

***** Attention *****
***** Please Read *****

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to inform you about a change to our MS/HS Attendance Policy that will be in effect for the 2008-2009 school year. The updated policy is quite different from what we have used in the past and I want to make sure that you are aware of the changes. This is important because it may have a significant impact on students to successfully earn course credit and access to summer school opportunities. Below is an *excerpt* from the 2008-2009 Student Handbook detailing some important information within the new policy. As mentioned in the recent summer letter, you will be asked to *read and sign* that you acknowledge and understand the information in the Student Handbook, which contains much more detailed information regarding these policy changes. Your child will receive a copy of the handbook on the first day of school to bring home for your review and signature.

The primary purpose of a school is to educate the students to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for entry-level employment or higher education. It is extremely important the student attends classes daily so that the process of education progresses. In those instances where students are not present for instruction, something is lost which cannot be regained. Where this loss is too great, the student shall be unable to successfully complete the requirements of the courses.

Any absence from class will be detrimental to learning, and in some cases, just a few absences at critical periods of instruction could result in a serious lowering of the student's grade. Although the school will attempt to keep the parents informed of excessive absences so that lower grades or failure will not come as a surprise, it should be understood that, ultimately, it is the legal responsibility of the parent/guardian (and obligation of the student) to see that attendance at school is on a regular basis.

A vital and integral element of the learning experience includes interaction with others to develop critical thinking, listening and speaking skills. Recognizing this, the Duanesburg Central District Board of Education has adopted a policy regarding class attendance.

Course Credit Policy – Students who are absent from a ½ year course in excess of 15 days or from full-year courses in excess of 30 days shall not receive course credit. For course credit purposes, all excused and unexcused absences, from each class, will be counted.

The decision to deny credit shall be the responsibility of the principal based on the outcome of a previously held attendance hearing.

To receive credit for attendance in a specific class, a student must be present for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Parents of students with attendance concerns shall be notified in the following manner:

Parents of a student in grades 6-12 will receive notification when their son or daughter has been tardy or absent TEN, FIFTEEN, and TWENTY days for full year courses; for a semester course FOUR, EIGHT, and TWELVE days for semester courses. Parental input will be sought to initiate intervention strategies to improve student attendance.

Further absences will result in the Administration conducting an attendance hearing. The parties invited may include the student, his/her teachers, counselor, parent(s) and administrator. This will likely occur after the 15th absence for full-year classes / 8th absence for semester-based courses.

The outcome(s) of the attendance hearing may result in:

1. Extension of the minimum attendance policy
2. The assignment of No Grade to the student of poor attendance
3. Establish consequences of future absences
4. Discussion of intervention strategies
5. Discussion of the responsibility of student and parent in regards to pupil attendance

If the student receives a "No Grade" for his/her class, the student will not be rescheduled to an alternate class, but will remain in the class to participate as deemed appropriate by the teacher. However, the student will not be eligible to have his/her exams or quizzes graded. He/she will audit the course. The student who successfully audits the course will receive a minimum grade of 55, per remaining quarter, for the purpose of not prohibiting admission to summer school. If the course has a Regents exam attached, the student will be allowed to take the Regents if they have met all requirements to do so.

Please visit our school district website at www.dcs.neric.org, click on high school, then click forms to preview the 2008-2009 MS/HS Student Handbook. If you have any questions or concerns about this or any other policies after reading the handbook, please do not hesitate to call the main office at 895-5350 ext. 221. Thank you and I hope you have a great rest of the summer.

Yours truly,

Wilford M. LeForestier Jr.
High School Principal

Beth DeLuke
Middle School Principal