



# SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education -14 Beekman Terrace- Summit - New Jersey 07901-1702 (908) 273-3023

Mr. Scott Hough, Superintendent of Schools

August 5, 2021

Dear Summit Public Schools Community,

I hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones well. This letter is intended to summarize important changes to the [District's Attendance Policy](#).

## **Background:**

In February of 2021, The State Department of Education released guidance that was intended to better align the language that school districts use to record student attendance at the school level, with the language that districts use to report attendance to the state. This guidance presented a need for policy revision. Summit's administrative team worked to ensure that this information was processed carefully, and on July 22, 2021, the Board of Education adopted the mandatory policy revisions.

## **New for 2021-22:**

There are several notable differences in language that students and parents/guardians will need to understand as it pertains to this policy. These terms will be used regardless of school or level. However, your building principals will communicate additional details that will help you to understand how these terms apply to your student(s). Please review the points summarizing the changes below, as well as the chart on the following page.

- Every time your student is absent from school, it will fall into one of two categories: *CUMULATIVE* or *NON-CUMULATIVE*.
- *NON-CUMULATIVE* absences will not count towards your student's absence total. These absences are **the only** allowable absences per Statute (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3) and the *NJDOE Guidance for Reporting Student Absences and Calculating Chronic Absenteeism*. The five, non-cumulative absences are:
  - Religious Observance
  - College Visit (up to 3 days per year for students in grades 11-12)
  - Take Our Children to Work Day
  - Observance of Veteran's Day
  - The closure of a busing district that prevents a student from having transportation to school.



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- **All other absences** are *CUMULATIVE* absences, and **will count** towards your student's absence total. Cumulative absences are divided into two sub-categories: *VERIFIED* or *UNVERIFIED*.
- A *VERIFIED* absence means that your student is not in school, and the school has been notified of his/her absence. This applies anytime you have notified the school of the absence, such as the student being home sick and/or missing school due to a doctor's appointment. Verified absences may count towards loss of credit (SHS only), or may result in the school district sending a letter to notify you of the number of absences accrued in a given year.
- An *UNVERIFIED* absence means that your student is not in school, and the school has not been notified of his/her absence. This will result in a phone call being made to you in an attempt to verify the absence, and more importantly, to locate the student's whereabouts. In addition to counting towards credit loss (SHS only) and generating a phone call, unverified absences also count towards truancy and/or may result in student discipline (cutting class, for example).

The chart on the next page was created to help as a visual representation of these policy revisions. Please review these important changes, and contact the main office in your respective school if you have any questions.

Be well,

Scott D. Hough  
Superintendent of Schools



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