

## **LFHS Attendance Procedures FAQ**

Attendance is a topic that all schools must clarify and address through procedures aligned with Illinois School Code and the values of the district. Like other districts, the Board of Education is responsible for creating an attendance policy (often drafted directly from Illinois School Board of Education (ISBE), and individual schools are required to have procedures in place that are in alignment with various components of school code.

While LFHS has outlined changes to our attendance procedures and parameters, our primary goal has been to clarify our procedures, communicate parameters, and allow for stakeholders to make decisions, accordingly. There are different perspectives regarding every aspect of our attendance. We plan to partner with all stakeholders to implement the changes, recognizing that there will be a need for ongoing communication and clarification throughout the year.

### 1. Why the review and changes to attendance procedures?

- Throughout the 2016-17 school year, the administrative team took an in-depth look at our current attendance policy, procedures, and practices. Attendance is a significant aspect of schooling and all Illinois schools are not only required to have an attendance policy, but to also have coherent procedures that ensure safety, well-being, student participation, and support for students who struggle with attending school.

### 2. What are the benefits of the changes to the attendance procedures?

- Improves student safety and security - Over the years attendance procedures have lapsed, causing us to get to a point where we were not clearly adhering to and communicating attendance procedures. We did not have adequate procedures in place to track who was in the building and who was not in the building.

- Aligns with Illinois School Code - Clarified procedures that account for student attendance during the entire school-day, along with coding and consistent reporting. Aligned attendance with instruction and credit accrual.
- Supports and fosters student learning - Student attendance in courses is connected with obtaining credits for courses. It is the school's responsibility to create procedures that support school attendance, while also working with families to address and problem-solve situations that might interfere or pose a conflict with obtaining course instruction.
- Embeds attendance communication and supports - LFHS is required to have structures in place that account for student attendance and support the school in identifying students/families who need supports/interventions regarding attendance or related concerns.

### 3. How is attendance tracked and reported by LFHS?

- LFHS is required by the state to take and report student attendance by period and daily

### 4. What counts as a full-day, half day, and no attendance?

- 300 minutes is a full-day
- 150 minutes or more= half day
- 150 minutes or less= non-attendance
- All course minutes are associated with attendance and obtaining course credit. Study halls only count towards daily attendance.

### 5. How many absences are allowed before a student is at-risk of compromising course credit

- 9 absences, per course, per semester

6. How can the attendance procedures help the school identify students who might need additional supports?

- As absences accumulate, it is the school's responsibility to communicate with students and parents regarding the absences (even if known) and, if necessary, discuss the impact on learning
- Procedures are in place to increase communication. This helps us to know and identify if there are additional needs or supports that might be beneficial to the student and family (tiered supports and interventions)
  - Through this process, we also need to identify and provide support for families experiencing issues with truancy

7. What kinds of absences are considered permissible?

- Medical (with a doctor's note), family emergency, meeting with a counselor or other student supports, onsite college visit, field trip, testing, religious holiday

8. What occurs when a student is sick?

- There are times when a student is sick and will need to stay home. A doctor's note can be provided, if necessary. Most situations will not warrant a doctor's note. When a parent calls in to report the absence they should indicate the reason for the absence and the school will record the reason. The absence will be included in the 9 discretionary absences and the school will have record of the reason.
- Doctor's/Dentist/Orthodontic appointments are a part of the discretionary 9 absences. In order to receive a "Medical" absence, the doctor's note must state that the student should not be in school due to illness.

9. Are college campus visits considered permissible?

- Juniors and Seniors are allowed up to 4 days for college visits (per year). These will be considered “Permissible.” Students who attend these trips should give documentation of the visit to their dean. It is considered “Permissible” for students to miss class to attend college visits in our College Resource Center during the course of the school day.

10. What about extenuating circumstances?

- The coding of our attendance allows us to identify the cause or reason for the absence.
- In partnership with individual families and based on the situation, the district can use discretion regarding extenuating circumstances that arise.

11. Can parents call students out of school events?

- Although the school has parameters regarding attendance, parents can always make decisions regarding what they deem best for their student/family. Many of our school approved events have altered schedules to accommodate the event and limit the disruption of instructional time.

12. Why does attendance in Study Hall matter?

- Although students do not receive credit for attending Study Hall, Study Halls (minutes/attendance) count toward daily attendance.
- While student attendance remains in the control of parents, we want to be transparent about how we document and report attendance to the state, and what it means for students

13. What is the difference between Study Hall and Athletic Study Hall?

- Athletic Study halls and any associated PE credit is defined by Illinois School Code. Student who are eligible for a PE waiver are required to attend study hall and have documented

attendance records in order to earn credit. Students in Athletic Study Hall must attend study hall in order to receive the PE waiver. Unlike the other Study Halls, Athletic Study Hall is associated with obtaining credit.

14. Do Seniors still have privileges?

- Yes, Seniors will still be able to leave for lunch, with an off-campus pass, but will need to check-out before leaving. Seniors that have a regular study hall may leave during that time period as long as they scan in and out. Senior Study Hall (both regular and athletic) will be in the Commons and although we will need to take attendance, Seniors will be allowed to go to other resources and the Grind during the scheduled Study Hall.

15. How do Seniors obtain permission to leave campus for lunch?

- Seniors with a Study Hall may check in for attendance purposes and then check out and leave campus, if they have a senior off-campus pass that has been approved by a parent. This does NOT apply for Athletic Study Halls.

16. If a student is late to class, at what point in time does it become an absence?

- Students more than 10 minutes late to a class (including 1st period) are considered absent.

As with any change, we expect to learn a lot through the implementation process and will continue to monitor and review our procedures and practices throughout the year. If warranted, we will make necessary adjustments.