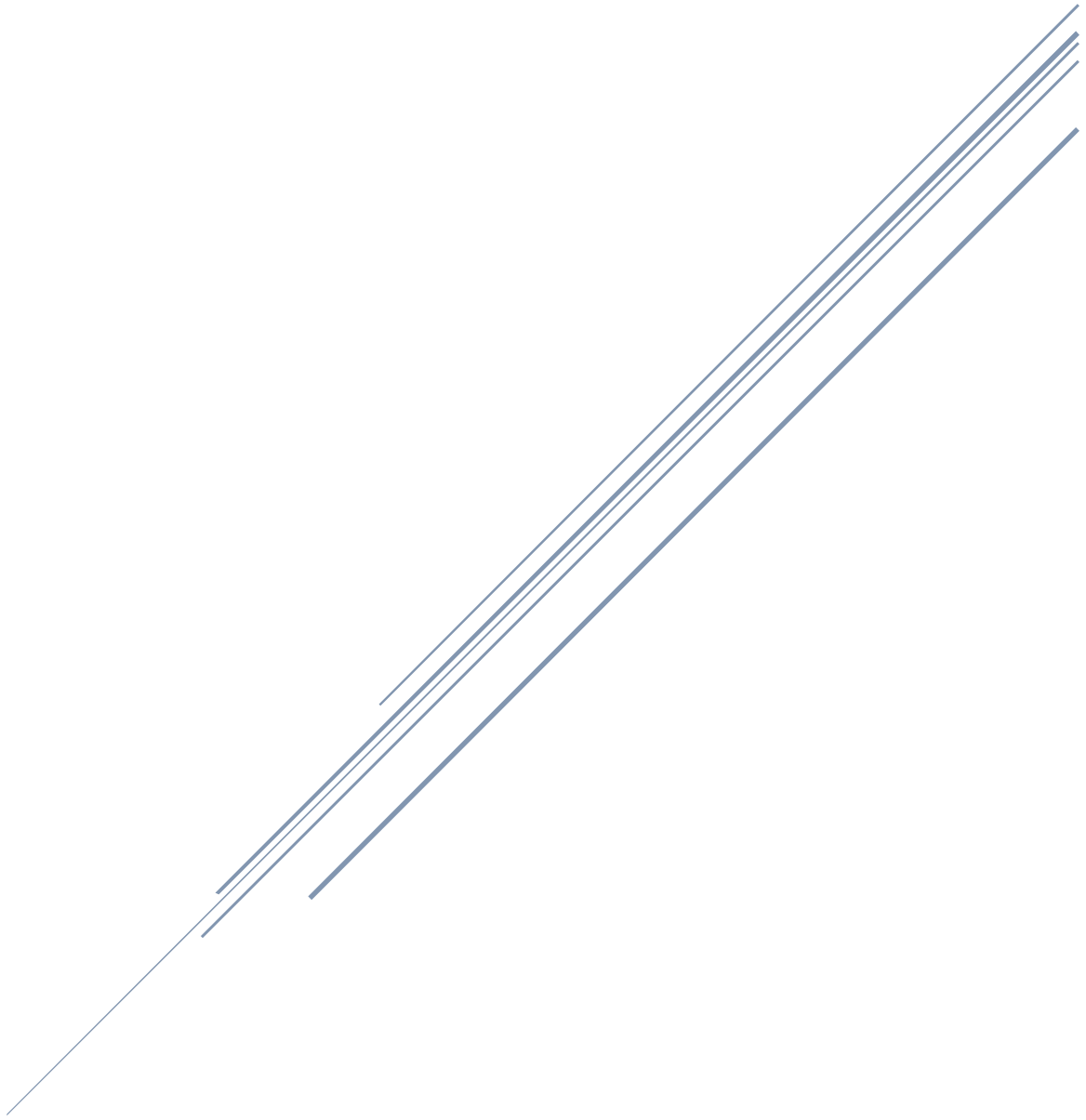


JAMES HILLHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Purpose of the Attendance Policy

The purpose of the James Hillhouse High School Attendance Policy reflects our desire to have each student attend all classes and arrive on time. Students and parents should familiarize themselves with the provisions and procedures of the policy. It is expected that parents will support the intent of the policy and encourage their children to have good attendance.

THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

The number of absences permitted for each course before credit is lost is listed below:

- Full-year course: 18 absences
- Semester course: 9 absences
- Quarter course: 4 absences

Absences beyond this number will result in loss of credit for the course or courses in which the student has been absent. For seniors, loss of credit in a course may result in failure to meet graduation requirements.

A LOSS OF CREDIT MAY OCCUR THROUGH THE ACCUMULATION OF ABSENCES FROM ANY ONE OF THE FOUR TYPES OF ABSENCES LISTED OR THROUGH ANY COMBINATION OF THE FOUR TYPES OF ABSENCES.

