



Book	CCPS Policies and Regulations
Section	J - Students
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OFFICE: Associate Superintendent for Education Services

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

### **Rationale**

The State of Maryland defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of school days regardless of reason. This is the equivalent of missing more than 17 school days. Studies show that students who are not chronically absent perform better in all subjects (especially in mathematics) and are more likely to graduate than their peers who are chronically absent.

### **STANDARDS FOR REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

A student shall not be absent from school in excess of 17 days during the school year regardless of the reason.

### **Definitions**

**Habitual Truant:** A student is a habitual truant if the student is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portions of days in excess of 10% of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year. Students who demonstrate a pattern of habitual truancy will be referred to Pupil Personnel workers or Student Services Resource Teachers to develop a plan to improve attendance.

**Half (½) day attendance:** Students attending at least two hours, but less than four hours in any school day are considered present one-half day. If a student's entire schedule is for a partial day, then attendance for the partial day is considered a full day. Half days will accumulate. Two half days equal one full day. Four (4) hours or more constitutes a full day.

The laws of Maryland require that all absences are coded "lawful" or "unlawful;" however, lawful causes of absence are still counted towards the 17-day limit of absences.

**Lawful Cause of Absence:** (COMAR 13A.08.01.03): Absence from school, including absence for any portion of the day, of students who are presently enrolled in public schools shall be considered lawful only under the following conditions: death in the immediate family, illness of the student, court summons, suspensions, state emergencies, hazardous weather conditions, extenuating circumstance, health exclusions, emergencies declared by the superintendent as sufficient cause of an absence, observance of a religious holiday; work approved or sponsored by the school and/or lack of authorized transportation.

**Unlawful Cause of Absence:** (COMAR 13A.08.01.03) An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful is presumed unlawful and may constitute truancy.

### **PENALTIES FOR NOT MEETING STANDARDS FOR REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

1. High school students who are absent from school in excess of 17 days in a school year will receive no credit in all subjects for the year. (Regulations for determining grades may be found in the Grading and Reporting Policy appropriate IKAG-RA.)
2. Middle or elementary school students who are absent from school in excess of 17 days may fail the grade. If advanced to the next grade, such student will be placed rather than promoted. (Regulations for determining grades may be found in the Grading and Reporting Policy IKAE-RA and IKAG-RD.)
3. Parents will be notified in writing when a student has accumulated 5, 10, and 15 absences in a school year.
4. A student who arrives after the official start of the school day shall be considered tardy. Each school shall develop and implement regulations to encourage punctual attendance. These regulations shall be disseminated to each student at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment.
5. The parents or guardians of each student must provide the necessary certification for absences on the day that the student returns to school following an absence.
6. The Principal and/or Pupil Personnel Worker/Student Services Resource Teacher may require a physician's note from a parent or guardian of a student reported continuously absent from school. (Continuously absent means either a number of consecutive absences, or a total number of absences that are in excess of the standards set by the definition of habitual truant.)
7. Absences due to family trips count toward the total absences for the year.
8. When illnesses are certified through doctor's notes or parent note or circumstances warrant, the principal may waive attendance failures after verification.
9. Students on verified college visits up to five (5) days will be counted present.
10. Suspensions will not count toward the 17-day limit.

### **REINSTATEMENT OF GRADES**

**High School and Middle Schools:** A student who has exceeded the 17-day limit shall have the earned grades reinstated through the following process: students will serve two (2) hours of Twilight School for each day absent in excess of 17 days. School administrators or their designee will schedule students for Twilight School after a student conference and parent contact. Students failing the fourth marking period due only to attendance may restore the earned grade by successfully completing a program offered after the last day of school.

**Elementary Schools:** Students who have exceeded the 17-day limit may appeal non-promotion through the process listed below.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

The parent/guardian and/or eligible student shall have the right to appeal failure or placement due to attendance. The procedures for appeal are as follows:

1. The parent, guardian, or eligible student will be notified by the school administration when the student exceeds the limit for absenteeism.
2. The student or parent shall have the responsibility for filing a written request for an appeal upon receipt of the notification letter.
3. The written appeal request must be submitted to the school administration no later than ten (10) days following the distribution date of the attendance notification letter.
4. The principal or designee will schedule a conference with the student and his or her parents or guardians to hear the appeal.
5. The principal or designee will notify the parents or guardians of the outcome of the appeal no later than ten (10) days following the conference.
6. The right of due process permits students, parents, or guardians to appeal the decision rendered by the principal to the superintendent of schools or his/her designee.
7. Nothing in this procedure will preclude the parent or guardian from the right of initiating the appeal process.

### **ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURES**

Under the supervision of the Director of Student and School Safety, the principal of each school shall establish an effective and accurate method of monitoring attendance. At a minimum, this method of attendance monitoring shall:

1. Provide information that will permit a complete and accurate reporting of attendance to Cecil County Public Schools and to the Maryland State Department of Education.
2. Provide information on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis that can be used to identify students with problematic attendance and tardiness patterns so corrective measures may be instituted.

3. Provide information on students with chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness to the Department of Student Services so that causes may be considered and remedies applied to improve attendance and punctuality of these students.

### **REWARD PROCESS**

The principal of each school is charged with establishing programs that will recognize and reward students with regular and exemplary school attendance. These programs should be designed to motivate students to attend school on a daily basis.

### **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

Each school shall provide information on the attendance regulations to each student at the beginning of each school year and will provide similar information to each new enrollee during the school year. This information may be part of a student handbook or may be distributed as an entity within itself. Teachers responsible for homeroom activities in each school will be charged with the responsibility of reviewing attendance regulations with students at the beginning of each school year. Individuals responsible for the entry of students during the school year will review attendance regulations with new students as part of the registration process.

The principal of each school shall establish procedures for verification of student absences and tardiness. These procedures shall be disseminated to each student at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment.

**NOTE: The following codes are included in this regulation for Maryland State Department reporting purposes only. All absences, with the exception of suspensions, count toward the 17-day limit.**

### **Absence Codes:**

Absences shall be coded using the following:

01 Death in immediate family -- certified by family

02 Illness of child--certified by medical doctor, dentist, or licensed psychologist

03 Uncertified illness--parent note

04 Court summons--certified by court

05 Family trip--approved in advance by principal for a maximum of five days per year. Principals may approve if the student has a 90% or better attendance rate at the time of the trip. (Individual schools may establish regulations by which absences for family trips are approved.)

07 Violent storms

08 Work approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or state education agency, accepted by the local superintendent or the school principal, or any persons duly authorized by the superintendent or principal, as reason for excusing students

09 Observance of a religious holiday--certified by parent

10 State emergency--certified by superintendent of schools

13 Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the superintendent or designee constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.

17 Health exclusion

18 Suspension

19 Lack of authorized transportation. Shall not include student denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.

20 Truancy

21 Unexcused absence

22 Indifference of student

23 Illness in family

24 Parent note unexcused