

Overview of Revisions

Priorities:

- Simplify the policy as it is written to enable more adherence to the policy
- Communicate to students and families that attendance in class is important
- Clear delineation of responsibilities
- Enforceable and supported from all sides (family, student, educators, administrators)
- Team approach that is effective in getting students back in class

Removed:

- Excess/repeated language
- “N” Policy

Added/Changed: (These are written in red text in draft 1. They are BLUE in DRAFT 2)

- Guiding Statement to express value of attendance
- Tardy is now up until 1st mod is complete. Cut/Skip is if a student comes in after 1st mod.
- Robocalls and daily attendance email are now in policy
- Re-organized what follow-up should be after absences/tardies
 - Standard communication home after 5 total absences and 10 tardies per quarter per class. These totals include excused absences and tardies and are in addition to the specific follow-up after cuts and unexcused tardies.
 - Student Fails course (with a 50%) after 2 cuts following a meeting with admin, teacher, family, guidance counselor
- When a student is absent unexcused (cut/skip), they can earn back credit up to 80% for missed work.
- There is no expectation for teachers to provide work prior to family vacations/trips. Make-up work can be scheduled with the teacher when the student returns.

Additional Items Needed to Support Policy:

- Audible bells will be used at the beginning and end of every class period (individual lunch bells will not happen). There will be a 7:55am warning bell at the start of the day.
- Form for teachers to submit for AP when a student has cut class
- Assembly to explain new policies to students within first week of school
- Family Meeting to explain new policies to parents/guardians within first week of school

[Attendance Policy - Reorganized Version - DRAFT 2](#)

[Attendance Policy - Reorganized Version - DRAFT 1](#)

[Attendance Policy - Redline Version](#)

Attendance Policy - Reorganized Version - DRAFT 2

Guiding Statement:

As our homepage states, “with a commitment to teaching and learning, the Belmont Public Schools strive to nurture the knowledge, skills, and emotional development of each student in order to create a community of engaged learners who contribute to the common good and are of service to others.” In order to deliver on this goal for every student, the faculty and staff at Belmont High School believe that attendance in class every day is critical. Each student’s attendance is her/her/their commitment to both their own education and the community of learners at Belmont High School. Below, you will find the ways in which staff and faculty hope to partner with students and families to support successful attendance in school.

Attendance Policy Guidelines and Protocols

Students are expected to attend every class meeting unless excused according to procedures described here.

Individual Responsibilities

Student’s Responsibilities

- It is each student’s responsibility to be aware of his/her/their attendance status in class and to make responsible decisions about attending all classes on a regular basis.
- The student should monitor his/her/their own attendance and speak with his/her/their teachers if he/she/they has any questions about attendance records.
- The student must obtain and make-up class work missed due to absences **when appropriate**. It is the student’s responsibility to see his/her/their teachers to obtain missed work. **If the student does not submit missed work by the agreed upon due date, the work will not receive credit.**

Parent/Guardian Information and Responsibilities

- The parent/guardian should monitor his/her/their child’s attendance in each of his/her/their classes **via robocalls when absent and daily attendance emails home**.
- We encourage parents to discuss the importance of good attendance with their children.
- To excuse a student’s absence, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office the night before, or the day of the student’s absence at (617) 993-5999 prior to 2:00 p.m. Messages left after 2:00 p.m. will not be considered, and the student will be marked unexcused for the day. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the assistant principal. **If a student needs to leave school midday due to illness, they must be dismissed from the Nurse’s Office to be considered excused from any remaining classes.**
- When leaving a message on the attendance line, please leave the following information:
 - Student’s name
 - Student’s grade
 - Reason for absence (see below)
 - Return telephone number
- **Phone calls submitted after 2:00 p.m. of the day of the absence will not be accepted.**

Faculty, Staff, and Administration Responsibilities

- Record each student’s attendance in PlusPortals for each class on a daily basis.
- Submit the daily attendance records **by the end of the first mod (27 minutes) in each class**.
- Reconcile all adjustments to a student’s attendance the following day.
- Notify the student, parent, guidance counselor, and assistant principal when a student reaches **cut, absence, or tardy totals as outlined below**.
- Assistant principals will address students whose absences are unexcused or excessive

MA Laws

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, ch. 76, §2, Parents/guardians of children aged six to sixteen are obligated to send their children to school unless otherwise provided by law. Absences are considered excused or unexcused. An absence will be considered excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law, School Committee policy and procedures developed by the Superintendent. All other absences will be considered unexcused.

Definitions

1. **Unexcused tardy**- When a student arrives late to school or class and no phone call or note has been provided, the student receives an unexcused tardy.

2. **Cut/Skip**- When a student misses class and no phone call or note has been provided. The student receives a grade penalty and discipline. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student **cuts/skips**. This is marked in PlusPortals as an "UA" or **Unexcused Absence**. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to:
 - If a student is in school and fails to attend a class
 - If a student arrives at class after 27 minutes (the first mod) is complete OR leaves class for an extended period without a pass.
 - If a parent/guardian fails to call the attendance office by 2:00 p.m. to excuse the student's absence
 - If a leaves school for a dismissal without advanced communication from a parent/guardian or the school nurse.
3. **Excused absence** (called in by parent/guardian) – When a student is absent due to illness, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office the night before or the day of the student's absence at (617)993-5999 prior to 2:00PM. A parent/guardian note is not required for this absence. Phone calls made after a student's absence will not be considered excused. If a student needs to leave school midday due to illness, they must be dismissed from the Nurse's Office to be considered excused from any remaining classes.
4. **Documented excused absence**- When a student is absent due to a special circumstance, the parent/guardian must provide a note to document the absence. Examples of documented excused absences are listed below.

Documented Excused Absences

The following absences are considered documented excused, however documentation must be provided **no later than one day after the absence** and missed work must be made up **within the agreed upon time**:

Reasons-Required Documentation

- Religious holidays - Parent note
- Mandatory court visits - Court documents
- Testing (Special education, etc.) - Evaluator note
- Field Trips/School-sponsored-events - None required
- Extended illness (4 or more consecutive) - Doctor/ Nurse practitioner note can be faxed or brought in
- Family funeral/emergencies - Parent note
- Health professional visits - Doctor/Nurse practitioner note
- College/private school visits (3 maximum) – Parent or College/School note

Routine health professional appointments should be scheduled after school. If this is unavoidable, parents/guardians must notify the main office or submit a note in advance of the appointment.

