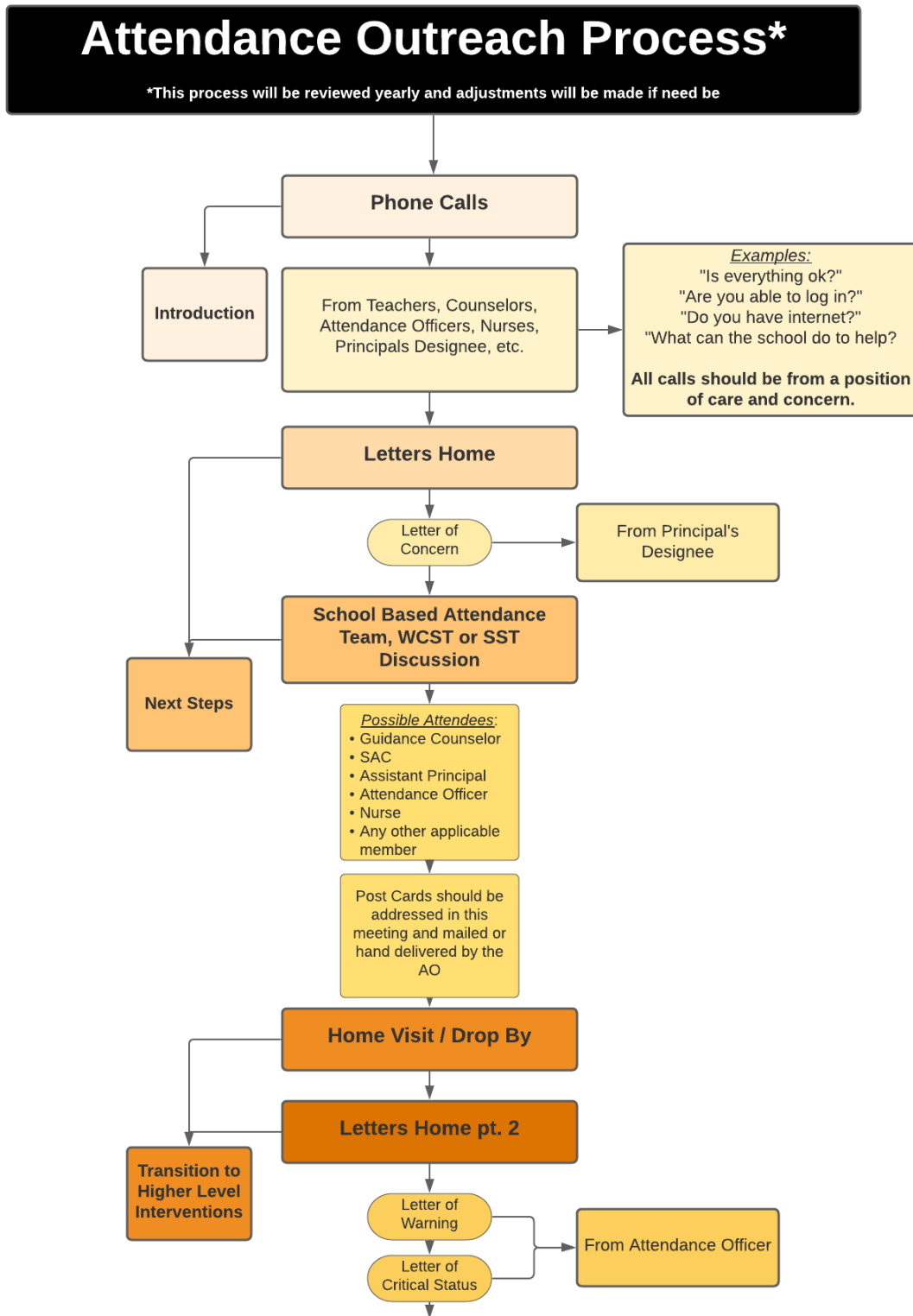
Sincerely,

Name

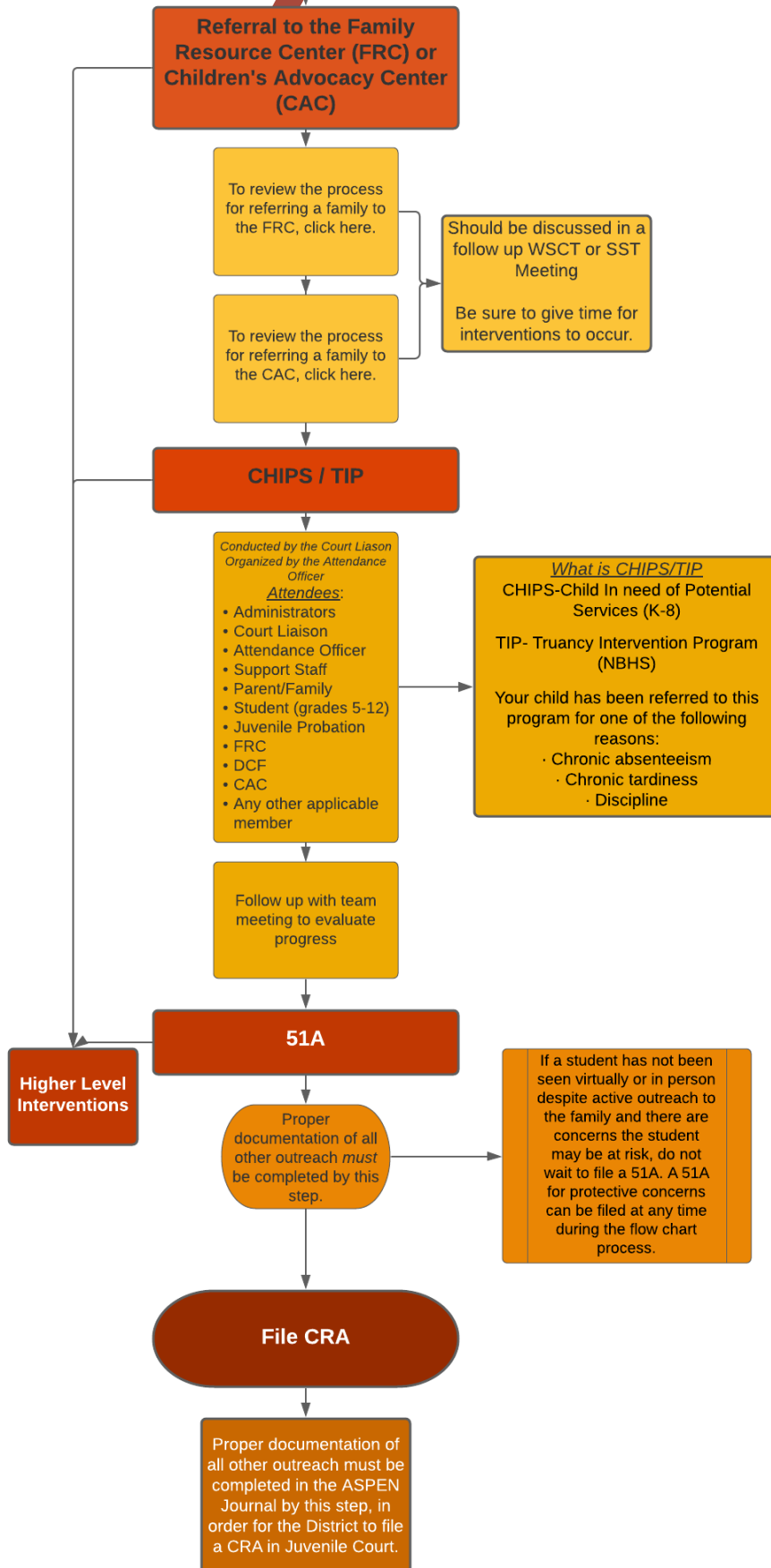
Title

# Appendix B

## Attendance Flow Chart



# Appendix B





# Appendix B

## Attendance Outreach Checklist



### New Bedford Public Schools - Wraparound Services

#### Attendance Outreach Process Checklist

<u>Student Name:</u>	<u>Grade:</u>	<u>DOB:</u>
<b>Step</b>	<b>Completed?</b>	<b>Completed By:</b>
<i>Introduction Step</i>		
Phone Calls Home (From Teachers, Counselors, AOs, Nurses, Principals Designee, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Emails Home (From Teachers, Counselors, AOs, Nurses, Principals Designee, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
School Communication App Outreach (From Teachers, Counselors, AOs, Nurses, Principals Designee, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<i>Next Steps</i>		
Letter of Concern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
School-Based Attendance Team, WCST, or SST discussion – <a href="#">Attendance Intervention Plan to be Developed</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Post Cards Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Post Cards Mailed or Hand Delivered	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<i>Transition to Higher Level Interventions</i>		
Home Visit/Drop By	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Letter of Warning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Letter of Critical Status	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<i>Higher Level Interventions</i>		
Follow up WCST or SST Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Referral to Family Resource Center (FRC), Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) or Family Engagement Center (FEC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
CHIPS/TIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Follow up with Team Meeting to evaluate progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b><i>If all other steps have been completed:</i></b>		
File 51A	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
File CRA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.

**ALL STEPS AND OUTREACH MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN ASPEN**