



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

The Board recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.[1]

Authority

The Board requires the attendance of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except that temporary student absences may be excused by authorized district staff in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.[2][3][4][5][6][7]

Definitions

Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a student's life from the time the student's person in parental relation elects to have the student enter school, which shall be no later than six (6) years of age, until the student reaches eighteen (18) years of age. The term does not include a student who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.[8][9]

Excused absence shall mean an absence from school which is permitted by law.

Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.[8]

Medical excuse/document is a document stating the result of a satisfactory medical examination by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.

School shall mean the educational entity in which the child is enrolled.

School-based or **community-based attendance improvement program** shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a student'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.[8]

School day shall mean the length of time that a child subject to compulsory school attendance is expected to be receiving instruction during a calendar day, as determined by the governing body.

Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.[8]

Person in parental relation shall mean a:[8]

1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
3. Guardian of the person of a student.
4. Person with whom a student lives and who is acting in a parental role of a student.

This term shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.[10]

Unexcused absence shall mean an absence from school which is not permitted by the provisions of section 1329 and for which an approved explanation has not been submitted within the time period and in the manner prescribed by the governing body. An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, persons in parental relation, staff and local children and youth agency and local magisterial district judges about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in student handbooks and newsletters, on the district website and through other efficient communication methods.[1][11]

The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with the building principal, and/or Attendance Officer shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

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

1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.[12][13]
2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences.
3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency, or the appropriate magisterial district judge.
4. Clarify the district's responsibility for collaboration with nonpublic schools in the enforcement of compulsory school attendance requirements.
5. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

Guidelines

Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

All students of compulsory school age who reside in the district shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.[2]

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; or the student's placement is instruction in the home.[2][5][14][15][16][17][18][19][20]

Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements

Student is Truant -

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.[21]

The notice shall:[21]

1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;
2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant;
3. Shall include the offer of a school attendance improvement conference;
 - a. Date, time and location; or
 - b. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the student's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.

School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) -

District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date, time and location of the SAIC.[21]

The purpose of the SAIC is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.[8]

The following individuals shall be invited to the SAIC:[8]

1. The student.
2. The student's person in parental relation.
3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
4. Appropriate school personnel.
5. Recommended service providers.

Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the SAIC shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.[21]

The outcome of the SAIC shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student and appropriate district staff.[21]

The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until the scheduled SAIC has been held and the student has incurred six (6) or more days of unexcused absences.[21]

Discipline

Schools shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.[21]

At the 4th unexcused absence, after the school has issued the three (3)-day written notice, then the student shall be sent through the District's Agency.

Student is Habitually Truant -

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff:[\[22\]](#)

1. Shall refer the student to:
 - a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
 - b. The local children and youth agency.
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.[\[22\]](#)

When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, district staff shall:[\[22\]](#)

1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

District staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency, if the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or if the student refuses to participate in such program.[\[22\]](#)

Regardless of age, when district staff refer a habitually truant student to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate magisterial district judge, district staff shall provide verification that the school held a SAIC.[\[22\]](#)

Filing a Citation -

A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled, against the student or person in parental relation to the student.[\[23\]](#)

Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.[\[23\]](#)

Parental Notice of Absence -

Absences shall be treated as unexcused until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

If no written excuse is received within three (3) school days then the absences will be marked as unexcused.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year.

All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.

For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria specified in this policy shall be permanently considered unexcused.

An out-of-school suspension shall not be considered an unexcused absence.

District staff shall provide prompt notice to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused absence.

Enforcement

Generally, a truancy citation is filed with the magisterial district judge (MDJ) where the student attends school or would attend school in the student's school district of residence. For students attending cyber charter schools, the cyber charter school must file truancy citations with the MDJ where the student resides. For students attending nonpublic schools, the student's school district of residence must file truancy citations with the MDJ where the nonpublic school student resides.

If a Cyber School is established by the Trinity Area School District, then the compulsory school attendance requirements will follow the procedures in this policy.