Attendance Follow-Up:

We believe attendance is a crucial element of a student's ability to invest in their own academic and social development at Belmont High School. As such, students and families will be contacted via phone, email, or letter by a school administrator when a student's total daily absences exceed five (5) per quarter regardless of the nature of the absences. Additionally, students and families will be contacted when a student's total tardy marks in a given class exceed ten (10) per quarter regardless of the nature of the tardy. This communication will serve as an opportunity to put any necessary support in place to ensure the student is able to successfully attend school and be on time.

Cuts/Skips:

- First **cut/skip** in a quarter:
 - o Student will **not receive full credit** for work due or completed in class. Students must reach out to the teacher within 24 hours of a cut class to earn the opportunity to complete missed work for up to 80% credit.
 - o parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator via email or phone call
- Second **cut/skip** in a quarter:
 - o Student will **not receive full credit** for work due or completed in class. Student must reach out to the teacher within 24 hours of a cut class to earn the opportunity to complete missed work for up to 80% credit.
 - o parent will receive notification from the administrator
 - o Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to a meeting with the classroom teacher, assistant principal, and guidance counselor. The athletic director and/or performing arts director will also be invited when applicable to alert relevant coaches/theatre and band leaders of a student's cut. All parties will agree to an attendance contract at this meeting. The assistant principal will send out a

copy of the contract to relevant parties.

- Two (2) cut/skips in a quarter after an attendance contract has been signed:
 - o parent will receive phone call from administrator
 - o student will earn a failing grade (50%) for the quarter
 - o Continued unexcused absences will result in further disciplinary action

Unexcused Tardy:

- First unexcused tardy in a quarter:
 - o Student will not receive full credit for work due or completed in class prior to arrival. Student must reach out to the teacher within 24 hours of the class to earn the opportunity to complete missed work for up to 80% credit.
 - o Teacher may request student to meet outside of class time regarding tardy
 - o parent will receive notification via the daily attendance email home
- Second unexcused tardy in a quarter:
 - o Student will not receive full credit for work due or completed in class prior to arrival. Student must reach out to the teacher within 24 hours of the class to earn the opportunity to complete missed work for up to 80% credit.
 - o parent will receive notification via daily attendance email home
- Third unexcused tardy in a quarter:
 - o Student will not receive full credit for work due or completed in class prior to arrival. Student must reach out to the teacher within 24 hours of the class to earn the opportunity to complete missed work for up to 80% credit.
 - o parent will receive notification via phone call or email home from the teacher
- Fourth unexcused tardy in a quarter:
 - o Student will not receive full credit for work due or completed in class prior to arrival. Student must reach out to the teacher within 24 hours of the class to earn the opportunity to complete missed work for up to 80% credit.
 - o parent will receive notification from the administrator
 - o student will work with assistant principal to establish appropriate consequences and follow-up

Dismissals

Once the school day has commenced and a student is in attendance, he/she/they may be dismissed via a parent/guardian phone call or written note **prior to the dismissal. Notification after the fact will not be excused and will be recorded as an unexcused absence.**

- When a student is dismissed, he/she/they is expected to leave school grounds or wait for his/her/their ride in the main lobby.
- In the event of illness while the student is in school, the student must see and be released by the school nurse for a documented dismissal. The student will wait for his/her/their ride in the nurse's office.
- A dismissal request without good cause (see "Documented Excused Absences") will be denied. A student is not to be dismissed from a class to stay in school and do work for other classes. Any student found on school grounds while dismissed, will be marked unexcused for all missed classes.
- If the student returns to school for a portion of the day, he/she/they must immediately report to the main office for an office pass prior to going to class. When a student misses a class due to a dismissal in which a test/quiz is given, he/she/they will be expected to take the test/quiz later that day, if the teacher is in agreement. The student bears the responsibility of making these arrangements around the convenience of the teacher's schedule.

Incompletes

Students who are absent for an extended period of time due to an illness or hospitalization and are able to make-up the work may receive an Incomplete (I) for the quarter. All work must be made-up within two (2) weeks after the end of the quarter. Teachers must change the Incomplete to a grade within two (2) weeks after the end of the quarter.

Medical Exemption

A doctor or nurse practitioner's note will excuse absences for an ongoing, chronic, or long-term illness (***long-term illness is defined as four (4) or more consecutive days of absence***) provided that the note is written on the doctor's

or nurse practitioner's stationary, showing the name of the student and stating that the student was under his/her/their care for a particular time interval. If the illness impacts the quarterly grade, the student's assistant principal, in consultation with the guidance counselor, will review his/her/their situation and determine if the student will receive an Incomplete (I) for a grade.

Extended Absence

If a student ends up missing more than 45 school days during the school year for medical/mental health reasons the student will only be able to earn a Pass/Fail for the course grade. If a student works with an outside tutor for more than 50% of the school year the course name on the transcript will reflect this.

Skip Days

There are NO sanctioned "skip days" at BHS. Student organized "skip days" undermine the educational process. The school will not accept parental excuses to participate in "skip days". Students involved in a "skip day" will be considered [cut/skip](#).

Standing Early Dismissals

Some students' classes are completed at 2:00 p.m. Parents/guardians may choose to submit a letter requesting a standing dismissal for their student for such days. A standing dismissal letter permits students to leave campus no earlier than 2:00 p.m. If a student with a standing dismissal remains on school grounds after the 2:00 p.m. dismissal, they remain subject to all school rules. The administration retains the right to revoke a standing dismissal. Students' schedules frequently change from first to second semester. Therefore, all requests for standing dismissals must be re-submitted within one week of receiving their schedule.

Standing Late Arrivals

Some students' classes start after 7:35 a.m. Students are allowed to arrive no later than 8:00 a.m. with parent/guardian approval. A letter from the parent/guardian requesting the late arrival must be submitted to the student's assistant principal in advance. Students' schedules frequently change from first to second semester. Therefore, all requests for standing arrivals must be re-submitted within one week of receiving their new schedule.

Truancy

An unexcused absence from school occurs when both parents and the school expect the student to be in attendance. For students under 16 years of age, in addition to school disciplinary action, the truant officer may be involved.

