

## TARDINESS POLICY

As approved by Policy and Advocacy Committee, October 18, 2011  
NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY BOARD

### BACKGROUND:

Since the inception of the Truancy Prevention Project in 1999, regular meetings have been held with “truancy contacts” – those staff members in schools who work most closely with truancy and attendance issues. This group includes guidance counselors, assistant principals, administrative assistants and social workers. A consistent theme at these meetings has been requests from principals, guidance counselors and teachers to address student tardiness in a similar fashion to the way the district has addressed student absence—by developing a set of policies and procedures that govern issues of tardiness for the district as a whole.

- ← Concern has been expressed for years by *elementary* guidance counselors, as well as principals and teachers, about amount of instructional time lost due to tardiness.
- ← Concern has been expressed by *middle school* guidance counselors as well as principals and others about lack of consequences for tardiness at the elementary school level resulting in poor habits already being established by the time students reach middle school.
- ← Concern has been expressed by guidance counselors, teachers and principals at all levels that habitual, chronic tardiness is a major factor in loss of instructional time for students regardless of age, and that consistent policies and procedures at a District-wide level are needed.
- ← Frequently, chronic tardiness and absenteeism go hand-in-hand. However, in some cases, a student accumulates several dozen tardies for every absence. A new policy is needed to address the tardiness before it becomes habitual, and to flag tardiness as an issue unto itself for those cases.
- ← A draft set of policies and procedures follows. This has been reviewed by the Truancy Contacts group and circulated for comments and feedback to all principals. They are based upon, and consistent with, the highly successful attendance policy that has been in use by the district since 2000.

### *NEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING TARDINESS* based upon the current policies on absence and truancy

*New language in italics.*

### ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS

School attendance is essential for children, and the City of Burlington and the State of Vermont are continuing their efforts to ensure that students attend school. Students are required by state law to attend school unless excused for illness or a family emergency. *The Burlington School District further requires that students attend school for the entire school day, unless excused because of an illness, a family emergency or for an educational activity (such as a debate competition or concert tour) that has received*

*prior approval. If a student is going to be tardy, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school in writing of the reason for tardiness. The tardiness is considered unexcused unless the school hears from the parent/guardian for one of the reasons listed above.*

*The policy requires:*

- ← *Each school publish on its website and in its newsletter the start time of the school day including a note that any student will be **considered tardy at five minutes past the start time.***
- ← *Each school publish on its website and in its newsletter the immediate consequences for tardiness, such as going to the planning room or making up the time after school. For any school which currently does not have procedures developed that address immediate consequence for tardiness, the District directs each school to develop procedures by November 22, 2011 and provide a copy to Jeanne as well as publish those procedures on its website.*
- ← *Each school publish on its website and in its newsletter the District policy on tardiness.*
- ← *All instances of tardiness will be recorded, whether excused or unexcused, in the district's database (SMS).*
- ← *After 5 and 10 cumulative instances of tardiness during the school year, the School District will notify the parent/guardian by using the AlertNow system with the principal's pre-recorded message, reminding the parent/guardian of the time that school starts and of the District policy on tardiness.*
- ← *After 15 cumulative instances of tardiness, the School District will notify the parent/guardian of the need for a meeting with a school administrator so that they can develop a plan for addressing the chronic tardiness. Please note: the principal decides whether or not such a meeting is warranted, as is the current procedure with chronic absences.*
- ← *All instances of tardiness become part of the student's record. If the school files an affidavit with the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office concerning excessive absences (20 or more), the record of tardiness will be included in the filing. The parent/guardian will be notified that the filing was made, and the possibility of criminal prosecution for truancy, or a petition to determine if the student is a child in need of care and supervision, may result. A conviction for truancy could result in a fine of \$1000 and a determination that the child is in need of care or supervision. It could also potentially result in loss of custody as the most serious consequence.*