

WELCOME BACK MESSAGE

From Mr. Harkin, CHS Principal

August, 2025

Dear Students and Parent/Guardians,

Welcome Back! As summer winds down all too quickly, the first day of school is rapidly approaching. Classes resume on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 from 7:10am to 2:03pm. Please note that Bus Transportation information will be posted on the District web page shortly before school resumes. Please continue to check EGCSD.org for updates as they become available.

Your student's schedule with classroom locations will be sent via email under separate cover to students (schedules will be emailed directly to each Student's Google Email) shortly before school resumes. Please note that this ***tentative*** schedule may be subject to change. For any questions, students MUST SIGN UP in the Guidance Office in person to SET UP an appointment to meet with their Counselors. Please check with Guidance for what is and isn't allowed with changing a schedule.

Students will go directly to their First Period class upon arrival to school. It is very important that you arrive to school on time every day. Please review the Attendance Policy below.

Throughout the school year, parents and students will receive information about school news via ParentSquare notification. This information may also be accessed from our District website – EGCSD.org. Please be aware that the Parent Portal will not be open until September 18th.

VERY IMPORTANT: If you have a change in your email address, please contact Columbia High School's Main (518-207-2010) or Guidance (518-207-2020) Office immediately. Because we are now paperless, **we must have a current email address on file for ALL correspondence.** Please note that **all report cards, progress notes, school newsletters, and any continually updated school information will be sent via email / ParentSquare throughout the year.**

Please take the time to review our Attendance Newsletter and Policy (*click on the links at bottom of this letter*). The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct can be found on Columbia's webpage under Parent Information. Please be aware that we are no longer recognizing Perfect Attendance.

We are very excited about your arrival and the start of the coming school year. I hope the remaining days of summer are enjoyable for you and your family.

Sincerely
Michael J. Harkin,
Principal CHS

COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ABSENCES INFORMATION

24-Hour Absence Report Phone Number: 518-207-2002

Only parents or legal guardians, as indicated on the Student Verification Form, may verify absences or have students released from school. We ask you, the parent or guardian, to call the school on the morning of the day your son or daughter will be absence, regardless of the reason. The telephone number is 518-207-2002. Please place this number in a strategic location. This is a 24-hour number.

Parent/Guardian Call-In Absence Voice Mail (24 hour availability)

Early calls or email notifications are appreciated. Please report the following:

Your name
Your relationship to the student
Student's full name
Reason for the absence
Possible length of the absence if more than one day

Absence Notes:

We must have an absence note in writing. Please include the following:

Student's full name and grade
Reason for the absences (*click on flyer brochure below for legally allowed absence reasons*)
Date/time of absence or tardy
Possible length of the absence, if more than one day
Your name full name
Your relationship to the student

If you wish, you may send an email informing your child's Assistant Principal's Office of your child's absence. As long as the email contains all of the information above and comes from a valid parent/guardian email, it may be accepted as a legal parent-written absence note. If your child's name is different from yours, please write the student's full name.

Per EG District Policy, an absence note must be submitted no later than five (5) days after the student was absent. Please note as well that **we can only accept 10 legal absences by parent notification for the school year. Legal or medical documentation must be provided after the 10-day limit has been reached.**

Following an absence due to an injury or serious illness, the parent/guardian must provide the Health or Attendance Offices with medical written documentation of physician office visits and clearance if necessary.

Please be aware that it could take up to a week for any absence note credit to appear on PowerSchool. Parents may view their child's record on PowerSchool after applying for an ID number. There is also an APP you can download to follow attendances throughout the school day *(Click on Attendance Newsletter below for directions)*.
Reminder – the Parent Portal does not open until mid-September.

Please note as well: Fire Fighting activities are not to interfere with education time and are not allowed during school class-time hours. Therefore, any absence due to student Firefighting **during school hours** is Unexcused.

Finally: Please note – If a student is supposed to be in school but is not present for their first period class when attendance is taken at the beginning of class, he/she is marked "U" by the teacher. **For any student marked as "U" (absent) or "TUIN" (unexcused tardy), the District's automated absence notification system is sent out to the parent/guardian on a daily basis through ParentSquare.** Be aware that the "U" code may be amended upon receipt of a legal absence/tardy note or by medical documentation, or when the student arrives late to school and checks in at the Front Entrance desk.

Thank you for your understanding. Knowing that good attendance is essential for school success, we appreciate your cooperation and support. Additional attendance information is found further in this email.