Make-up Work after an Excused Absence

Students are responsible for make-up work associated with excused absences. Students are allowed twice the number of [calendar](#) days they were absent to make up missed work (weekends and vacation days count towards this allowance). In addition to their availability during the school day, faculty members will establish and post times when they are available to assist students with make-up work. If a student is unable to meet with the teacher at the established time, it is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher and establish a mutually agreeable time for assistance with make-up work. If a student is excused for an extended period, the teacher, in consultation with the parent and/or guidance counselor, shall determine an appropriate and reasonable time period for the completion of make-up work. Teachers will make every reasonable effort to help students make up missed work. However, students and parents must understand that time lost from class is irretrievable.

Excused Late Arrivals

If a student has a professional health appointment or other obligation that requires him/her to arrive late to school, the parent/guardian must call the main office **prior** to the student's arrival to school to excuse the late arrival. A student who arrives late must immediately report to the main office for an office pass, prior to going to class. When a student misses a class due to a late arrival in which a test/quiz is given, he/she/they will be expected to take the test/quiz that same day, at the convenience of the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to make these arrangements. It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the teacher regarding missed work if he/she/they has missed a class due to a late arrival.

Field Trips

Students must get prior approval from the teachers whose classes they are missing. If approval is not given and the student participates in the field trip, the student is considered Absent Unexcused from the class.

Extracurricular Activity Participation

To be eligible for participation in any extracurricular activity offered by the school, the student must be in school from 7:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. that day. The student must be in school for the entire day on scheduled half-days and early dismissal Wednesdays. If a student's first class begins at 8:00 a.m. and he/she/they has been approved by his/her/their assistant principal for a late arrival, he/she/they must be in school by 8:00 a.m. If a student's last class of the day ends at 2:00 p.m. and he/she/they has been approved by his/her/their assistant principal for an early dismissal, he/she/they must remain in school until 2:00 p.m. Attendance during the final school day before a weekend or a vacation event will be used to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an extracurricular activity during the weekend or vacation. A student who does not attend school for the entire day prior to a weekend or a vacation will not be allowed to participate in the practice, contest, and/or performance during that weekend or vacation.

Extracurricular Activities = Any interscholastic athletic or school sanctioned activity

College/Private School Interviews and Visits

Students are encouraged to schedule college/private school visits during non-school hours. However, a student will be excused from school for college/private school visits or interviews that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of school time. Students can schedule no more than three (3) college/private school visits or interviews during the school year. Any visits or interviews beyond the allocated three (3) days will be recorded as unexcused absences.

Family Vacations and Trips

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts's law requires attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations while school is in session. Family vacations/personal trips interrupt the educational process. Completion of make-up work does not compensate for the impact of lost instructional time and classroom experience, regardless of the course or course level. For family vacations/personal trips that are planned for a period longer than two (2) days, written notification must be submitted to the [student's assistant principal](#) two (2) weeks in advance. [Teachers are not required to provide make-up work prior to the trip.](#) It is the student's responsibility to initiate a meeting with each of his/her/their teachers to arrange for make-up work [upon returning to school.](#)

Alternative Semester Education Program

Parents/guardians must submit written request to the principal for permission for a student to attend an Alternative Semester Education Program eight (8) weeks in advance of the scheduled program. They must work together with the Belmont High School guidance counselor to see if the Alternative Education Program meets the Belmont High School graduation requirements. In order for a student to enroll in an AP course that year, the student's Alternative Semester Education Program must also offer the same AP course in its entirety. While attending the Alternative Education Program, students must withdraw from Belmont High School. When the student returns from the program, he/she/they will re-enroll and transfer his/her/their credits to Belmont High School.

Teacher Tardiness/Absence from Class

In the event that a teacher does not report to class within 10 minutes of the start of the period, please follow these procedures:

- o Do not assume that the class has been cancelled.
- o One member of the class should report to the department office or main office to confirm that the teacher is absent and that the class is cancelled.
- o If the teacher is absent and work has been assigned, students are responsible for the assigned work.

**** Belmont High School's Attendance Policy adheres to the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1 and conditions under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37H****

Attendance Policy - Reorganized Version - DRAFT 1

Guiding Statement:

As our homepage states, “with a commitment to teaching and learning, the Belmont Public Schools strive to nurture the knowledge, skills, and emotional development of each student in order to create a community of engaged learners who contribute to the common good and are of service to others.” In order to deliver on this goal for every student, the faculty and staff at Belmont High School believe that attendance in class every day is critical. Each student’s attendance is her/her/their commitment to both their own education and the community of learners at Belmont High School. Below, you will find the ways in which staff and faculty hope to partner with students and families to support successful attendance in school.

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Definitions

5. **Unexcused tardy**- When a student arrives late to school or class and no phone call or note has been provided, the student receives an unexcused tardy.
6. **Unexcused absence**- When a student misses class and no phone call or note has been provided. The student receives a grade penalty and discipline. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student receives an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to:
 - If a student is in school and fails to attend a class
 - **If a student arrives at class after 27 minutes (the first mod) is complete.**
 - If a parent/guardian fails to call the attendance office by 2:00 p.m. to excuse the student’s absence
 - **If a leaves school for a dismissal without advanced communication from a parent/guardian or the school nurse.**
7. **Excused absence** (called in by parent/guardian) – When a student is absent due to illness, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office the night before or the day of the student’s absence at (617)993-5999 prior to 2:00PM. A parent/guardian note is not required for this absence. **Phone calls made after a student’s absence will not be considered excused. If a student needs to leave school midday due to illness, they must be dismissed from the Nurse’s Office to be considered excused from any remaining classes.**
8. **Documented excused absence**- When a student is absent due to a special circumstance, the parent/guardian must provide a note to document the absence. Examples of documented excused absences are listed below.

Documented Excused absences

The following absences are considered documented excused, however documentation must be provided **no later than one day after the absence** and missed work must be made up **within the agreed upon time**:

Reasons-Required Documentation

- Religious holidays - Parent note
- Mandatory court visits - Court documents
- Testing (Special education, etc.) - Evaluator note
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Attendance Policy Guidelines and Protocols

Students are expected to attend every class meeting unless excused according to procedures described here.

