



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Attendance
Code	204
Status	Active
Adopted	September 21, 2006
Last Revised	August 16, 2018

Purpose

The Board requires that school age students enrolled in district schools attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by the district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.

Definitions

Absence is the nonattendance of a student on those days or half days when school is in session.

Excused Absence refers to absence for a legal reason(s). Excused absences shall be classified into two (2) groups:

1. Nonattendance due to unpreventable causes.
2. Nonattendance due to other legal reasons. The Public School Code of Pennsylvania states that upon proper evidence a child may be excused for mental, physical or other urgent reasons. The term **urgent reason** shall be strictly construed and shall not permit irregular attendance. The term **strictly construed** implies that the reasons of non-attendance for unpreventable causes may be serious and that they apply to the child him/herself and not ordinarily to home conditions, sickness, impassable roads, quarantine, death in the immediate family, or inclement weather. Absences due to other legal causes would include, for example, minors who have employment certificates, a farm or domestic permit, students who are absent for religious instruction, religious holidays and who are absent because the school bus was delayed or did not operate.

Unexcused Absence is the absence of a student due to parental neglect, illegal employment or truancy.

Unlawful/Illegal Absence is the unexcused absence of any student under seventeen (17) years of age.

Truant – having three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to the compulsory attendance law.[1].

Habitually Truant – having six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.[1]

School-based or community based attendance improvement program - a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.[1]

Tardiness is the absence of a student up to thirty (30) minutes following the start of any morning or afternoon session, provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session.

Excused Tardiness is the absence of a student up to thirty (30) minutes following the start of any morning or afternoon session, provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session. A tardy may be granted excused only if the student turns in a medical or doctor's excuse at the time of the infraction. A student may submit up to four (4) parent/guardian excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within three (3) days of the infraction for the tardy to be excused.

Unexcused Tardiness is the absence of a student up to thirty (30) minutes following the start of any morning or afternoon session, provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session. Once the student has exhausted the allotment for excused tardies and cannot provide a medical/doctor excuse, the absence will be unexcused/illegal. The student is permitted to submit up to four (4) parent/guardian excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within three (3) days of the infraction for the tardy to be excused. After the permitted four (4) parental excuses for tardiness are exhausted, all other tardies must have a medical/doctor excuse to be excused.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in district schools during the days and hours that school is in session, except that a principal or teacher may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.[2][3][4]

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Verification by a physician will be required if absences, excused or unexcused/illegal, exceed ten (10) days.
2. Death in the family, limited to five (5) days for the death of an immediate relative - (mother, father, child, sibling, or legal guardian). Death in the family of a grandparent or half-brother/sister is limited to three (3) school days from date of death. Death of a near relative like a cousin, aunt, or uncle is limited to one (1) day. For non-family members' deaths, pre-approval is required for a one-day absence. Documentation from the funeral home director stating the name of the person and the relationship to the student must be submitted for the day to be excused.
3. Impassable roads as certified by the bus driver, township supervisor or state police.
4. Religious holidays - students may be excused for religious holidays and religious instruction for up to thirty-six (36) hours per school year in accordance with the School Code. A written request from parents/guardians of the students must be submitted to the principal prior to participation in the religious instructional program. Proof of attendance in such program must also be provided upon the student's return to school. The school shall not provide transportation to religious instruction. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for religious instruction. (Reference Early Dismissal Section)
5. Administrative reasons as certified by the principal (field trips organized by the school for educational endeavors, a college visit, reasons noted in an IEP.)

6. Calamity - fire, flood, etc.
7. Medical appointment which cannot be scheduled outside the school day when the absence is verified by a physician and verified by the school. We recommend that parents/guardians make appointments outside the school day.
8. Illness or injury when the student is absent verified by a physician.
9. Family Educational Leave maximum of five (5) days with paperwork completed prior to departure explaining where, which dates and the educational experience which may be gleaned. This paperwork must be submitted to the office at least two (2) days prior to departure. In addition, each student must go to all teachers and have the teacher sign off and write the assignments that s/he must complete while away. The Family Educational Leave journal must be completed and submitted within three (3) days upon return or the days of family travel will automatically become unexcused/illegal. (See building secretary for forms).
10. College visits are limited to seniors. Seniors are allotted three (3) days per year for college visits. A letter from the college stating the date and time of visit must be submitted within three (3) days or the day will be unexcused/illegal.
11. Required court attendance. Documentation of court attendance is required and must include time in and out.
12. Health exclusions - students may be excluded from school for health reasons including, but not limited to: Lice, Pinkeye, Scabies, Ringworm.

