

Glassboro Public Schools



MEMO

To: Dr. Al Lewis, Superintendent of Schools

From: Craig Stephenson, Chief Academic Officer

Date: August 18, 2026

Re: Action Memo
August 26, 2026

District Attendance Policy Family Letter: Recommend the Board approve the distribution of an attendance policy letter to all district families during the 2026–27 school year. The letter will provide families with information regarding district attendance expectations, the importance of regular school attendance, and procedures for reporting student absences. The communication will support increased family awareness and promote consistent student attendance.



GLASSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Attendance Policy Update

Dear Glassboro Public Schools Families,

Regular school attendance is essential to student success. When students are present in school, they benefit from direct instruction, classroom discussions, academic support, peer collaboration, assessments, extracurricular opportunities, and the daily routines that help students grow academically, socially, and emotionally. While make-up work is important, missed instructional time cannot be fully replaced.

Student attendance continues to be an important area of focus for Glassboro Public Schools and the New Jersey Department of Education. **Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason, including both excused and unexcused absences.** This means a student may be considered chronically absent after missing approximately 18 days of school.

During the 2024-2025 school year, **20.6% of Glassboro Public Schools students were identified as chronically absent.** While some schools have made progress, chronic absenteeism remains a districtwide concern. Four schools in the district are required to develop corrective action plans because 10% or more of their students were chronically absent.

The State of New Jersey only recognizes a few specific reasons for excusing an absence. Absences for any other reason are reported as unexcused for attendance and chronic absenteeism calculations. In the past, [Board Policy 5200](#) permitted the district to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused for local purposes, such as truancy interventions, student conduct, promotion or retention, and high school credit recovery. This distinction can be confusing because an absence may be documented and accepted by the school under [Board policy](#), but still count as an absence for State reporting and chronic absenteeism purposes. This does not mean the family has done anything wrong; it simply reflects the difference between State attendance reporting requirements and local Board attendance procedures.

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, Glassboro Public Schools will update [Policy](#) and [Regulation 5200](#) and align its attendance procedures with New Jersey statutes and NJDOE reporting requirements. It is important for families to understand that, for State attendance reporting purposes, students are considered absent whenever they are not present in school unless the absence qualifies as a State-excused absence.



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Starting in September 2026, only the following will be counted as excused absences:

1. Religious observance, as permitted by New Jersey law;
2. Participation in observance of Veterans Day;
3. Participation in district board of election membership activities;
4. Take Our Children to Work Day;
5. College visits, up to three days per school year, for students in grades 11 and 12;
6. Closure of a sending/busing school district that prevents transportation to the receiving school;
7. Attendance at a civic event, one day per school year, for students in grades 6 through 12, when proper notice and documentation are provided.

All other absences, including illness, medical appointments, family vacations, personal reasons, or other circumstances, may still be documented by the parent/guardian or medical provider; however, they do not automatically qualify as State-excused absences for attendance reporting purposes. This does not mean that the district wants students to attend school when they are sick. Student health and safety remain a priority, and families should continue to keep students home when illness makes attendance unsafe or inappropriate.

Families should also understand that excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, can have a significant impact on student learning. [Board Policy 5200](#) recognizes that prolonged or repeated absences from school or class may deprive students of educational experiences essential to learning. At the high school level, excessive absences may also affect course credit.

The district will continue to use a progressive attendance process that includes communication with families, review of attendance patterns, school-based interventions, and support plans when appropriate. Depending on the student's age, grade level, attendance history, and individual circumstances, responses may include:

- Parent/guardian notification;
- Review by school administration, school counselors, and/or attendance personnel;
- Development of an attendance improvement plan;
- Referral to support services when barriers to attendance are identified;
- Truancy-related action when required by law;
- Credit review or credit recovery opportunities at the high school level, when applicable.

Students receiving approved home instruction will continue to have attendance recorded in accordance with State requirements.



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We are asking families to partner with us by making regular school attendance a priority. Please monitor your child's attendance through the PowerSchool Parent Portal, communicate with your child's school when absences occur, schedule appointments outside of the school day whenever possible, and avoid vacations or non-essential absences during the school year.

Our goal is not simply to improve attendance data. Our goal is to ensure that every student has consistent access to instruction, support, relationships, and opportunities. Every school day matters.

Additional information regarding attendance procedures, health-related guidance, and frequently asked questions will be shared prior to the start of the 2026-2027 school year. If you have questions about your child's attendance record or the district's attendance procedures, please contact your child's building principal.