Individual Responsibilities

Student's Responsibilities

- It is each student's responsibility to be aware of his/her/their attendance status in class and to make responsible decisions about attending all classes on a regular basis.
- The student should monitor his/her/their own attendance and speak with his/her/their teachers if he/she/they has any questions about attendance records.
- The student must obtain and make-up class work missed due to absences **when the absence was excused**. It is the student's responsibility to see his/her/their teachers to obtain missed work. **If the student does not submit missed work by the agreed upon due date, the work will not receive credit.**

Parent/Guardian Information and Responsibilities

- The parent/guardian should monitor his/her/their child's attendance in each of his/her/their classes **via robocalls when absent and daily attendance emails home.**
- We encourage parents to discuss the importance of good attendance with their children.
- To excuse a student's absence, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office the night before, or the day of the student's absence at (617) 993-5999 prior to the start of school 2:00 p.m. Messages left after 2:00 p.m. will not be considered, and the student will be marked unexcused for the day. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the assistant principal. **If a student needs to leave school midday due to illness, they must be dismissed from the Nurse's Office to be considered excused from any remaining classes.**
- When leaving a message on the attendance line, please leave the following information:
 - Student's name
 - Student's grade
 - Reason for absence (see below)
 - Return telephone number
- **Phone calls submitted after 2:00 p.m. of the day of the absence will not be accepted.**

Faculty, Staff, and Administration Responsibilities

- Record each student's attendance in PlusPortals for each class on a daily basis.
- Submit the daily attendance records **by the end of the first mod (27 minutes) in each class.**
- Reconcile all adjustments to a student's attendance the following day.
- Notify the student, parent, guidance counselor, and assistant principal when a student reaches one (1) unexcused absence and/or three (3) unexcused tardies, **as outlined below.**
- Assistant principals will address students whose absences are unexcused or excessive

Attendance Follow-Up:

We believe attendance is a crucial element of a student's ability to invest in their own academic and social development at Belmont High School. As such, students and families will be contacted via phone, email, or letter by a school administrator when a student's total daily absences exceed seven (7) per quarter regardless of the nature of the absences. This communication will serve as an opportunity to put any necessary support in place to ensure the student is able to successfully attend school.

Unexcused Absences:

- First unexcused absence in a term:
 - student will **not receive credit** for work due or completed in class
 - parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator
- Second unexcused absence in a term:
 - student will **not receive credit** for work due or completed in class
 - parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator
 - **Student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to a meeting with the classroom teacher, assistant principal, and guidance counselor.**
- Third unexcused absence in a term:
 - student will **not receive credit** for work due or completed in class
 - parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator

- o student will earn a failing grade for the term
- o **Continued unexcused absences will result in disciplinary action**

Unexcused Tardy:

- First unexcused tardy in a term:
 - o student will **not receive credit** for work due or completed in class prior to their arrival
 - o Teacher may request student to meet outside of class time regarding tardy
 - o **parent will receive notification via the daily attendance email home**
- Second unexcused tardy in a term:
 - o student will **not receive credit** for work due or completed in class prior to their arrival
 - o **parent will receive notification from the teacher either via phone or email**
- Third unexcused tardy in a term:
 - o student will **not receive credit** for work due or completed in class prior to their arrival
 - o **parent will receive notification from the administrator**
 - o **student will work with assistant principal to establish appropriate consequences and follow-up**

Dismissals

Once the school day has commenced and a student is in attendance, he/she may be dismissed via a parent/guardian phone call or written note **prior to the dismissal. Notification after the fact will not be excused and will be recorded as an unexcused absence.**

- When a student is dismissed, he/she is expected to leave school grounds or wait for his/her/their ride in the main lobby.
- In the event of illness while the student is in school, the student must see and be released by the school nurse for a documented dismissal. The student will wait for his/her/their ride in the nurse's office.
- A dismissal request without good cause (see "Documented Excused Absences") will be denied. A student is not to be dismissed from a class to stay in school and do work for other classes. Any student found on school grounds while dismissed, will be marked unexcused for all missed classes.
- If the student returns to school for a portion of the day, he/she must immediately report to the main office for an office pass prior to going to class. When a student misses a class due to a dismissal in which a test/quiz is given, he/she will be expected to take the test/quiz later that day, if the teacher is in agreement. The student bears the responsibility of making these arrangements around the convenience of the teacher's schedule.

Incompletes

Students who are absent for an extended period of time due to an illness or hospitalization and are able to make-up the work may receive an Incomplete (I) for the term. All work must be made-up within two (2) weeks after the end of the quarter. Teachers must change the Incomplete to a grade within two (2) weeks after the end of the quarter.

Medical Exemption

A doctor or nurse practitioner's note will excuse absences for an ongoing, chronic, or long-term illness (***long-term illness is defined as four (4) or more consecutive days of absence***) provided that the note is written on the doctor's or nurse practitioner's stationary, showing the name of the student and stating that the student was under his/her/their care for a particular time interval. If the illness impacts the quarterly grade, the student's assistant principal, in consultation with the guidance counselor, will review his/her/their situation and determine if the student will receive an Incomplete (I) for a grade.

Extended Absence

If a student ends up missing more than 45 school days during the school year for medical/mental health reasons the student will only be able to earn a Pass/Fail for the course grade. If a student works with an outside tutor for more than 50% of the school year the course name on the transcript will reflect this.

Skip Days

There are NO sanctioned "skip days" at BHS. Student organized "skip days" undermine the educational process. The school will not accept parental excuses to participate in "skip days". Students involved in a "skip day" will be considered absent unexcused.

Standing Early Dismissals

Some students' classes are completed at 2:00 p.m. Parents/guardians may choose to submit a letter requesting a standing dismissal for their student for such days. A standing dismissal letter permits students to leave campus no earlier than 2:00 p.m. If a student with a standing dismissal remains on school grounds after the 2:00 p.m. dismissal, they remain subject to all school rules. The administration retains the right to revoke a standing dismissal. Students' schedules frequently change from first to second semester. Therefore, all requests for standing dismissals must be re-submitted within one week of receiving their schedule.

Standing Late Arrivals

Some students' classes start after 7:35 a.m. Students are allowed to arrive no later than 8:00 a.m. with parent/guardian approval. A letter from the parent/guardian requesting the late arrival must be submitted to the student's assistant principal in advance. Students' schedules frequently change from first to second semester. Therefore, all requests for standing arrivals must be re-submitted within one week of receiving their new schedule.

Truancy

An unexcused absence from school occurs when both parents and the school expect the student to be in attendance. For students under 16 years of age, in addition to school disciplinary action, the truant officer may be involved.

