



August 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we begin the new school year, it is important to highlight the significance of school attendance for our students and to highlight recently adopted changes to the district's Policy #5100, Attendance. The US Department of Education has reported that school attendance is a powerful predictor of student outcomes. The New York State School Boards Association published an article entitled *A third of HS students are chronically absent*. Within this article it states... "Students who are chronically absent can fall far behind their peers in their academic progress. And students with good attendance are affected by others' absenteeism; teachers might be forced to repeat lessons and may find it more difficult to set high expectations for behavior and academic performance."

After substantive feedback from district teachers and administrators, a thorough review of the district's attendance policy was conducted by the district's Board of Education Policy Committee and adjustments to this policy were recently adopted by the Board of Education. Within the policy, the Smithtown Central School District's philosophical approach is codified as follows:

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to minimize the number of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as "ATEDs"), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Excused and Unexcused Absences:

- Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or unsafe travel conditions, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, medical appointments, approved college visits, approved court appearances, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, participation in school sponsored and approved activities, or such reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator.
- All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.
- **All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within at least 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school.**

- No student can participate in any extracurricular activity or interscholastic sporting event on a day when he or she is absent from school without the permission of the Building Principal or his/her designee.
- Approved college visits will require supporting documentation provided to the building administration for the absence to be deemed as “excused.” This documentation can be easily obtained at the visited college and submitted to the high school attendance office.
- Departmental assignments will no longer be utilized for the conversion of (I) Incomplete grades. Missing assignments may be completed with teacher’s permission prior to the final two (2) weeks of the quarter in which work is missing. Work assigned in the final two (2) weeks of the quarter may be made up with teacher’s permission within two weeks of the originally assigned date. If the student does not complete the missing work in the time allocated by the teacher or does not satisfactorily complete the missing work as determined by the teacher, the grade for the quarter will be changed to an “F” and the grade will count towards the final grade in accordance with Policy #4710.
- Students who have more than five (5) unexcused absences from a class that meets daily or three times for a class that meets on alternate days will receive an incomplete grade for that marking period and may lose course credit in accordance with Policy #4710. A student who has more than twenty (20) unexcused absences for a full year course meeting daily or ten (10) unexcused absences for courses meeting on alternate days or a half year course meeting daily will receive an incomplete grade for the course and may lose course credit in accordance with Policy #4710.
- A student who has exceeded the number of unexcused ATEDs for a course may request a review of his/her attendance and appeal the loss of credit two (2) weeks prior to the conclusion of the course to the principal or his/her designee. A student whose ATEDs included more than four (4) cuts in a one-semester class or PE class and more than eight (8) cuts in a full year course may forfeit the right to appeal.
- Any student and/or parent/guardian may appeal the decision to not grant the student credit for a course based upon the student’s failure to meet the minimum attendance requirements as set forth in this policy. Said appeal will be made in writing to the building principal and will include a written statement describing the basis for the appeal. The building principal will review said appeal and provide his/her written determination concerning the appeal within ten (10) business days. The building principal’s determination will be final. The parent (or other person in parental relation to the student) may thereafter appeal the building principal’s determination to the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Education Law, section 310 and the regulations thereunder.
- The high school minimum attendance policy will apply to all students taking High School level courses in the middle schools.

The current full policy can be found below:

[BOE Policy #5100 Attendance](#)

Collectively, we must work together to decrease absenteeism in order to increase our student's opportunity for academic success. Please contact your school should you have any questions or need assistance regarding this matter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dr. Kevin R. Simmons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. Kevin R. Simmons
Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Instruction