Missing Required Shots/Immunizations (School law requires students to obtain immunization shots; however, parents/guardians may get a legal exemption from the school law for medical reasons or conscientiously held beliefs.)

The length of these exclusions is forty-eight (48) hours. Days absent after that time period will be considered unexcused unless a valid medical excuse is provided. For more serious communicable diseases, acceptable periods of exclusion will be determined by a district representative and the child's physician.

Attendance need not always be within school facilities. A student will be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the building principal; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.[2][5][6][7][8][9][15][16]

The building principal shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide organization and approved by an administrator.

The building principal will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearances, and family emergencies. (Reference Guidelines for Submitting a Doctor Excuse.)

The building principal shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at the schools of this district:

1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.[3][4][10]
2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught, except that such students and students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in the district schools shall be counted as being in part-time attendance in

this district.[2][11][12]

3. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.[2]
4. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate. Students can withdraw from school with proof of full-time employment and parent/guardian approval.[4][7]

The building principal may excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools:

1. Students receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.[2][9][17]
2. Homebound children unable to attend school on the recommendation of the school physician and the school psychologist or a psychiatrist and approval of the Secretary of Education.[18][19][20]
3. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by the Intermediate Unit No. 1 or the Department of Education.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of state law and regulations.
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with state law.[13][14]
3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences and excusals.
4. Impose on truant students appropriate incremental disciplinary measures for infractions of school rules.
5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of truant behavior, and consider modification of the student's educational program to meet particular needs and interests.
6. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.
7. Issue notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance statute. Such notice shall inform the parent/guardian of the date(s) the absence occurred, that the absence was unexcused/illegal and in violation of law, that the parent/guardian is being notified and informed of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student, and that further violation during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.

Excessive Absences

The attendance record of each student shall be monitored during the school year and when excessive absences occur, action will be taken by the administration and the attendance officer. Such action shall include phone calls, home visits, letters sent to the student's home and possible referrals to attendance improvement programs. The letters sent home shall contain the days on which the student was absent and will state that the student's attendance records will be submitted to the home school visitor/attendance officer for further investigation including possible prosecution.

If excessive absences continue to occur and are deemed to be unexcused/illegal, the district shall mail a citation warning to the student's home while the pending magistrate hearing is scheduled. The building principal reserves the right to require physician's excuse at any time to verify the validity of an absence.

In cases where teachers or school officials believe that attendance laws are being abused, a physician's statement may be required for each absence, stating that the student was under his/her care and was too ill to be in school on a certain date.

Without the required certification, the absence will be considered unexcused/illegal.

The excuse must be presented to the homeroom teacher within three (3) days upon the student's return to school. If no excuse is presented, or if it is not presented in the specified amount of time, the absence shall be considered unexcused/illegal.

Whenever a student has been unlawfully/illegally absent to the extent that his/her parents/guardians have received a letter of notification explaining the student has been absent unlawfully/illegally, the parents/guardians will be prosecuted for noncompliance with compulsory attendance laws.

Students with excessive absences will be removed and will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities.

Students who drive to school and are chronically late shall lose driving privileges.

Early Dismissal

An early dismissal is leaving school before the end of the school day for excused reasons.

Early dismissals must be kept to a minimum because students leaving early miss instructional time. Failure to provide documentation supporting an excused reason for early dismissal will result in an unexcused/illegal absence.

All excused absences for early dismissals must be made by a parent/guardian in writing. The student is permitted to submit up to four (4) parental excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within three (3) days of the infraction for the early dismissal to be excused. After the permitted four (4) parental excuses for early dismissals are exhausted all other early dismissals must have a medical/doctor excuse to be excused.