Make-up Work after an Excused Absence

Students are responsible for make-up work associated with excused absences. Students are allowed twice the number of days they were absent to make up missed work (weekends and vacation days count towards this allowance). In addition to their availability during the school day, faculty members will establish and post times when they are available to assist students with make-up work. If a student is unable to meet with the teacher at the established time, it is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher and establish a mutually agreeable time for assistance with make-up work. If a student is excused for an extended period, the teacher, in consultation with the parent and/or guidance counselor, shall determine an appropriate and reasonable time period for the completion of make-up work. Teachers will make every reasonable effort to help students make up missed work. However, students and parents must understand that time lost from class is irretrievable.

Excused Late Arrivals

If a student has a professional health appointment or other obligation that requires him/her to arrive late to school, the parent/guardian must call the main office **prior** to the student's arrival to school to excuse the late arrival. A student who arrives late must immediately report to the main office for an office pass, prior to going to class. When a student misses a class due to a late arrival in which a test/quiz is given, he/she will be expected to take the test/quiz that same day, at the convenience of the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to make these arrangements. It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the teacher regarding missed work if he/she has missed a class due to a late arrival.

Field Trips

Students must get prior approval from the teachers whose classes they are missing. If approval is not given and the student participates in the field trip, the student is considered Absent Unexcused from the class.

Extracurricular Activity Participation

To be eligible for participation in any extracurricular activity offered by the school, the student must be in school from 7:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. that day. The student must be in school for the entire day on scheduled half-days and early dismissal Wednesdays. If a student's first class begins at 8:00 a.m. and he/she has been approved by his/her/their assistant principal for a late arrival, he/she must be in school by 8:00 a.m. If a student's last class of the day ends at 2:00 p.m. and he/she has been approved by his/her/their assistant principal for an early dismissal, he/she must remain in school until 2:00 p.m. Attendance during the final school day before a weekend or a vacation event will be used to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an extracurricular activity during the weekend or vacation. A student who does not attend school for the entire day prior to a weekend or a vacation will not be allowed to participate in the practice, contest, and/or performance during that weekend or vacation.

Extracurricular Activities = Any interscholastic athletic or school sanctioned activity

College/Private School Interviews and Visits

Students are encouraged to schedule college/private school visits during non-school hours. However, a student will be excused from school for college/private school visits or interviews that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of school time. Students can schedule no more than three (3) college/private school visits or interviews during the school year. Any visits or interviews beyond the allocated three (3) days will be recorded as unexcused absences.

Family Vacations and Trips

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts's law requires attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations while school is in session. Family vacations/personal trips interrupt the educational process. Completion of make-up work does not compensate for the impact of lost instructional time and classroom experience, regardless of the course or course level. For family vacations/personal trips that are planned for a period longer than two (2) days, written notification must be submitted to the principal two (2) weeks in advance in order to afford students the opportunity to obtain make-up work from their teachers. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a meeting with each of his/her/their teachers to arrange for make-up work. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work, unless the two-week notification of the trip has been given. Days missed due to family vacations/personal trips are considered undocumented excused absences.

Alternative Semester Education Program

Parents/guardians must submit written request to the principal for permission for a student to attend an Alternative Semester Education Program eight (8) weeks in advance of the scheduled program. They must work together with the Belmont High School guidance counselor to see if the Alternative Education Program meets the Belmont High School graduation requirements. In order for a student to enroll in an AP course that year, the student's Alternative Semester Education Program must also offer the same AP course in its entirety. While attending the Alternative Education Program, students must withdraw from Belmont High School. When the student returns from the program, he/she will re-enroll and transfer his/her/their credits to Belmont High School.

Teacher Tardiness/Absence from Class

In the event that a teacher does not report to class within 10 minutes of the start of the period, please follow these procedures:

- o Do not assume that the class has been cancelled.
- o One member of the class should report to the department office or main office to confirm that the teacher is absent and that the class is cancelled.
- o If the teacher is absent and work has been assigned, students are responsible for the assigned work.

**** Belmont High School's Attendance Policy adheres to the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 1 and conditions under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37H****

Attendance Policy - Redline Version

Guiding Statement:

As our homepage will tell you, with a commitment to teaching and learning, the Belmont Public Schools strive to nurture the knowledge, skills, and emotional development of each student in order to create a community of engaged learners who contribute to the common good and are of service to others. In order to deliver on this goal for every student, the faculty and staff at Belmont High School believe that attendance in class every day is critical. Each student's attendance is her/her/their commitment to both their own education and the community of learners at Belmont High School. Below, you will find the ways in which staff and faculty hope to partner with students and families to support successful attendance in school.

MA Laws

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, ch. 76, §2, Parents/guardians of children aged six to sixteen are obligated to send their children to school unless otherwise provided by law. Absences are considered excused or unexcused. An absence will be considered excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law, School Committee policy and procedures developed by the Superintendent. All other absences will be considered unexcused.

Student Absence Notification Program

~~At the commencement of each school year, parents/guardians will be sent a notice instructing them to call a designated telephone number at a designated time to inform the school of the student's absence and the reason for such absence. The notice will also require such parent or guardian to furnish the school with a home, work or other emergency telephone number where they can be contacted during the school day. If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time, then the school shall call the telephone number or numbers furnished to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the Parent(s) or Guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.~~

~~Parent(s) or Guardians will also be notified when a student who has at least five days in which the student has missed two or more classes/periods (unexcused) or who has five or more unexcused absences in the school year and a meeting will be scheduled with the building Principal (or his/her designee), the Parent(s)/Guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.~~

~~Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact school staff and work collaboratively with them to correct the reasons that the student is missing school.~~

Key Points

- Students should be in school every scheduled day from 8:00 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.
- To be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity offered by the school, students must be in school from 8:00 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. on the day of the activity. Attendance on the final school day before a weekend or school vacation will be used to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an extracurricular activity during the weekend or vacation. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the assistant principal.
- Students are expected to attend every class meeting; attendance records are maintained on a course-by-course basis.
- ~~Students are only allowed 5 excused absences per class per quarter. See list of documented absences (which do not count toward the cap of 5 excused absences) below.~~
- The parent/guardian must leave a return telephone number, and a reason for the absence. Only the student's parent/guardian may excuse an absence.
- Grade penalties will be imposed for unexcused absences.
- ~~All absences due to school-sponsored field trips are considered excused.~~
- ~~When a student arrives to class without a pass and is tardy more than the first mod fifteen (15) minutes after formal instruction has commenced, he/she is considered absent unexcused. The student should still go to class to receive credit for the work done in the portion of the class he/she attended.~~
- ~~In extenuating circumstances, a student may appeal absence-related consequences to the Attendance~~

Review Panel to resolve attendance issues:

- Appeals must be in writing to the student's assistant principal within one (1) week of the incident. Appeals submitted after this time will not be accepted. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the assistant principal.

