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| Book         | Policy Manual   |
| Section      | 200 Pupils      |
| Title        | Attendance      |
| Code         | 204             |
| Status       | Active          |
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### **Purpose**

The Board recognizes that regular school attendance is essential to the academic progress of all students and 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.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)

### **Authority**

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 upon receipt of 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.[\[3\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

In general, absences for the following reasons shall be excused:

1. Illness.[\[12\]](#)
2. Quarantine.
3. Family emergency (unavoidable).
4. Recovery from accident.
5. Required court appearance.
6. Death in family.
7. Religious holidays and religious instruction.[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)

Students may also be excused for the following reasons, at the discretion of the district and in accordance with established Board policy and administrative regulations:

1. Educational tours and trips.[\[15\]](#)

2. Impassable roads.
3. Inclement weather.
4. Health care.
5. Tutorial work.
6. College visitations.
7. Family travel.

After any absence, students have three (3) school days to submit to the building principal or designee a valid written excuse from the parent/guardian. If the excuse is not received within three (3) school days, the absence will be considered unexcused. Students experiencing excessive absences shall be monitored from year to year.

Absences in excess of 3 consecutive days will require an excuse from a physician unless directly related to a documented medical issue. A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification, may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a physician.

The Board shall report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of seventeen (17). The Board shall issue notice to those parents/guardians who fail to comply with the requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions will be prosecuted according to law.[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

Attendance need not always be within school buildings. A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; 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.[\[3\]](#)[\[18\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)[\[22\]](#)[\[23\]](#)

Upon written request by a parent/guardian and in accordance with the policies of the district's Board of School Directors, students may be excused from school for religious holidays observed by bona fide religious groups. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for a religious holiday.[\[14\]](#)

The Board shall, upon written request of the parents/guardians, release from attendance a student participating in a religious instruction program acknowledged by the Board. Such instruction shall not require the child's absence from school for more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year, and its organizers must inform the Board of the child's attendance record. The Board shall not provide transportation to religious instruction. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for religious instruction.[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)

The Board shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group upon written request prior to the event.[\[9\]](#)[\[6\]](#)

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearances, family emergencies, and other urgent reasons.[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

The Board shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:

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.[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[24\]](#)

2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught. [\[3\]](#)[\[25\]](#)
3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools. [\[26\]](#)
4. Students attending a home education program in accordance with law. [\[27\]](#)[\[28\]](#)
5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved. [\[3\]](#)
6. Students fifteen (15) years of age, and fourteen (14) years of age who have completed the highest elementary grade, engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits. [\[10\]](#)
7. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate. [\[10\]](#)[\[19\]](#)

The Board 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. [\[3\]](#)[\[18\]](#)[\[21\]](#)
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. [\[24\]](#)
3. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by the Capital Area Intermediate Unit or the Department of Education. [\[3\]](#)

#### Educational Tours/Trips

The Board may excuse a student from school attendance to participate in an educational tour or trip not sponsored by the district if the following conditions are met: [\[15\]](#)

1. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal prior to the absence.
2. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee.
3. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the parents/guardians and the Superintendent.

The Board may limit the number and duration of tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school term.

Trips may not be approved if it is determined that:

1. The trip is not adequately educational to warrant an absence from school.
2. The student's prior attendance record is not adequate to approve additional days out of school.
3. The trip would be detrimental to the student's progress or success in school.
4. The trip takes place during the final two (2) weeks of the school term, unless an emergency exists.
5. The requests exceed a total of five (5) school days in one (1) school year.

#### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, district web site and/or other efficient methods.[\[6\]](#)

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

1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of state law and regulations.[\[29\]](#)[\[30\]](#)[\[31\]](#)[\[32\]](#)[\[40\]](#)[\[41\]](#)
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with law.[\[34\]](#)[\[35\]](#)
3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences and excusals.[\[6\]](#)
4. Impose on truant students appropriate incremental disciplinary measures for infractions of school rules, but no penalty may have an irredeemably negative effect on the student's record beyond that which naturally follows absence from classroom learning experiences.[\[16\]](#)[\[36\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[37\]](#)[\[38\]](#)
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, through the Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) process.
6. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1301
2. 24 P.S. 1326
3. 24 P.S. 1327
4. 22 PA Code 11.12
5. 22 PA Code 11.13
6. 22 PA Code 11.41
7. 22 PA Code 12.1
8. Pol. 200
9. 24 P.S. 1329
10. 24 P.S. 1330
11. 22 PA Code 11.23
12. 22 PA Code 11.25
13. 24 P.S. 1546
14. 22 PA Code 11.21
15. 22 PA Code 11.26
16. 24 P.S. 1333
17. 24 P.S. 1354
18. 22 PA Code 11.22
19. 22 PA Code 11.28
20. Pol. 115
21. Pol. 116
22. Pol. 117
23. Pol. 118

24. 22 PA Code 11.34  
25. 22 PA Code 11.32  
26. 22 PA Code 11.5  
27. 24 P.S. 1327.1  
28. Pol. 137  
29. 24 P.S. 1501  
30. 24 P.S. 1504  
31. 22 PA Code 4.4  
32. 22 PA Code 11.1  
34. 24 P.S. 1332  
35. 24 P.S. 1339  
36. 24 P.S. 1338  
37. Pol. 218  
38. Pol. 233  
39. 24 P.S. 1318  
40. 22 PA Code 11.2  
41. 22 PA Code 11.3  
22 PA Code 11.24  
22 PA Code 11.8  
24 P.S. 510  
Pol. 000