Students will be permitted to makeup work/tests for one (1) early dismissal, tardy, and/or full day absence per semester that are unexcused/illegal and receive full credit. Any unexcused early dismissals, tardiness, and/or full day absence that is unexcused beyond the one (1) per semester will result in a zero (0) for any classwork, quiz, and/or test.

All requests for early dismissals must be made by a parent/guardian in writing. Written requests shall include:

1. Student's name.
2. Date.
3. Reason for the early dismissal.
4. Telephone number where parent/guardian can be contacted. If request cannot be verified student will not be dismissed.

All early dismissal arrangements must be made through the school office.

Students being picked up must be picked up at the school office and signed out by a parent/guardian/designee.

Early dismissal for student drivers must also be verified by a parent/guardian.

Students must remain in school for the entire day. It is understandable that, on occasion, a student may need to leave early for an occasional appointment. However, students leaving early too often

miss their last class of the day. Parents/Guardians should consider doctor appointments after school. Appointments for haircuts, family trips, or shopping are not excusable.

At the secondary level students leaving two (2) hours or less prior to dismissal will be charged a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students leaving two (2) hours to three and one-half (3-1/2) hours prior to dismissal will be charged half (.50) day absence.

At the elementary level students leaving one and one-half (1-1/2) hours or less prior to dismissal will be charged a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students leaving one and one-half (1-1/2) to three and one-half (3-1/2) hours prior to dismissal will be charged a half (.50) day absence.

Early dismissals will accumulate and be counted against the ten (10) total days of absence.

Detention, written parent/guardian notification, withdrawal of privileges, parent/guardian hearing, and possible citation to the magistrate are progressive punishments when a student abuses the system and leaves early regularly and the absent is unexcused/illegal.

Tardies/Late Arrivals

Tardiness - the arrival up to thirty (30) minutes after the designated starting time. Failure to provide documentation supporting an excused reason will result in an unexcused/illegal tardy.

Tardiness/late arrivals must be kept to a minimum because students arriving to school late miss instructional time. Failure to provide documentation supporting an excused reason for the tardiness will result in an unexcused/illegal absence.

All excused absences for tardiness must be made by a parent/guardian in writing. The student is permitted to submit up to four (4) parent excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within three (3) days of the infraction for the tardy to be excused. After the permitted four (4) parental excuses for tardiness are exhausted, all other tardies must have a medical/doctor excuse to be excused.

Students will be permitted to makeup work/tests for one (1) early dismissal, tardy, and/or full day absence per semester that are unexcused/illegal and receive full credit. Any unexcused early dismissals, tardies, and/or full day absence that is unexcused beyond the one (1) per semester will result in a zero (0) for any classwork, quiz, and/or test.

Written excuses shall include:

1. Student's name.
2. Date.
3. Reason for being tardy.
4. Telephone number where parent/guardian can be contacted.

Tardies/Late Arrivals are counted cumulatively throughout the school year.

At the secondary level students who arrive two (2) hours or less after the start of the school day will be charged with a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students who arrive two (2) hours to three and one-half (3-1/2) hours after the start of the school day will be charged with a half (.50) day absence.

At the elementary level students who arrive one and one-half (1-1/2) hours or less after the start of the school day will be charged a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students who arrive one and one-half (1-1/2) to three and one-half (3-1/2) hours after the start of the school day will be charged a half (.50) day absence.

Tardies will be accumulated and count towards the ten (10) total days of absence.

Detention, written parent/guardian notification, withdrawal of privileges, parent/guardian hearing, and possible citation to the magistrate are progressive punishments when a student abuses the system and leaves early regularly and the absence is unexcused/illegal.

After the mid-day cut-off point, students can only arrive to school if they have a doctor's excuse/legal excuse or a parent/guardian must escort the student to the office and sign the student into school. Students who do not meet these requirements will be referred to administration.

All teachers and administrators shall assume responsibility for enforcing compulsory attendance laws in conformity with the School Laws of Pennsylvania and the regulations of the State Board of Education.