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS / REPLIES:

CAN I CHANGE MY SCHEDULE?

YES

- I don't have a lunch in my schedule
- I am missing a required course
(Math, Science, English, Social Studies)
- I have two classes scheduled for the same period
- I don't have the minimum 5.5 credits
- I have already taken and passed this class

NO

- I want a different lunch period
- I want to change my teacher
- I don't know anyone in that class
- I want my class a different period
- I want to be in classes with my friends

IMPORTANT ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Message from Principal Harkin

Hello Parents/Guardians:

- ◆ **Please know that Attendance to school is very important.** Please click on the link below to view the video:

Attendance Matters Video:

PLEASE NOTE: When your child is absent, phone calls, emails or written notes are still required. Please see absence call-in information on page 10 for full details.

Please be aware that Parent-Square automatically sends out notification to the Parent/ Guardian whenever their student is marked absent from school. The information is pulled from Period 1 so if your child has been marked absent (U) or unexcused tardy (TUIN) from Period 1, a notification will automatically be sent.

As always, I thank you for your continued support.

Michael J. Harkin

Principal CHS

TO ACCESS INFO, CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:

[PowerSchool](#)

[ParentSquare](#)

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COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE ABSENCES INFORMATION

24-hour Absence Report Phone Number: (518) 207-2002

Dear Parent or Guardian, we welcome your child to Columbia High School.

Only parents or legal guardians, as indicated on the Student Verification Form, may verify absences or have students released from school. We ask you, the parent or guardian, to call the school on the morning of the day your son or daughter will be absent, regardless of the reason. The telephone number is **207-2002**. Please place this number in a strategic location. This is a 24-hour number.

Parent/Guardian Call-In Absence Voice Mail (24 hour availability)

Early calls are appreciated. Written absence note still must be sent in.

Please report the following:

Your name

Your relationship to the student

Student's full name (especially if last name is different from Parent/Guardian)

Reason for the absence

Possible length of the absence

Absence Notes

When notifying CHS of the absence, please include the following:

1. Student's full name and grade
2. Reason for the absence (*See flyer brochure on page 13 for legally allowed absence reasons*)
3. Date/time of absence or tardy
4. Possible length of the absence, if more than one day
5. Your name

Your relationship to the student

If you wish, **you may send an email** informing your child's Assistant Principal's Secretary of your child's absence. As long as the email contains all of the information above and comes from a valid parent/guardian email, it may be accepted as a legal parent-written absence note. **If your child's name is different from yours, please write the student's full name.**

PARENT PORTAL INFORMATION

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

As well, we have the PowerSchool's Parent Portal where parents can follow their child's attendance and grades.

On your computer (if not reached via clicking on link on page 9 of this Newsletter):

1. Type in "EGCSD.org" to bring up the district webpage
2. On the top Blue line, click on "PowerSchool"
3. Click on Students/Parents
4. In the Sign-In box that comes up, either sign in or create an account.
5. Also in the sign-in box, you can click on the information to read more about creating a new account or view the Parent Portal Users Guide:

Create New Account – Instructions

Parent Portal Users Guide

Student Portal Guide

6. For full detailed instructions, please click [HERE](#) to continue.

Please Note: If you experience issues with the Portal, please email problem and student name(s) to: PortalHelp@egcsd.org

Parent Portal will not be opened until the middle of September.

Parents/Guardians should be aware that teachers are required to mark a student absent ("U") when he/she is not present in the classroom. This code is amended through the Attendance Office once notification is received for legal absence *(For Example: Field trip; visit to Assistant Principal, Guidance or Health Office; Legal absence when a tardy note is received, School-related activities or Exams)*. Please be aware that it may take time for code changes/amendments to show.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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E. **Tardiness and Early Departure:** A student shall not arrive late to or depart early from school except in cases where such is deemed "excused." In cases when a student arrives ten (10) minutes after the start of the school day, departs ten (10) minutes after the start of the school day, and such lateness or departure is deemed unexcused, the following procedure will be followed:

- Student is tardy or leaves school early (unexcused) a combined total of 10 times-letter of notification to parent/guardian; meeting with student, parent/guardian, building principal and other school support staff as necessary (Instructional Support Team, social worker, school nurse, school resource officer, psychologist, etc.).
- Student is tardy or leaves school early (unexcused) a combined total of 15 times-letter of notification to parent/guardian that PINS diversion may be filed; additional meetings as directed by principal.