Cumulative, Consecutive Lawful Absences

Students who are absent from school for ten (10) consecutive school days shall be dropped from the active membership roll unless the school is provided with evidence the absence is legal or compulsory attendance prosecution is being pursued.

Charter schools or cyber charter schools that drop students from their membership rolls must immediately inform the student's school district of residence.

Standard disenrollment procedures do not apply when a student with an IEP has been absent for ten (10) consecutive days. Instead, schools must comply with the procedures required by IDEA and 22 Pa Code Chapter 14 when disenrolling a student with an IEP.

Excused Absence

The following students shall be excused 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. [\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[24\]](#).
2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught. [\[2\]](#)[\[25\]](#).
3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools. [\[26\]](#)
4. Students attending a home education program or private tutoring in accordance with law. [\[2\]](#)[\[18\]](#)[\[27\]](#)[\[28\]](#)[\[29\]](#)[\[30\]](#)
5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved. [\[2\]](#)
6. Students fifteen (15) years of age, as well as students fourteen (14) years of age who have completed the highest elementary grade, engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits. [\[4\]](#)
7. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly engaged in useful and lawful employment during the school session and holding a valid employment certificate. Regularly engaged means thirty-five (35) or more hours per week of employment. [\[4\]](#)[\[15\]](#).

Excused/Lawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons. [\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#).

2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.[\[3\]](#)
3. Quarantine – as recommended by a medical professional.
4. Family emergency – principal approval.
5. Recovery from accident – as recommended by a medical professional.
6. Required court attendance – with documentation.
7. Death in family – with documentation.
8. Medical or dental appointments – with documentation.
9. Authorized school activities - with documentation.
10. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countrywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
11. Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined by law, for an event or funeral.
 - a. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location, and time of the event or funeral.
 - b. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the district prior to being excused from school.
12. Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.
13. Nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips, if the following conditions are met:
 - a. The person in parental relation submits the required documentation for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate timeframe.
 - b. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee.
 - c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation and the Superintendent.
14. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
15. Other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness, foster care and other forms of educational instability.[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[31\]](#)

The district may limit the number and duration of nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips and/or college or postsecondary institution visits for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

Temporary Excusals -

The following students may be temporarily excused 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.[\[2\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[18\]](#)
2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:[\[32\]](#)
[\[33\]](#)

- a. The person in parental relation submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction.
 - b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
 - c. Following each absence, the person in parental relation shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.
3. School age children unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education.[\[24\]](#)

Parent Notification -

District staff shall provide prompt notice to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused absence.

The notice may include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[21\]](#)

If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[21\]](#)

Special Needs and Accommodations

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.
[\[16\]](#)[\[34\]](#)[\[35\]](#)[\[36\]](#)

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

Discipline

The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.[\[21\]](#)

- Legal
- [1. 22 PA Code 11.41](#)
 - [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 11.25](#)
 - [7. 22 PA Code 12.1](#)
 - [8. 24 P.S. 1326](#)
 - [9. 22 PA Code 11.13](#)
 - [10. 42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302](#)
 - [11. 24 P.S. 510.2](#)
 - [12. 24 P.S. 1332](#)
 - [13. 24 P.S. 1339](#)
 - [14. 22 PA Code 11.22](#)

[15. 22 PA Code 11.28](#)

16. Pol. 113

17. Pol. 115

18. Pol. 116

19. Pol. 117

20. Pol. 118

[21. 24 P.S. 1333](#)

[22. 24 P.S. 1331.1](#)

[23. 24 P.S. 1333.2](#)

[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. 22 PA Code 11.31](#)

[29. 22 PA Code 11.31a](#)

30. Pol. 137

31. Pol. 251

[32. 22 PA Code 11.21](#)

[33. 24 P.S. 1546](#)

34. Pol. 103.1

35. Pol. 113.3

36. Pol. 114

[24 P.S. 1333.3](#)

[22 PA Code 11.24](#)

[22 PA Code 11.8](#)