

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the new attendance policy?**

A student may be absent up to 8 days in a semester.

A student with a passing grade and nine (9) or more unexcused absences (per semester) in a class will be in jeopardy of losing all credits for that course (No Credit “NC”) unless the student participates in the Academic/Attendance Recovery Program (Buy-Back). Students with between 9 and 15 unexcused absences during a semester will be eligible for this credit recovery program. Please see page 4-6 of the Student Handbook for complete policy.

- **Do parent / guardian notes excuse an absence from school?**

No.

Parent notes will only ensure a student can make up missed classroom work because it documents that the student was not truant; however, absences covered by parent notes are not considered excused absences.

- **What is a “House Office”?**

At Lowell High School the student body is divided into four separate groups or “House Offices:” B – House, C – House, D – House, and E – House. Additionally all first year freshman are assigned to the “Freshman Academy.”

Upon completion of a student’s freshman year of high school they are randomly assigned to one of the four named “House Offices.” This office will serve as the primary office to handle all school related business. A “House Office” consists of a Housemaster, a House clerk, two guidance counselors and a clerk scheduler. This House Team along with teachers will serve as the primary contact for all matters concerning: academics, attendance, discipline, etc.

- **Who should parents / guardians contact with questions concerning: academics, attendance, or discipline?**

All questions regarding student matters should be directed to the student’s individual House Office. The primary contact person for students is the Housemaster. Please see the individual House Office tabs for contact information.

In addition, guidance counselors are referral agents who act as liaisons for parent and student to all student support services. The following is a list of general services provided by counselors for students and their parents:

- Educational planning and counseling
- Personal counseling
- Scheduling new students

- Information sharing and consultation with parents and teachers
  - Information about and referral to internal and external student support services
  - Information about and referral to special services (Chapter 766 & 504)
  - Participation in “TAT”
  - Assistance with decision making about the implementation of post graduate plans
  - Information about and referral to special programs
- **Can a parent / guardian dismiss a student over the phone?**

No...Emergency dismissals will not be approved by telephone contact alone.

If an emergency arises and a note has **not** been sent in, the parent/guardian must come to the school and present valid identification in order to dismiss a student. If this is not possible, a note signed by the parent that provides all the necessary information may be faxed to the house office with a follow-up phone call to the parent/guardian. Family members who come in to pick up a student for a previously verified dismissal must present valid identification.

**Please be aware that dismissing a student can impact his/her ability to earn credit in a course.** Parents are urged to make necessary appointments for students after school hours in order to minimize the need for dismissal. Students will not be dismissed early on days of school functions except for documented medical reasons. The same documentation is required as for an excused absence (see section 4-2).

Students who wish to be dismissed must bring in a parent-signed note to the house office on the morning of the dismissal before first period indicating:

- Student’s name and ID number
- Day/date/year of the dismissal
- The reason for the dismissal
- Parent/guardian name
- Signature
- Phone number(s) where parent can be reached to verify dismissal
- The name of the person who will picking the student up from school

- **Where do visitors park during school operation?**

Parents / guardians and other visitors should park their vehicles in the Ayotte Parking Garage located directly across the street from the school. The school will validate all parking permits in the case of school business. Other than handicapped parking (in front of the school, outside the cafeteria) there is no legal parking in or around the school.

### **School Visitation**

To accommodate the needs of all parties, an appointment is required and may be made by contacting your child’s house office. All visitors entering the building must report to the Main Office and obtain a guest ID Badge.

- **Who should parents contact if their child has a new or, existing medical concern that may require accommodations (e.g. temporary injury, medications, etc)?**

Parents / guardians should contact the student's Housemaster.

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  - Personal counseling
  - Scheduling new students
  - Information sharing and consultation with parents and teachers
  - Information about and referral to internal and external student support services
  - Information about and referral to special services (Chapter 766 & 504)
  - Participation in "TAT"
  - Assistance with decision making about the implementation of post graduate plans
  - Information about and referral to special program
- **How should a parent / guardian request school-work when a student will be out of school for an extended period of time?**

Parents / guardians should contact their child's House Office. The contact person to request student work is the clerk scheduler. The contact information for this person can be found on the House tab page. The clerk scheduler will request work from teachers and hold the work for parents / guardians to retrieve. When requesting work be aware that it will take 2 – 3 days to prepare and collect. Providing student's with work during a temporary absence is considered a courtesy and is not an obligation of the school.

