



Pequannock Township High School

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Pequannock Township High School is excited to begin our 2024-2025 school year with our new rotating block schedule, along with a later start time for our students. We wanted to share this important information with you and provide you with basic information regarding student attendance and school hours. All information about Pequannock Township High School can be found in our student handbook located on our school website, hs.pequannock.org under the Students tab, as well as the policies on our district website, Pequannock Township School District: Home.

SCHOOL HOURS

On September 5th and 6th, students will follow a schedule that will allow them to attend every class assigned and meet with every teacher. This is referred to as an *All Meet Day*. The schedule will run periods 1 through 8, with a lunch period at the end of Period 4. School begins at 8:05am and will end at 2:46pm for these two days.

Starting on Monday, September 9th, students will begin following their Day 4 rotational schedule, followed by Day 3, Day 2, Day 1, and back to Day 4 in a rotational pattern. Students will follow the block schedule for each assigned day which can be found on their Realtime portal. During this first full week (9/9 - 9/13), school begins at 8:05am and dismissal is at 2:46pm. Thereafter, students may be required to stay until 3:04pm to attend their Panther Period with a teacher. This time period is part of the students' daily academic schedule and attendance is **mandatory** when assigned. Panther Periods will be discussed with the students in their class meetings during the first full week of school.

TARDINESS TO SCHOOL

The later start time gives families more time in the morning to get ready for school. However, students must be in their classrooms **before 8:05am** or will be considered tardy to school. Block 1 at PTHS begins promptly at 8:05am. **Students must be in their classrooms prior to the 8:05am school bell.** Students that are not in their classrooms by the 8:05am bell must receive a late pass from the attendance kiosk at the front of the school. All entrances are locked at 8:05am and students must enter the school through the main entrance by the attendance kiosk. Failure to sign in at the attendance kiosk will result in disciplinary action. Lateness to class that exceeds 20 minutes counts as an absence in that class. Lateness to school will not reset each marking period and are cumulative for the school year. Consequences for the lateness will be documented on the late pass. Issues of lateness caused by bad weather or unforeseen township delays will be at the discretion of administration. Be

aware that students entering the building minutes or seconds prior to the bell does not guarantee that they are on time for their Block 1 class. Please make sure that your child has enough time to enter the building and be in their Block 1 class prior to the 8:05am bell.

The consequences for tardies to school are as follows:

- 1st to 4th late to school: Warning Pass
- 5th to 14th late to school: One Central Detention Pass* for each late
- 15th to 20th late to school: One Saturday Detention Pass* for each late, potential loss of credit
- 21 or more lates to school: Discretion of Administrator, potential loss of credit

*The detention date assigned will be written on the student's pass.

Please note that student drop off time is a high traffic time. Please do not wait until the last minute to drop your child off at school, nor should students who drive try to rush and create an unsafe situation for themselves or others. Please allow time to get to school in a timely manner to create a more stress free time for your student.

Please note:

- Students can enter the building beginning at 7:45am to have breakfast in the cafe (except on half days).
- Students can enter the building beginning at 7:45am to see a teacher if they have a pass.
- All other students must wait outside until they can enter at 7:55am.
- In the colder months or days of bad weather, students will be able to wait inside starting at 7:45am. Grades 9 and 10 will enter through the front entrance and can wait in the auditorium. Grades 11 and 12 can enter by the gym and wait in the small gym.

Excused tardiness to school still counts on the student's attendance record but does not calculate towards credit loss or discipline. An excused tardy may include the following:

1. Doctor's note verifying an appointment/medical issue
2. College note on college letterhead verifying the student's attendance to their institution (up to 3 days per school year, only for students in grades 11 and 12)
3. DMV note verifying an appointment
4. Court papers verifying an appointment
5. Religious holidays
6. Death in the family
7. Other (as approved by administration) Tardies to school are only considered "verified" with a parent/guardian note. A parent/guardian note does not excuse the tardy or negate the consequences.

GENERAL ATTENDANCE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Compulsory attendance at school is a longstanding state policy and has been upheld by the court of New Jersey and the U.S. Supreme Court as a matter of public concern and legislative regulations. Regular attendance is essential to student achievement. Students and parents should be very careful to adhere to attendance requirements. Therefore, the Pequannock Township High School cannot condone or permit absences from school for minor reasons and will not issue credit if minimum pupil attendance requirements are not met.

Parents who remove students from school excessively must accept responsibility for lower or failing grades or possible loss of credit. All absences from school are cumulative, excused and unexcused. Pupils are required to attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. A pupil will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least four (4) hours during the school day.

In order to be eligible to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities, students must be in school before 10:00 am. Students leaving must remain until 12:00 pm (noon). Students entering after 10:00 am or leaving before 12:00 pm (noon) are not eligible for any co-curricular or extracurricular participation that day. (This does not pertain to students who have submitted written requests and/or received prior written administrative approval for scheduled appointments.) A pupil not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity will be considered to be in attendance. Students who are absent from school are not eligible to participate in or attend after school activities (Friday attendance counts for Saturday activities).