EACH TYPE OF ABSENCE IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT IN ITS CONTRIBUTION TOWARD REACHING THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE ABSENCES IN A COURSE.

(1) Excused Absences: (equals ONE absence per occasion)

- Student illness
- Death or critical illness in the family
- Response to a legal process
- Medical appointment (which cannot be scheduled outside of the school day)
- College visit beyond two (juniors and seniors only)
- Early dismissal or late arrival for other than school related activities
- An absence deemed "excused" by the administrator responsible for the student
- A verified visit to the Guidance Office to meet with a college representative. Juniors missing class to meet with a college rep will be charged with an unexcused absence.

(2) Unexcused Absences: (equals TWO absences per occasion)

- All absences not identified above are considered UNEXCUSED
- Absences that are not explained by a Pre-Planned Absence Form, a note and/or a telephone call from a parent within 48 hours after the student's return to school from an absence, are considered UNEXCUSED
- An absence deemed "unexcused" by the administrator responsible for the student. No makeup work is allowed for class periods where a student has accrued an unexcused absence.

(3) Unexcused Tardies: (equals .25 absence per occasion)

- Occurs when a student arrives up to 10 minutes late for class without authorization

(4) Unexcused Late: (equals .50 absence per occasion)

- Occurs when a student arrives to a class later than 10 minutes without authorization, but less than half way through the class.
- Students arriving more than halfway through the class without authorization will be considered absent.

Absences which do not count towards the loss of credit include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- School related activities
- Suspensions: in-school or out-of-school
- Homebound instruction
- "Special" absences
 - Class meetings
 - Field trips
 - Sports or other school approved extracurricular activities
 - Scheduled office and guidance appointments - Normally, scheduled office and guidance appointments should occur during non-class time.
- Religious Observance
- For Juniors and Seniors ONLY: 4 days for college visits. Students must fill out a Pre-Planned Absence Form available in the Assistant Principals' Office prior to going on a college visit. Failure to do so will result in the visit being counted as an absence.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARENTS

- It is the responsibility of parents to communicate to the school the reason for all absences.
- Parent notes or telephone calls to excuse an absence must be received no later than 48 hours following the student's return to school, or the absence will be classified as unexcused.

All students, please call the Attendance office at (475) 220-7500.

- Parent notes to request an early dismissal must be presented to the attendance office before the student is dismissed in order for dismissal to be considered excused.
- Provide medical documentation for long-term absences, to include the nature of the illness, any limitations on the student, inclusive dates of medical condition, specific dates of absence covered.

CONTENT OF PARENT NOTES

All parent notes for any reason must include the following:

1. the student's name,

2. the date(s) of the absence(s),
3. the specific reason for the absence, lateness or dismissal,
4. the signature of the parent
5. a daytime phone number where a parent can be reached to verify the note.

“Blanket” notes covering unspecified dates of absences, tardies, etc. are not acceptable. (for example: “Please excuse my child from all absences in the months of April and May due to illness.”)

COMMUNICATIONS TO STUDENT AND PARENTS

Students and parents will be notified concerning absences by mail utilizing the following letters:

- Student and parents will have access to information concerning attendance via Power School Home Access Center.
- Excessive Absence Notification Letter: generated when one-half of the number of permitted absences has been accumulated in a class. The purpose of this notification will be to inform the parent and the student of the possibility of loss of credit if the student’s attendance does not improve.
- Loss of Credit Letter: generated when a student loses credit in any course.
- Appeals Board Hearing Results Notification: used to communicate the decision of the Appeals Board to the student and parent when a student appeals a loss of credit.

ANTICIPATED ABSENCES

Any anticipated absence, such as college visitations, family vacations, etc., which conflict with the school calendar, must be arranged in advance by a phone call or a Pre-Planned Absence Form or the absence will be considered unexcused and make-up privileges will be forfeited.

DISMISSAL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Once students have reported to school, they are expected to remain in school and attend classes all day. Under the following conditions, a student may have an excused dismissal:

1. Under rare or emergency circumstances, a written request from a parent must be presented or a phone call must be received by the Assistant Principals’ Office and/or Attendance Office prior to dismissal. A parent may come to the attendance office and personally request dismissal.
2. The student must sign out in the Attendance Office. If the student returns to school, the student must sign in at the Attendance Office to verify the time of his/her return and provide appropriate documentation.
3. Students returning from any type of outside of school appointment: doctor etc., must present a note upon return from the appropriate office to the Attendance Secretary.

Failure to meet the above two conditions will cause any class absences to be considered unexcused. Such absences will be counted towards loss of credit and make-up privileges will be forfeited.