### **Home or Hospital Tutorials**

Home teaching or tutoring is provided for those students who cannot attend school and fall under one of the following categories:

- Certified medical reasons which must be documented by a medical physician's Statement for Home or Hospitalization Education.
- An official Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- A 504 Accommodation Plan
- Suspension/Expulsion

If the tutoring is for medical or IEP reasons or for 504 Accommodations, the form must be sent to Lowell High School, Student Support Services, 50 Fr. Morissette Blvd., Lowell, MA 01852. If the tutoring is for a Suspension/Expulsion, the documentation must be sent to Student Support Services, at the Lowell School Department, on 155 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 01852.

If the tutoring is approved, a tutor will be assigned by the Lowell School Department to work with the student for a total of up to four (4) hours per week.

- **When is a student considered late or tardy to school (school hours)?**

A student is considered **late** to school at **7:55**. All students are required to attend advisory period from 7:55 until 8:15. Students arriving to school at 8:15 or later are required to check in at their House Office.

**School Hours:**

School hours are 7:55 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Students must be in advisory class by 7:55.

Students are expected to attend all classes and not leave school before the 2:30 dismissal bell. Students must leave the building upon dismissal. The only students who should be in the building after school are students involved in supervised activities:

- Tutoring
- Detention
- Athletics
- Band
- Clubs and Activities
- Meetings with Classroom Teachers

- **What is the policy regarding cell phones and other electronic devices?**

Cell Phones are allowed in school but must be shut off before entering the building. Cell phones will be considered in use if they are visible. All other electronic devices (IPODs etc.) are prohibited.

Cell phones have become the normal means for parents/guardians to coordinate afterschool activities, schedules, and transportation issues. Recognizing this reality but also needing to ensure that the educational process is not disrupted and the integrity of testing is not compromised, the following policy will apply to the issue of cell phones within the school:

- Cell phones must be shut off and put away BEFORE entering the school building in the morning.
- Cell phones and/or their carriers are not to be visible and cell phones are not to be used during the school day. If a cell phone is visible, it is considered “in use.”
- Any student using a cell phone during the school day (text messaging, phone conversations, checking messages, checking the time, or using it as a calculator) will have his/her phone confiscated and may face disciplinary action to include detention and/or suspension. Complete disregard for the policy could result in more serious actions such as referral to the alternative school.
- To ensure that students comply with the policy, we would ask that parents not call or text their child during the school day. In an emergency situation a student may be contacted through their house office (see page ix for house telephone numbers).
- Any student who repeatedly violates this policy will have his/her privilege to carry a cell phone in school terminated.
- Failure to surrender the device to faculty member or administrator when asked will result in a one-day suspension from school or further action as determined by the Headmaster.
- Cell phones that have been confiscated will not be returned directly to the student. The parent/guardian may collect the cell phone from the student’s house office no earlier than the day after the confiscation (24 hours) either 30 minutes prior to the start of school or 30 minutes after the close of school (7:30-8:00 a.m. and 2:30-3:00 p.m.)

- Though the school will secure the phone, the ultimate responsibility for any loss or damage remains with the student who violated this policy.
- Students may only use the cell phones after the final dismissal bell sounds.
- Students who have detention are not considered dismissed from school until the close of detention at 3:30; thus, their cell phone must remain off and out of sight until this time— additionally, students participating in after school activities especially, tutoring, or Academic Buy Back must also keep their cell phones off and out of sight.

**Prohibited Items:**

The following items are considered disruptive to the educational process at LHS and are not allowed in school:

- Radios
- Beepers or Pagers
- CD Players
- Video Games
- iPod and other Walkman Type Devices
- Hand Held Laser Pointers
- Playing Cards
- Tobacco Products
- Lighter/Matches (possession will lead to immediate suspension)
- Other Items or Devices deemed inappropriate by the Headmaster
- Cell phones
- Hats

Students displaying and/or using these devices will have the device confiscated and turned over to house office. Though the school will secure the device, the ultimate responsibility for any loss or damage remains with the student who brought the prohibited item to school. **A parent or guardian must come in to school to pick up the item.** Playing cards, tobacco products, lighter, and matches will not be returned. All confiscated items must be claimed by the last day of the school year, any item(s) not claimed will be disposed of one week after the official end of the school year.