Definitions

9. **Unexcused tardy**- When a student arrives late to school or class and no phone call or note has been provided, the student receives an unexcused tardy. ~~If the student receives 4 or more unexcused tardies in one quarter, the student receives a grade penalty. Parents or guardians will be notified by teacher and/or assistant principal by phone or email when a student receives 3 or more unexcused tardies.~~
10. **Unexcused absence**- When a student misses class and no phone call or note has been provided. The student receives a grade penalty and discipline. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student receives an unexcused absence.
11. **Excused absence** (called in by parent/guardian) – When a student is absent due to illness, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office the night before or the day of the student's absence at (617)993-5999 prior to 2:00PM. A parent/guardian note is not required for this absence. ~~Students are allowed a maximum of 5 called in or excused absences per quarter.~~ **Phone calls made after a student's absence will not be considered excused. If student needs to leave school midday due to illness, they must be dismissed from the Nurse's Office to be considered excused from any remaining classes.**
12. **Documented excused absence**- When a student is absent due to a special circumstance, the parent/guardian must provide a note to document the absence. Examples of documented excused absences are listed below. ~~Documented excused absences do not count toward the maximum of 5 absences per quarter.~~

Documented Excused absences

The following absences are considered documented excused ~~and do not count towards the maximum five (5) allowed absences~~; however documentation must be provided and missed work must be made up:

Reasons-Required Documentation

- Religious holidays - Parent note
- Mandatory court visits - Court documents
- Testing (Special education, etc.) - Evaluator note
- Field Trips/School-sponsored-events - None required
- Extended illness (4 or more consecutive) - Doctor/ Nurse practitioner note can be faxed or brought in
- Family funeral/emergencies - Parent note
- Health professional visits - Doctor/Nurse practitioner note
- College/private school visits (3 maximum) – Parent or College/School note

All documentation notes must be brought in no later than one day after the absence.

Routine health professional appointments should be scheduled after school. If this is unavoidable, parents/guardians must notify the main office or submit a note in advance of the appointment. Notification after the fact will not be excused.

Attendance Policy Guidelines and Protocols

Students are expected to attend every class meeting unless excused according to procedures described here. ~~Six (6) or more absences in a quarter will result in grade reductions and potential failure of a course or courses.~~

Individual Responsibilities

Student's Responsibilities

- It is each student's responsibility to be aware of his/her attendance status in class, to make responsible decisions about attending all classes on a regular basis, ~~and to miss no more than five (5) classes during a quarter.~~
- The student should monitor his/her own attendance and speak with his/her teachers if he/she has any questions about attendance records.

- The student must obtain and make-up class work missed due to absences **when the absence was excused**. It is the student's responsibility to see his/her teachers to obtain missed work. **If the student does not submit missed work by the agreed upon due date, the work will not receive credit.**

Parent/Guardian Information and Responsibilities

- The parent/guardian should monitor his/her son's/daughter's attendance in each of his/her classes.
- We encourage parents to discuss the importance of good attendance with their children.
- To excuse a student's absence, the parent/guardian must call the high school attendance office the night before, or the day of the student's absence at (617) 993-5999 prior to the start of school 2:00 p.m. Messages left after 2:00 p.m. will not be considered, and the student will be marked unexcused for the day. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the assistant principal. **If a student needs to leave school midday due to illness, they must be dismissed from the Nurse's Office to be considered excused from any remaining classes.**
- When leaving a message on the attendance line, please leave the following information:
 - o Student's name
 - o Student's grade
 - o Reason for absence (see below)
 - o Return telephone number
- **Phone calls submitted after 2:00 p.m. of the day of the absence will not be accepted.**

Faculty, Staff, and Administration Responsibilities

- Record each student's attendance in ~~Grade Quick~~ **PlusPortals** for each class on a daily basis.
- Submit the daily attendance records by ~~2:45PM each day~~. **The end of the first mod (27 minutes)**
- Reconcile all adjustments to a student's attendance the following day.
- Notify the student, parent, guidance counselor, and assistant principal when a student reaches ~~three (3) undocumented excused absences~~, one (1) unexcused absence, and/or three (3) unexcused tardies.
- Assistant principals will address students whose absences are unexcused or excessive

Grade Reduction and Buy Back Program

The letter grade of **N** in a particular course indicates a student has not met the school's attendance expectations. An **N** reflects an academic grade of 50% due to a lack of attendance. Students are afforded the opportunity to recover a grade of **N** with the students' earned grade. The policy and procedure is listed below:

Semester Courses

(2 quarters Grade Reduction and Buyback)

- ~~Grade Reduction~~
 - o ~~A student with six (6) or more undocumented excused and/or unexcused absences in the first quarter of a semester course (half year) will receive an N for a grade. As a result, the original grade earned (60% or higher) is replaced with a 50%. The comment of "Failure due to attendance" will be noted on the student's report card. Grades earned below 50% will not be replaced with an N but will be recorded according to what the student has earned.~~
- ~~Grade Buyback~~
 - o ~~A student who earns an N in the first quarter can pass a semester course if he/she meets the attendance expectations in the following quarter and has no discipline concerns. If the student meets the discipline and attendance expectations in the following quarter, his/her grade of N (50) will be replaced by the student's original grade earned. Both earned grades are then calculated to determine a final grade.~~
 - o ~~If a student does not meet the attendance expectation in the second quarter, the grade of N (50) is not replaced and is used to determine a final grade for the course.~~
 - o ~~There is no buy back option for the fourth quarter, therefore if a student does not meet the required attendance expectations the student would receive an "F" (50%) for quarter 4.~~

Full-year courses

(4 quarters Grade Reduction and Buyback)

- ~~Grade Reduction~~
 - o ~~A student with six (6) or more undocumented excused and/or unexcused absences in a single quarter of a year-long course will receive an N for a grade. As a result, the original grade earned~~

(60% or higher) is replaced with a 59%. The comment of "Failure due to attendance" will be noted on the student's report card. Grades earned below 50% will not be replaced with an N but will be recorded according to what the student has earned:

- A student cannot exceed two (2) quarters earning an N for a grade. If the student does exceed the limit, they will then receive a failing grade for the year. Required courses would need to be repeated in the following school year.
- **Grade Buyback**
 - A student who earns an N for a single quarter in a year-long course can pass for the quarter if he/she meets the discipline and attendance expectations in the following quarter. The N is then replaced by the original grade earned by the student and used when calculating the final grade for the course.
 - During quarter 4 there is no buyback option, therefore if a student does not meet the required attendance expectations the student would receive an "F" (50%) for quarter 4.