Attendance Procedures

When a student is truant, parents/guardians will be notified in writing within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence that the child has been "truant" and an attendance improvement meeting may be held.

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant s/he will be referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or CYS. Additionally, the district may file a citation against the parent of a habitually truant student under fifteen (15) in a Magisterial District Court.

When a student fifteen (15) years or older is habitually truant s/he will be referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or file a citation against the student or parent/guardian in a Magisterial District Court. If the student incurs additional absences after a school refers that student to an attendance improvement program or refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, the school may refer the child to the local CYS for services for possible disposition as a dependent child.

The student will be allotted ten (10) absences per school year. Parental excuses, unexcused/illegal absences, early dismissals and late arrivals/tardies will count towards the allotted ten (10) absences. After ten (10) absences a student must have a mandatory doctor excuse.

All absences will be considered unexcused/illegal after the allotted ten (10) absences per school year a doctor's excuse is provided.

All parent/guardian and doctor excuses must be submitted within three (3) days of absence or the day(s) absent will remain unexcused/illegal.

Citations will be filed with the District Justice (Magistrate) according to state regulations. A student may be referred to Children and Youth Services.

After ten (10) doctor excuses, a meeting may occur with the family, attendance designee, school nurse, and physician to discuss concerns about missing school and student progress.

An attendance committee will be available to review individual cases.

Guidelines for Submitting a Parental Excuse

A Parental Excuse must include all of the following in order for it to be acceptable:

1. Full name.
2. Date(s) of absence.
3. Specific reason.
4. Parent's/Guardian's full name (printed).
5. Parent's/Guardian's signature.

The excuse must be submitted within three (3) days of absence.

In the situation where more than one (1) child in the household was absent on the same day, a separate excuse must be provided for each student, following the same criteria.

Guidelines for Submitting a Doctor Excuse

A doctor's excuse must include all of the following in order for it to be acceptable:

1. Student's full name.
2. Date(s) of absence.
3. Time of visit.
4. Include if the student is excused from school all day or one-half (1/2) day.
5. Specific reason (if applicable).
6. Doctor's name (printed).
7. Doctor's signature.

The excuse must be on original medical stationary. Photocopied excuses will not be accepted.

The excuse must be submitted within three (3) school days of absence.

In the situation where more than one (1) child in the household was at the doctors, a separate excuse must be provided for each student, following the same criteria.

Disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken against any student who falsifies or alters an excuse.

Make-Up Work

It is imperative that students make up work when they miss school. Failure to complete the make-up work could result in a failing grade or even a zero (0) for that assignment, exam, paper, etc.

Students returning from an excused absence, must contact the classroom teachers within three (3) school days of their return to school concerning make-up work. The teacher and the student shall arrange a schedule to make up work and tests.

Students will be permitted to make up missed work for one (1) unexcused absence, tardy, or early release per semester. Any unexcused absences thereafter will result in a zero (0) grade for any class work missed due to the absence.

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1326
2. 24 P.S. 1327
3. 24 P.S. 1329
4. 24 P.S. 1330
5. 22 PA Code 11.23
6. 22 PA Code 11.22
7. 22 PA Code 11.28
8. Pol. 115
9. Pol. 116
10. 22 PA Code 11.34
11. 22 PA Code 11.5
12. 22 PA Code 11.32
13. 24 P.S. 1332
14. 24 P.S. 1339
15. Pol. 117
16. Pol. 118
17. 22 PA Code 11.31
18. 22 PA Code 11.31a
19. 24 P.S. 1327.1
20. Pol. 137
- 24 P.S. 510.2
- 24 P.S. 1333
- 24 P.S. 1333.1
- 24 P.S. 1333.2
- 24 P.S. 1546
- 22 PA Code 11.8
- 22 PA Code 11.13
- 22 PA Code 11.21
- 22 PA Code 11.24
- 22 PA Code 11.25
- 22 PA Code 11.26
- 22 PA Code 11.41
- 22 PA Code 12.1
- 42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302
- Pol. 103.1
- Pol. 113
- Pol. 114