

## Belmont High School Attendance Policy

### Philosophy

Research shows that few factors within students' and families' control are more closely associated with academic success than school attendance. Students need to be in the classroom to benefit from the teacher's instruction, and from interaction and exchange of ideas with peers. Excessive absences affect the culture of the classroom, where the faculty seeks to build a community of learners. A student's excessive absences or tardiness can lead to incomplete and unsatisfactory work, a reduced capacity to meet curricular standards, and lower course grades.

Parents/guardians are partners with the school and faculty in assuring that students have good attendance and arrive in class on time. Parents determine when an absence should be excused, and should call in those absences prior to the absence or by 2:00 p.m. of the day on which the student is absent. Belmont High School keeps accurate records of student attendance, and will communicate promptly and consistently with parents/guardians regarding attendance issues.

This attendance policy is designed to foster a culture of learning at Belmont High School. This policy:

- Establishes firm expectations that on-time school and class attendance are important in sustaining the learning environment and in meeting individual learning needs.
- Provides significant flexibility to accommodate legitimate absence or lateness with a minimum of administrative procedure.
- Assures the timely flow of information from parents to school, and from school to parents about attendance at school and in class so that both can work to improve a situation before a student's education suffers.
- Clearly defines the responsibilities of students, educators, and parents regarding absences, tardiness, and dismissals.

### Key Points

- Students should be in school every scheduled day.
- Except in the case of excused late arrivals and early dismissals, students must be present in school from 7:35 AM to 2:00 PM, or from 8:00 AM to 2:25 PM to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity offered by the school that day.
- Students are expected to attend every class meeting. Attendance records are maintained on a course-by-course basis, and requirements and consequences apply to each course individually.
- Recognizing that there are legitimate and unavoidable reasons for absence, parents/guardians may call in to the high school to excuse a student's absence. **To excuse an absence, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office at [current] (617) 484-0135 / [new] (617) 993-5999 prior to the end of the school day on which the student is absent. If an absence is not called in by 2:00 p.m., the absence is unexcused.** The parent/guardian must leave a return telephone number, and a reason for the absence. No one except a parent or guardian may excuse an absence for a student.
- Excused absences should be called in as early as possible. After 10:00 AM, the high school will begin calling parents and guardians of all students who are absent from school without a call-in from home.
- Grade penalties will be imposed for unexcused absences.
- All absences for school-sponsored field trips are considered excused.
- When a student comes to class without a pass more than fifteen minutes after formal instruction has begun, s/he is considered absent.
- In extenuating circumstances, a student or his/her parent/guardian may appeal to the administration to resolve attendance issues.

### Excused Absences:

Students are responsible for make-up work associated with excused absences. In addition to their availability during the school day, faculty members will establish a time before or after school when they are available to assist students with make-up work. If students are unable to come at this designated time, it is their own responsibility to arrange a time to collect make-up assignments from their teachers, and to turn them in. If a student is absent, make-up work must be turned in within one week of his/her return. If a student is excused for an extended period, the teacher shall determine an appropriate and reasonable time-frame for make-up work.

Teachers will make reasonable efforts to help students make up missed work, but students, parents and guardians must understand that time lost from class is irretrievable. The more often a student is absent from class, the greater the likelihood that his or her learning and grades may suffer.

BHS will notify parents/guardians when a student has reached three, five, or seven excused absences in a class. When a student reaches five excused absences from a class, the teacher or another member of the staff will call the parents/guardians, and a conference may be arranged. Parent(s)/guardian(s) need not wait until for a call to set up a conference. They are encouraged to contact their child's guidance counselor, teacher(s), and/or administrator regarding concerns about their child's attendance.

### Unexcused Absences:

When in school, students are expected to attend all classes and assigned meetings unless excused by an administrator or the nurse.

- If a student is in school, fails to attend a class, and does not have such an excuse, the absence is unexcused.
- If a student arrives more than 15 minutes late to a class without a pass, the tardy converts to an unexcused absence.
- If a parent fails to call a student in by 2:00 p.m. on the day of an absence, the school will classify the absence as unexcused.

Parents/guardians will be notified each time a student has an unexcused absence. For each of the first two unexcused absences, students will earn zeroes for work due or completed in class, have three percentage points deducted from their quarter average, and be assigned an office detention. **With the third class cut, a student earns a failing grade for the marking period.**

\*SENIORS: Seniors who cut a class during first semester will forfeit the privilege of Open Campus in second semester. During 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, for the first and again for the second unexcused absences, a senior's grade will be reduced by ten percentage points. With a third class cut, the senior will fail for fourth quarter.

### Tardiness:

If a student arrives at class without a pass after formal instruction has commenced, s/he is tardy. Teachers will inform students when they are tardy, and may assign teacher detentions. With the third tardy, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of academic consequences to be imposed for additional tardies. For the fourth and each subsequent tardy, one percentage point will be deducted from the student's quarter average. In addition, for the sixth and subsequent tardies, students will be referred to the office for disciplinary consequences.

### Excused Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals:

- If students have doctors' appointments or other obligations that require them to arrive late at school, the parents/guardians may call prior to the student's arrival at school to excuse the late arrival. Upon arrival at school, students should check in at the attendance office to receive a pass to class.
- Once the school day has begun and a student is in attendance, s/he may be dismissed via a parent/guardian phone call. Early dismissal phone calls must be received prior to the student's departure.

- If the school does not receive timely notification of a late arrival or early dismissal, the student's absence from any classes will be recorded as unexcused.
- If the parent/guardian notifies the school, the student may return to school for a portion of the day after a dismissal. If the returning student will be entering a class late, s/he should check in at the attendance office to receive a pass to class.
- It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the teacher regarding missed work if s/he has missed a class due to a dismissal.