~~*** Students will not be allowed to change or drop classes to avoid the consequences of poor attendance. Those who do change classes for legitimate reasons will have their attendance record follow them to the similar class. ***~~

Incompletes

Students who are absent for an extended period of time due to an illness or hospitalization and are able to make-up the work may receive an Incomplete (I) for the term. All work must be made-up within two (2) weeks after the end of the quarter. Teachers must change the Incomplete to a grade within two (2) weeks after the end of the quarter.

Medical Exemption

A doctor or nurse practitioner's note will excuse absences for an ongoing, chronic, or long-term illness (***long-term illness is defined as four (4) or more consecutive days of absence***) provided that the note is written on the doctor's or nurse practitioner's stationary, showing the name of the student and stating that the student was under his/her care for a particular time interval. If the illness impacts the quarterly grade, the student's assistant principal, in consultation with the guidance counselor, will review his/her situation and determine if the student will receive an Incomplete (I) for a grade.

Extended Absence

If a student ends up missing more than 45 school days during the school year for medical/mental health reasons the student will only be able to earn a Pass/Fail for the course grade.

If a student works with an outside tutor for more than 50% of the school year the course name on the transcript will reflect this.

Skip Days

There are NO sanctioned "skip days" at BHS. Student organized "skip days" undermine the educational process. The school will not accept parental excuses to participate in "skip days". Students involved in a "skip day" will be considered absent unexcused.

Dismissals

Once the school day has commenced and a student is in attendance, he/she may be dismissed via a parent/guardian phone call or written note **prior to the dismissal!** Notification after the fact will not be excused and will be recorded as an unexcused absence. When a student is dismissed, he/she is expected to leave school grounds and wait for his/her ride in the main lobby. In the event of illness while the student is in school, the student must see and be released by the school nurse for a documented dismissal. The student will wait for his/her ride in the nurse's office. A dismissal request without good cause (see "Documented Excused Absences") will be denied. A student is not to be dismissed from a class to stay in school and do work for other classes. Any student found on school grounds while dismissed, will be marked unexcused for all missed classes.

If the student returns to school for a portion of the day, he/she must immediately report to the main office for an office pass prior to going to class. When a student misses a class due to a dismissal in which a test/quiz is given, he/she will be expected to take the test/quiz later that day, if the teacher is in agreement. The student bears the responsibility of making these arrangements around the convenience of the teacher's schedule.

Standing Early Dismissals

Some students' classes are completed at 2:00 p.m. Parents/guardians may choose to submit a letter requesting a standing dismissal for their student for such days. A standing dismissal letter permits students to leave campus no earlier than 2:00 p.m. If a student with a standing dismissal remains on school grounds after the 2:00 p.m. dismissal, they remain subject to all school rules. The administration retains the right to revoke a standing dismissal.

Students' schedules frequently change from first to second semester. Therefore, all requests for standing dismissals must be re-submitted within one week of receiving their schedule.

Standing Late Arrivals

Some students' classes start after 7:35 a.m. Students are allowed to arrive no later than 8:00 a.m. with parent/guardian approval. A letter from the parent/guardian requesting the late arrival must be submitted to the student's assistant principal in advance.

Students' schedules frequently change from first to second semester. Therefore, all requests for standing arrivals must be re-submitted within one week of receiving their new schedule.

Unexcused Absences

When in school, students are expected to attend all classes unless excused by an administrator or the nurse. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to:

- If a student is in school and fails to attend a class
- ~~If a student arrives more than 15 minutes late to a class without a pass~~ **If a student arrives to class after the first mod is complete.**
- If a parent/guardian fails to call the attendance office by 2:00 p.m. to excuse the student's absence
- **If a leaves school for a dismissal without advanced communication from a parent/guardian or the school nurse.**

- First unexcused absence in a term:

- o student will receive zeroes for work due or completed in class
- o ~~student will be assigned one (1) administrative detention~~
- o parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator

- Second unexcused absence in a term:

- o student will receive zeroes for work due or completed in class
- o ~~student will be assigned two (2) administrative detentions~~
- o parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator
- o **Student and parent will be invited to a meeting with the classroom teacher, assistant principal, and guidance counselor.**
- o ~~student will have three (3) percentage points deducted from their quarter average~~

- Third unexcused absence in a term:

- o student will receive zeroes for work due or completed in class
- o ~~student will be assigned no less than three (3) administrative detentions or suspended from school~~
- o parent will receive notification from the teacher and administrator
- o student will earn a failing grade for the term

****A student can only receive a failing grade if the above protocol is followed****

Truancy

An unexcused absence from school occurs when both parents and the school expect the student to be in attendance. For students under 16 years of age, in addition to school disciplinary action, the truant officer may be involved.

Make-up Work after an Excused Absence

Students are responsible for make-up work associated with excused absences. Students are allowed twice the number of days they were absent to make up missed work (weekends and vacation days count towards this allowance). In addition to their availability during the school day, faculty members will establish and post times when they are available to assist students with make-up work. If a student is unable to meet with the teacher at the established time, it is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher and establish a mutually agreeable time for assistance with make-up work. If a student is excused for an extended period, the teacher, in consultation with the parent and/or guidance counselor, shall determine an appropriate and reasonable time period for the completion of make-up work. Teachers will make every reasonable effort to help students make up missed work. However, students and parents must understand that time lost from class is irretrievable.

Excused Late Arrivals

If a student has a professional health appointment or other obligation that requires him/her to arrive late to school, the parent/guardian must call the main office **prior** to the student's arrival to school to excuse the late arrival. A student who arrives late must immediately report to the main office for an office pass, prior to going to class. When a student misses a class due to a late arrival in which a test/quiz is given, he/she will be expected to take the test/quiz that same day, at the convenience of the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to make these arrangements. It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the teacher regarding missed work if he/she has missed a class due to a late arrival.