ABSENCES

It is our understanding that the reasons listed above do occur during the year. However, these absences must be kept at a minimum. An excused absence is an absence for one or more of the following reasons and will require documentation in most cases:

1. The pupil's illness – doctor documentation is required
2. Family illness or death
3. Educational opportunities - formal documentation is required
4. Excused religious observances
5. The pupil's suspension from school
6. The pupil's required attendance in court - court documentation is required
7. College visitation (up to 3 days per school year, only for students in grades 11 and 12) - college documentation is required
8. Examination for a driver's license - driver's license or documentation from DMV is required
9. Medical or dental appointments - doctor documentation is required

An unexcused absence is a pupil's absence for any reason other than those listed above. (Family vacations are considered unexcused absences.) Truancy is a pupil's absence from all or part of the school day without the knowledge of the pupil's parent/guardian. A pupil who leaves school without permission when school is still in session will also be considered truant. This includes leaving school during a Panther Period in which the student was assigned a meeting/extra help, etc. Students found truant will be issued a Saturday Detention, and the absence is unexcused. PTPD may be notified. **Pequannock Township High School does not sanction a "cut day" for any grade level. Please see our student handbook for the full details of PTHS attendance guidelines.

STUDENT/PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students shall attend school daily unless the absence is excused. Parents shall ensure that their child attends school punctually and daily and be aware of all absences. Absences can be seen on the Parent Portal of Realtime. Excessive absences will require a parent meeting and potential truancy charges.

NOTICE TO SCHOOL OF A PUPIL'S ABSENCE

Parents must notify the school prior to 8:00am regarding their child's absence or tardiness at (973) 616-6007. If the school does not receive a phone call from the parent, an automated call from the school will be made home. If there is no response from a parent, the student will be considered truant. Student phone calls to the school will not be accepted.

READMISSION TO SCHOOL AFTER AN ABSENCE

Students who are absent shall turn in, upon return to school, a note signed by their doctor, parent, or guardian setting forth detailed reasons for the absence and the date of the absence. Written notes for absences must be presented the day the student returns to school; if a legitimate reason is not received, the absence will be unexcused. Anyone with excessive absences will be required to present a doctor's note or other formal documentation for every occurrence and may be placed on probation or no-credit status in the courses affected.

PARENT NOTES

Parent notes and phone calls will "verify" an absence to avoid truancy issues. However, parent notes do not excuse an absence. Such absences do accrue towards credit loss.

DOCTOR'S NOTES

Doctor's notes will only be accepted for specific days of absences. No "blanket coverage" notes will be accepted unless approved by Child Study Team, Guidance, or Administration. At the discretion of the administration, a doctor's note may be required for absences that occur immediately before or after a school-related activity. In addition, student lateness to school will only be excused with a doctor's note. Doctor's notes may be faxed to (973) 616-2679.

COLLEGE VISITATIONS

Students who intend to visit a college must notify their counselor of their plans in advance. Students must report to a college admissions office and receive certification that they have met with an admissions director or counselor or received a tour sanctioned by the college. Only three (3) approved college visits will be considered "excused" absences for students in grades 11 and 12 only.

FAMILY VACATIONS

Family vacations are not excused absences. Families are encouraged to schedule their vacations to coincide with school holidays. This will eliminate the need for students to miss valuable class time. Students will not be given additional excused absences for family vacation. Students must be sure that their absences do not jeopardize their credit standing.

LOSS OF COURSE CREDIT/NO CREDIT STATUS

The Board of Education recognizes the continuity of the instructional program and the ability of pupils to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements are disrupted by frequent absence or tardiness. In recognition of this the Board of Education requires the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and students to maintain the highest level of school attendance. The attendance for each class is taken individually. Credit for each of your child's classes will be determined separately. Once placed on NO CREDIT STATUS, students lose all school privileges and are prohibited from participating in any athletics, activities, and school-sponsored events. A student will be placed on NO CREDIT STATUS if one of the following criteria are met:

- An accumulation of seventeen (17) or more unexcused absences from a full-year course.
- An accumulation of thirteen (13) or more unexcused absences from Physical Education.
- An accumulation of nine (9) or more unexcused absences from a semester course.
- An accumulation of five (5) or more unexcused absences from Health class.
- 3 or more class cuts

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

Students who are 18 years of age are permitted to leave school early if the parent/guardian has had communication with our attendance kiosk. A verbal conversation, as well as an email will be required for students 18 years of age to leave. The student must sign out at the attendance kiosk and is not permitted to drive any other student home early from school, even if a relative.

For students not yet 18 years of age, a parent, guardian, or an approved contact must come into the building to sign out a student at the attendance kiosk. A note or phone call letting us know ahead will help to facilitate an easy pick up.

The above information can be found in our PTHS 2024-2025 Handbook, located on our school website. However, if you need any further information or clarification, please feel free to reach out to Mrs. Mildner at 973-616-6000.

We hope you have had a fun and enjoyable summer, spending time with your family and friends. Thank you and have a great year!!!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mildner
Assistant Principal