ILLNESS IN SCHOOL

- In case of illness while in school, the student must report to the health office.
- The nurse, with parental permission, will make the decision to dismiss the student from school.
- Once the nurse has obtained permission to dismiss the student, the student will be issued a dismissal pass.
- Students who become ill in school and report to areas other than the nurse's office (cafeteria, restrooms, off campus) will be considered "unexcused" and may face disciplinary action.

MONITOR THE NUMBER OF ABSENCES IN EACH CLASS

- Throughout the school year, it is the responsibility of the student and parent(s) to monitor closely the number of absences, which have been accumulated in each course.
- When a student anticipates an absence from school or from a particular class for any reason, it is very important that the student and the parent consider carefully the necessity of the absence, taking into consideration the current number of accumulated absences and their potential impact on loss of credit in the course.

CERTIFICATION OF CHRONIC ILLNESS

- During an appeal for reinstatement of credit, the Appeals Board may request confirmation from a doctor to explain specific and frequent absences, which occurred due to medical reasons.
- Students and parents are advised to monitor the number of absences, which have accumulated because of medical reasons.
- When absences for medical reasons are frequent, it may be advisable to seek documentation from a doctor that a chronic illness exists.
- Presentation of verified information regarding chronic illness and specific dates of absence will strengthen a student's case in an appeal for reinstatement of credit.
- Just as with parent notes, doctor's notes need to specifically address dates of absences, and may not be "blanket excuses" for all absences which have occurred over a period a time. Such information must be presented on going and not at the end of a course.

LOSS OF CREDIT

- A student will lose credit in a course when the number of accumulated absences exceeds the number of permitted absences.
- When a student has lost credit, the administrator responsible for the student's attendance will review the record with the student and the parent. The student and the parent will receive a written copy of the appeals procedure.
- The student will be instructed to attend class, and the procedure to appeal the loss of credit will be explained.
- When credit is lost, the student is expected to attend the class. In addition, consistent attendance following loss of credit strengthens a student's appeals case.
- A letter grade will appear on the transcript even though credit is lost. All courses require a passing grade for the student to move to the next level.

EXCESSIVE “CLASS CUTTING” FOLLOWING LOSS OF CREDIT

Students, who flagrantly disregard the intent of the James Hillhouse High School Attendance Policy and continue to cut a class/s after loss of credit, may be removed from that class with a final grade of Withdrawn Failure (WF). The administrator responsible for the student, after consultation with the teacher, will determine under what circumstances this action will be taken.

Right Of Appeal

The Attendance Policy is not designed to deny credit to students who, through no fault of their own, were unable to attend school or a class due to a legitimate illness or other condition beyond the student's/parents' control. In January and June, students who have lost credit will have an opportunity to appeal to have credit reinstated. A student's decision to appeal must take into consideration the student's total attendance record. Any absences, other than excused absences will weaken the student's appeal. Absences which remain unexcused and undocumented as well as chronic absences will also weaken the student's appeal. Students wishing to appeal must follow the appeals procedure. If students do not have valid reasons for appealing loss of credit, they should contact their counselor to identify what options are available.

THE APPEALS BOARD:

- Composed of three teachers, two Retention Specialist, a truancy officer and the administrator responsible for the student.
- Hears the student's case and makes a decision on whether to reinstate credit.
- An Appeals Board decision is final.
- The decision will only be reviewed by the Principal as a result of the introduction of additional information, which was NOT presented to the Appeals Board.
- A request for review must state the intention of the review, and any new evidence in a written statement by the student and the parent(s).
- Students wishing to appeal to the Principal must do so within two (2) schools days following the receipt of the decision of the Appeals Board.
- A student and parent/guardian must appear in person before the Appeals Board. Failure to do so will be an automatic denial of restoration of credit.

FAST-TRACK” APPEALS

Under extremely rare and narrowly defined circumstances, a student who lost credit in one or more courses may not have to appear before the Attendance Appeals Committee to appeal the loss of credit. Instead, the assistant principal will appeal the student's loss of credit directly to the principal for adjudication. The assistant principal uses the following criteria, along with input from the guidance and/or pupil services staff, in determining which students to “fast-track”:

1. documented illness
2. total amount of absences barely exceeds the total number of absences required to lose credit.

3. teacher recommendation

All absences are excused, with the vast majority of absences being caused by documented illness or condition that was beyond the control of the student.

The total amount of absences in a particular course barely exceeds the total number of absences required to lose credit.

PRINCIPAL'S HEARING REQUEST FORM

Dear Mr. Worthy,

I am requesting a principal's review of the outcome of the Attendance Appeals Board hearing for which I was denied credit. Credit was denied for the following courses:

Courses

1. _____

Teacher

As you know, he/she has passed the first warning threshold for attendance and we now consider him/her to be at risk of losing credit for this course.