Tardy to Class

If a student arrives to class without a pass after formal instruction has commenced, he/she is considered tardy. Students should still go to class even if they do not have a pass. Students will receive credit for the work done in the portion of the class during which they are present. Teachers will inform students when they are tardy, and may assign teacher consequences ~~detentions. With the third (3) tardy, parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be notified of academic consequences to be imposed for additional tardies. For the fourth (4) and each subsequent tardy, one (1) percentage point will be deducted from the student's quarter average and the student will be referred to his/her assistant principal for disciplinary consequences.~~ **After a third (3) tardy in a quarter, the student will be referred to his/her assistant principal for disciplinary consequences.**

When a student arrives to class without a pass and is tardy for more than ~~fifteen (15) minutes~~ **the first mod** after formal instruction has commenced, he/she is considered absent- unexcused. The student should still go to class to receive credit for the work done in the portion of the class he/she attended.

When a student arrives late to class with a pass, then he/she will be considered excused for the tardy.

Field Trips

Students must get prior approval from the teachers whose classes they are missing. If approval is not given and the student participates in the field trip, the student is considered Absent Unexcused from the class.

Extracurricular Activity Participation

To be eligible for participation in any extracurricular activity offered by the school, the student must be in school from 7:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. that day. The student must be in school for the entire day on scheduled half-days and early dismissal Wednesdays. If a student's first class begins at 8:00 a.m. and he/she has been approved by his/her assistant principal for a late arrival, he/she must be in school by 8:00 a.m. If a student's last class of the day ends at 2:00 p.m. and he/she has been approved by his/her assistant principal for an early dismissal, he/she must remain in school until 2:00 p.m. Attendance during the final school day before a weekend or a vacation event will be used to determine a student's eligibility to participate in an extracurricular activity during the weekend or vacation. A student who does not attend school for the entire day prior to a weekend or a vacation will not be allowed to participate in the practice, contest, and/or performance during that weekend or vacation.

Extracurricular Activities = Any interscholastic athletic or school sanctioned activity

College/Private School Interviews and Visits

Students are encouraged to schedule college/private school visits during non-school hours. However, a student will be excused from school for college/private school visits or interviews that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of school time. Students can schedule no more than three (3) college/private school visits or interviews during the school year. Any visits or interviews beyond the allocated three (3) days will be recorded as unexcused absences.

Family Vacations and Trips

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts's law requires attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations while school is in session. Family vacations/personal trips interrupt the educational process. Completion of make-up work does not compensate for the impact of lost instructional time and classroom experience, regardless of the course or course level. For family vacations/personal trips that are planned for a period longer than two (2) days, written notification must be submitted to the principal two (2) weeks in advance in order to afford students the opportunity to obtain make-up work from their teachers. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a meeting with each of his/her teachers to arrange for make-up work. Teachers are not required to provide make-up work, unless the two-week notification of the trip has been given. Days missed due to family vacations/personal trips are considered undocumented excused absences.

Alternative Semester Education Program

Parents/guardians must submit written request to the principal for permission for a student to attend an Alternative Semester Education Program eight (8) weeks in advance of the scheduled program. They must work together with the Belmont High School guidance counselor to see if the Alternative Education Program meets the Belmont High School graduation requirements. In order for a student to enroll in an AP course that year, the student's Alternative Semester Education Program must also offer the same AP course in its entirety. While attending the Alternative Education Program, students must withdraw from Belmont High School. When the student returns from the program, he/she will re-enroll and transfer his/her credits to Belmont High School.

Teacher Tardiness/Absence from Class

In the event that a teacher does not report to class within 10 minutes of the start of the period, please follow these procedures:

- o Do not assume that the class has been cancelled.
- o One member of the class should report to the department office or main office to confirm that the teacher is absent and that the class is cancelled.
- o If the teacher is absent and work has been assigned, students are responsible for the assigned work.

Appeal Process for Attendance

~~The attendance policy described above holds students, parents, teachers, and the school accountable for attendance. It is not the intent of this policy to be unreasonably punitive towards students for unusual or extenuating circumstances. If a student has displayed expected responsibility for his/her attendance, but has nonetheless exceeded the allowable number of absences due to circumstances beyond his/her control, the situation should be brought to the attention of the Belmont High School administration. The procedure for appeals process is as follows:~~

- ~~o Student must complete the written appeal form which can be obtained from the main office.~~
- ~~o An appeal may be initiated by a written request from the student who has exceeded the limitations as defined in the Belmont High School Student Handbook. The appeal must include the extenuating circumstances which warrant such an appeal, and should be addressed to the student's Assistant Principal. This appeal must be initiated within five (5) school days of the student being notified of his/her failure to comply with the attendance policy.~~
- ~~o In most instances, once the appeal form has been submitted to the student's Assistant Principal, he/she will meet with the Attendance Review Panel the following week. The Assistant Principal will then confirm the Hearing time and place and notify the student.~~
- ~~o The Attendance Review Panel will consider the following:~~
 - ~~• Information presented by the student~~
 - ~~• The overall student attendance record~~
 - ~~• Other relevant documentation, e.g. grades, progress reports~~
- ~~o The Attendance Review Panel shall meet with the student to review the appeal and render a decision. Said decisions shall be made within five (5) days. Copy of the decision shall be forwarded to the student and his/her parent/guardian.~~
- ~~o The Attendance Review Panel is comprised of at least one administrator, one faculty/staff member, and two students. When necessary, other parties may join the Panel, i.e. school nurse, METCO Director. The purpose of the Attendance Review Panel shall be to review appeals initiated by students and to render a timely decision according to the criteria provided. A majority vote of the members shall constitute the Panel's decision. All decisions made by the Attendance Review Panel are final.~~
- ~~o All matters discussed during the hearing are confidential.~~
- ~~o Failure of a student to appear on a scheduled date specified for a hearing when he/she has been~~

~~present for school on that date will result in the loss of the right to appeal. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the student's assistant principal.~~

- ~~o When students present their appeal to the Attendance Review Panel, parents, guardians, liaisons, and/or support personnel are welcome to provide additional support.~~
- ~~o Students will remain in the course throughout the entire appeal process, or until a schedule change is made by the Guidance Department. The last day of classes for the year marks the end of the appeal process.~~
- ~~o If a member of the Attendance Review Panel has a conflict of interest (e.g., a student appealing an unexcused absence from a teacher who sits on the Panel) that Panel member will be excused from all discussion, input or decision making relative to the appeal.~~

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