Middle School (6-8)

- Student accumulates 10 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-letter of notification/phone call to parent/guardian.
- Student accumulates 15 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-letter of notification/phone call to parent/guardian, meeting with student, parent/guardian and school staff, student referred to Instructional Support Team.
- Student accumulates 20 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-letter of notification and phone call to parent/guardian, including notice that PINS diversion may be filed with Rensselaer County Family Court if absence total is greater than 25.
- Student accumulates 26 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day- PINS diversion will be filed, referral to Child Protective Services for educational neglect.
- Visit by the Student & Family Engagement Specialist at the recommendation of the building Principal.
- For "quarter" courses, the number of unexcused absences is modified as follows: Section 1-5; Section 2-8; Section 3-10; Section 4-13.

NOTE: While unexcused absences in excess of 25 will not be the sole criterion, they will be considered in determining the potential for denial of grade promotion.

NOTE: If a student misses more than 10 minutes of instructional time, the student is considered "Absent" from that class. A determination will be made as to whether the ab-

High School (9-12)

- Student accumulates 10 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-letter of notification/phone call to parent/guardian.
- Student accumulates 15 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-letter of notification/phone call to parent/guardian, meeting with student, parent/guardian and school staff; PINS diversion may be filed with Rensselaer County Family Court, student referred to Instructional Support Team.
- Student accumulates 20 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-registered letter of notification and phone call to parent/guardian that PINS diversion may be filed if absence total is greater than 25.
- Student accumulates 26 unexcused absences from individual class or entire day-PINS diversion will be filed, phone call to parent/guardian, referral to Child Protective Services for educational neglect.
- Visit by the Student & Family Engagement Specialist at the recommendation of the building Principal.
- For 1/2 credit courses the number of unexcused absences is modified as follows: in Section 1-5; Section 2-8; Section 3-10; Section 4-13.

NOTE: While unexcused absences in excess of 25 will not be the sole criterion, they will be considered in determining the potential for denial of credit.

NOTE: If a student misses more than 10 minutes of instructional time, the student is considered "Absent" from that class. A determination will be made as to whether the absence is considered excused or unexcused.

Incentives

Good attendance will be the basis for student recognition awards to be determined by building principals.

Policy Review

This policy will be annually reviewed by the Board of Education. Revisions, based on attendance records and recommendations from the Attendance Committee, will occur prior to the start of each new school year.

East Greenbush Central School District
Administration Center
29 Englewood Avenue
East Greenbush, NY 12061

SUMMARY

of the

**East Greenbush Central
School District**

**Comprehensive
Student**

Attendance Policy



**A School and Community Working
Together**

Visit us on the web at
www.egcsd.org

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Statement of Purpose



Attendance Matters

To support student success, and in accordance with Education Law 3205 and 3210 and the requirements of New York State Every Student Succeeds Plan, The East Greenbush Central School district is taking steps to ensure that students and parents/guardians are better informed regarding **chronic absenteeism** from school.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year for any reason, excused or unexcused.

A student who is absent 4-5 days per marking period is missing 10 percent of the available instructional days. To prevent chronic absenteeism and to promote good school attendance habits, the district has launched an *Attendance Matters Campaign to inform parents, students and community members of the importance of good school attendance*.

Here are some facts:

- ◆ Chronic absenteeism begins as early as pre-kindergarten
- ◆ Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- ◆ Compared to children with average attendance, chronically absent students gained 14% fewer literacy skills in kindergarten and 15% fewer literacy skills in 1st grade
- ◆ By 6th grade, chronic absence is one of three early warning signs that a student is more likely to dropout of school
- ◆ By 9th grade, student attendance is a better predictor of graduation than 8th grade test scores

Additional information is available on the district's website at www.eccsd.org/attendance/matters. The development of good school attendance habits in the early elementary grade levels can prevent chronic absenteeism from becoming a problem which affects a student's success.

Start the Day On Time for Learning

Positive routines for student success are established each day by arriving on time for school. It is important that students report to classes on time whether they ride the bus to school or are dropped off each day by a parent/guardian.

School start times are listed each year in the school calendar. However, it is expected that students arrive at school prior to these school start times in order to report to class ready to learn and to avoid being marked tardy.

Columbia HS-In Guideroom by 7:15 AM; Goff MS-In Home-base by 7:50 AM; Bell Top-In class by 9:10; DPS-In class by 9:15; Genet-In class by 8:55 AM; Green Meadow-In Class by 9:15; Red Mill-In class by 9:15.