- **What is the ID policy at Lowell High School?**

All students and staff must wear an ID Badge clearly visible at all times on a lanyard around the neck. Classroom teachers will check each class period to ensure that students are wearing their ID Badge.

Students found without their ID Badge will receive a temporary pass and after the 4<sup>th</sup> incident and each subsequent incident, detention will be given by the housemaster. Chronic disregard of the ID badge policy will result in further disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

Students are responsible for their ID badges. If the badge is lost, the student is responsible for purchasing a new one in Student Support Services. The replacement cost is \$3.00. ID Badges are the property of Lowell High School and must not be altered or defaced in any way.

- **What are the qualifications for “perfect” attendance?**

For the purposes of recognition during Commencement Exercises “perfect” attendance is defined as having no absences for the school year (exception: authorized field trips and up to three pre-approved college visits during senior year). Please note that a student who is dismissed before 11:10 or is tardy

after 11:10 is considered absent for the day. **Also, if the cumulative total time of tardies or dismissals for any school year equals more than half a day, this will disqualify the student for the perfect attendance designation.**

- **What are the criteria to qualify for the “Net Book Lottery?”**

The “Net Book Lottery” formally known as “Laptops for Lowell” is an attendance incentive program for grade 12 students at Lowell High School. To qualify for this lottery a student:

- Must be an active member of Lowell High
- Must be credited as a senior (grade 12) and graduate
- Must have 6 or fewer absences in each individual class on his/her schedule
- Must have an acceptance letter from the military, college, or approved technical school

- **What is the “Buy Back” program and how does it work?**

A student who exceeds the allowable number of excused absences in a class (8) may qualify to participate in the academic/attendance recovery program.

Participation in the program is a privilege, not a right, and the following criteria must be met:

- The student must see the housemaster to determine eligibility for the program.
- Once the Housemaster has determined that the student is eligible for the program, the Housemaster will officially enroll the student in the program.
- No student can be in the program without being officially enrolled by the Housemaster.
- The student can have no more than fifteen (15) unexcused absences in a semester course.
- The student must have five (5) days of perfect attendance (no unexcused tardies, dismissals, truancy, and no cuts) before beginning the program and the student must have met all other obligations including serving any outstanding detentions.
- The student must sign a contract with the housemaster and classroom teachers involved. This contract may include specific assignments to be completed by the student at the discretion of the teachers involved. Buy-Back Program staff members will assign additional work as required.
- The student must begin the academic/attendance recovery program by attending one Saturday tutorial at the Tutoring Center in the school library. If the student is buying back 3 hours or less, the student will not need to start the program on a Saturday. In the fourth quarter the Saturday requirement will be waived.
- To get credit for buy-back in the morning the student must be in the Tutoring Center from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. To receive credit for after school buy-back the student must attend a minimum of 30 minutes after school.
- A student can only buy back one (1) course at a time.
- All students must be actively engaged during their buy-back hours and complete the work assigned. Final approval of buy-back hours is subject to the assessment of the staff members at the Tutoring Center.
- Once enrolled in the program, for every one (1) hour of attendance at the Tutoring Center, the student will be credited for one period of class attendance
- The student must complete the academic/attendance recovery program prior to the end of the following marking period (example: 1st marking period “U” must be cleared up by the end of 2nd marking period). Any 4th quarter buy-back must be completed before 4th quarter exams. Buyback does not extend into the following school year.

- The second Saturday in May is the last day that buy-back can be entered for seniors and the first Saturday in June is the last day buy-back can be entered for underclassmen. The only other option for students who miss the deadline and have an outstanding NC would be attending Summer School (if eligible).
- It is the student's responsibility to verify attendance at the Tutoring Center.
- A student will lose his/her accrued hours and be put out of the program if he/she is asked to leave the Tutoring Center due to misbehavior or if the student cuts any further classes or has any other unexcused absences. A student put out of the program will not be permitted to re-enter the program. The student may be allowed to attend summer school (if eligible).