An acceptable level of attendance is important for student growth and success, and we provide this early notice in hopes that your child will make the appropriate adjustments to finish this course under the maximum allowed absences before loss of credit. **Loss of credit occurs at 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, 11 absences for a half-credit course, and at 20 absences for a full year (1 credit) course.**

You will receive a second phone call/letter from your child's guidance counselor if he/she passes the second and final warning threshold for this course. You will receive a final phone call/letter from your child's house administrator if he/she passes the threshold for loss of credit. At that point, your child will have to retake the course in summer school if he/she meets eligibility requirements, or retake the course the following semester/school year.

You may monitor your child's attendance on the Parent Portal of Power School. For instructions on how to access this feature, please contact your child's school counselor. We all wish for your child's success, and we hope this early warning regarding loss of credit will prompt a positive change in his/her attendance in this course.

Sincerely,

Mr. Worthy
Principal

**JAMES HILLHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL
LOSS OF CREDIT WARNING NOTICE**

SECOND AND FINAL WARNING

("Second Warning" is generated by 16 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 8 absences in a half-credit course, or 6 absences in a quarter-credit course)

DATE

Dear _____

I am writing to follow up on our conversation by phone on _____ regarding _____'s number of absences in _____ class, period _____. As you know, he/she has passed the second and final warning threshold for attendance and we now consider him/her to be at serious risk of losing credit for this course.

An acceptable level of attendance is important for student growth and success, and we provide this second notice in hopes that your child will make the appropriate adjustments to finish this course under the maximum allowed absences before loss of credit. **Loss of credit occurs at 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, 11 absences for a half-credit course, and at 20 absences for a full year (1 credit) course.**

You received the first warning phone call/letter from the teacher of the course on _____. You will receive a final phone call/letter from your child's house administrator if he/she passes the threshold for loss of credit. Please note that at that time it will be too late for your child to earn credit in this course. At that point, your child must retake the course in summer school if he/she meets eligibility requirements, or retake the course the following semester/school year.

You may monitor your child's attendance on the Parent Portal of Power School. For instructions on how to access this feature, please call your child's school counselor. We all wish for your child's success, and we hope this final warning regarding loss of credit will prompt a positive change in his/her attendance in this course.

Sincerely,

Mr. Worthy
Principal

**JAMES HILLHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL
LOSS OF CREDIT NOTICE**

DATE

Dear _____

I am writing to follow up on our conversation by phone on _____ regarding _____'s number of absences in _____ class, period _____. As you know, he/she has met or exceeded the threshold for loss of credit in this course, and he/she is no longer eligible to receive credit for this course.

An acceptable level of attendance is important for student growth and success, and we provided early notice in hopes that your child would make the appropriate adjustments to finish this course under the maximum allowed absences before loss of credit. **Loss of credit occurs at 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, 11 absences for a half-credit course, and at 20 absences for a full year (1 credit) course.** You received the first warning phone call/letter from the teacher of the course on _____. You received the second and final warning phone call/letter on _____. Please contact your child's guidance counselor to determine whether he/she is eligible for summer school and for information on how to make such arrangements, if possible. If your child is not eligible for summer school, his/her counselor could also arrange for registration for the same course in the next semester/school year.

A form outlining the appeals process for loss of credit has been provided with this letter. It is your child's responsibility to provide all evidence by the posted deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances. Reinstatement of credit is only available under extraordinary documented circumstances, and the decision of the appeals board is final.

Sincerely,

Mr. Worthy

**JAMES HILLHOUSE HIGH SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE APPEALS FORM**

It is the student's and parent/guardian's responsibility to fill out, collect data, and deliver this form to the student's House Office in order to be considered in the appeals process.

Student

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Grade (circle one): 9/10/11/12

Course: _____ Date Submitted: _____

Date of absence	Reason for absence	Documentation of absence
	DIRECTIONS:	DIRECTIONS:
	Place only the letter which represents your absence M(medical), L (legal) F/P (Family or personal)	Write either (Y) or (N) to indicate you provided evidence that is attached to this form

Student Signature _____

Date / /

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date / /

PRE-PLANNED ABSENCE FORM

Completed form should be handed into the Attendance Office

Date: _____

Student: _____ Grade: _____

I, _____ (parent/guardian) request the release of my son/daughter from classes for ____ school days during the period beginning _____ and ending _____.

The reason for this request is:

I understand that my son/daughter assumes responsibility for completion of all assignments during this period of voluntary absence.

Your son/daughter **must** have their teachers sign below indicating that each teacher is aware that the student will be absent from the class and that they have discussed the assignments that will be due during the time of the absence.

I further understand that certain classroom activities such as videos, class discussions, labs and presentations cannot be duplicated and may result in a lower grade.

I am aware that James Hillhouse High School's attendance policy limits the total number of absences, excused or unexcused, in any given course.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN_____

TEACHERS' SIGNATURES

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED PRIOR TO THIS ABSENCE. ANY FORM SUBMITTED AFTER THE ABSENCE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.