Attendance Procedures

Elementary Schools

In elementary school buildings attendance will be taken each morning at the beginning of the school day. Classroom teachers will record any student's absence from instructional time during any period of the day.

Middle School and High School

At Goff Middle School and Columbia High School attendance will be taken at the beginning of the school day during an attendance room period. Each attendance room teacher will keep a record of attendance and report all absences and tardiness to the building office. In addition, attendance will be taken for each instructional period, with each teacher keeping an attendance record for all students enrolled in their classes. Absences in these classes will also be reported to the building office during the instructional period.

District Wide Record

The school district will maintain a permanent record of attendance for all students. The record will include the student's name, date of birth, names of parents or person in parental relation, address, phone numbers, including emergency contact numbers, date of enrollment and a record of daily attendance.

The Role of Student and Parents/Guardians

School attendance is a right, obligation and responsibility in New York State. Students should come to school each day, ready to learn and perform at their highest levels. In the event that a student is absent from school, the following procedure should occur:

1. The parent/guardian should contact the school office on the day of the absence.
2. If no contact from a parent/guardian occurs, the school will make every reasonable effort to reach the parent/guardian through phone numbers provided to the school by the parent/guardian.
3. The parent/guardian should provide a written note (to be brought to school upon the student's return) explaining the reason for the absence.
4. Should the note not be submitted within five (5) days of the student's return from the absence, the absence may be deemed unexcused. An absence note may be accepted after the fifth day following the student's return, in such cases where the parent/guardian has requested that the building principal review the matter for extenuating circumstances which may have caused the parent/guardian not to submit the absence note within five days. If a student is absent due to illness for a period of five (5) consecutive days or more, a note from a medical professional will be required.

Excused/Unexcused Absences

For the purpose of this policy, the following is a listing of absences and tardiness that is deemed to be excused and unexcused:

Excused

- Personal illness up to 10 school days*
- Academic activity/program recognized or required by the school or district
- Activity recognized by the school district to be an educationally equivalent experience
- Recognized religious observance
- Death or serious illness in family
- Court appearance or legal obligation
- Impassable roads
- Military obligation
- Pre-approved college visit
- Medical appointment

Unexcused

- Truancy
- At CHS & Goff, any unexcused tardiness to class beyond 10 minutes
- Personal illness beyond 10 school days*
- Personal and/or family vacation
- Absences for which a note is not provided within five (5) school days of student's return
- Activity not recognized by the school district to be an educationally equivalent experience
- Other absences not listed above as "excused"

*For incidents of student illness beyond a total of 10 days over the course of the school year, medical documentation will be provided to the building principal so as to determine that extenuating circumstances exist.

Procedures to address Unexcused Absences

Elementary (K-5)

- A. Student accumulates 10 unexcused absences-letter of notification sent to parent/guardian; phone call to parent, meeting with parent/guardian and building staff.
- B. Student accumulates 15 unexcused absences-letter of notification sent, phone call to parent/guardian, and meeting with parent/guardian and building staff referral to Instructional Support Team.
- C. Student accumulates 20 unexcused absences-additional meetings with Principal may be called, letter of notification to parent/guardian that PINS diversion may be filed with Rensselaer County.
- D. Student accumulates 26 unexcused absences-letter of notification and phone call to parent/guardian, PINS diversion may be filed, referral to Child Protective Services for educational neglect.
- E. Visit by the Student & Family Engagement Specialist at the recommendation of the building Principal.

ABSENCE CALL-IN



Thank you to Parents/Guardians for submitting your child's absence notes on a timely basis. Please note that processing the absence excuses could take **at least a week** before the results appear on the Parent Portal. Thank you for your understanding.

Columbia High School has a direct Absence Call-In phone line that is available 24 hours a day, although it is best to call in the early morning when possible, and is checked daily prior to absentee notifications made home to Parents/Guardians. Please be aware that notification is sent out at 10:30 AM daily via ParentSquare.

Absence Phone #:
(518) 207-2002



PARENTS PLEASE NOTE

Please note: We are no longer recognizing Perfect Attendance. However, it is still good practice for your student to attend school on a regular basis to keep up with schoolwork. Students are allowed 10 days of legal absence by parent notification during the course of the school year. Anything beyond the 10 days must be accompanied by medical/legal documentation before it is accepted as a legal absence.