

Quinton Township School District

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Dear Wildcat Families,

As we begin the school year, we would like to review our attendance expectations and policies. Regular attendance is one of the most important factors contributing to a student's academic success, personal growth, and overall connection to our school community. When students attend school consistently, they have greater opportunities to learn, participate, build relationships, and achieve their goals.

Please carefully review the following attendance information and sign the acknowledgment form indicating that you understand these expectations.

At Quinton Township School, we believe every Wildcat thrives through three important areas:

Attendance – Being present and engaged in school every day whenever possible. Students who miss 10% or more of school days are considered chronically absent according to NJDOE guidelines. Establishing strong attendance habits, beginning as early as preschool, helps students develop responsibility, reliability, and lifelong habits for success.

Achievement – Building knowledge, skills, confidence, and independence through classroom instruction, participation, and hands-on learning experiences.

Attachment – Developing positive and supportive relationships with classmates, teachers, and staff. Feeling connected and valued helps students see school as a place where they belong.

Reporting an Absence

If your child will be absent from school, please notify the Main Office by:

Phone: 856-935-2379 ext. 200

Email: mainoffice@quintonschool.info

Absences must be reported by **9:00 a.m.** each day your child is absent.

Documentation supporting an absence (such as a doctor's note or other required documentation) must be submitted within **10 calendar days** of the absence. Documentation submitted after the ten-day period will not be accepted, and the absence will remain classified in accordance with attendance guidelines.

State Excused Absences

The State of New Jersey recognizes only the following as **State Excused Absences**:

- Religious observances/holidays
- Bring Your Child to Work Day
- Participation in a civic event
- Closure of the sending district that prevents transportation to the receiving district
- Any other absence specifically recognized by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education

All other absences are considered **unexcused for state reporting purposes**.

Verified Unexcused Absences

The district understands that families may experience situations when a student is unable to attend school for important or unavoidable reasons. When appropriate documentation is submitted within **10 calendar days**, the absence may be recorded as a **Verified Unexcused Absence**.

A Verified Unexcused Absence indicates that the school has received documentation supporting the reason for the absence; however, it does not meet the criteria for a State Excused Absence under the New Jersey Department of Education attendance guidelines. These absences remain unexcused for state reporting purposes and count toward a student's total number of absences for attendance monitoring.

Verified Unexcused Absences are reviewed with consideration of the circumstances provided and **will not be viewed as a failure by the family to meet attendance responsibilities or used as the sole reason for truancy concerns when families communicate with the school and provide required documentation**. The purpose of documenting these absences is to ensure accurate attendance records, identify patterns of concern, and provide appropriate support when needed.

Examples of absences that may be classified as Verified Unexcused include:

- Medical appointments or health-related appointments
- Court appearances
- Bereavement
- Other significant circumstances reviewed by the school

Families are encouraged to communicate openly with the school whenever a student must be absent. Working together allows the school to support student success while maintaining accurate attendance records.

Unexcused Absences

An absence will be considered an **Unexcused Absence** when:

- The absence is due to family vacations or personal travel.
- Required documentation is not submitted within **10 calendar days** of the student's return.
- A student is absent to participate in daytime activities that are not sponsored, approved, or related to the school program.
- A student is absent due to household responsibilities, childcare, babysitting duties, or similar obligations.
- A student leaves school before **1:00 p.m.** without a State-recognized excused reason.

For attendance purposes, all absences other than State-Excused Absences count toward the maximum number of days absent.

Chronic Absenteeism

According to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), a student is considered **chronically absent** when they miss **10% or more of the school days** in which they are enrolled.

In a typical 180-day school year, missing **18 or more school days** (approximately two days per month) for any reason places a student in the chronic absenteeism category.

When a pattern of attendance concerns develops, the district will work collaboratively with families to provide support and interventions.

If a pattern of attendance concerns develops or a student accumulates **5 or more unexcused absences**, the district may:

- Send attendance notification letters through OnCourse
- Develop an attendance improvement action plan
- Establish interventions and supports to improve attendance
- Refer the student to the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Team
- Coordinate with community-based social and health service providers when appropriate
- Make referrals as required by state regulations

Attendance and Student Participation

Consistent attendance is necessary for students to fully participate in the school experience. Chronic absenteeism may impact participation in certain school opportunities, including:

- Drama Club
- National Honor Society
- Other extracurricular activities
- Course credit requirements
- Eligibility for advanced coursework or course placement opportunities such as Advanced Math in the Middle School

Students may also be subject to additional school interventions and disciplinary consequences when attendance expectations are not met.

Tardiness and Early Dismissals

Students who arrive **after 8:30 a.m.** will be recorded as tardy.

- Three (3) unexcused tardies within a 30 calendar-day period may result in disciplinary consequences, including detention.
- Three (3) unexcused early dismissals within a 30 calendar-day period may result in disciplinary consequences, including detention.

Students must attend a minimum of **4 instructional hours** of the school day to be counted as present.

Students who demonstrate a pattern of tardiness or early dismissals may be placed on an attendance intervention plan and may become ineligible to participate in certain school activities.

Need Help Getting Your Child to School?

We understand that life circumstances can sometimes create challenges with getting to school. Transportation concerns, family transitions, physical illness, mental health concerns, responsibilities at home, or other barriers can impact attendance.

You do not have to face these challenges alone. Please reach out to a school counselor, teacher, or administrator. Our school provides support and can connect families with resources and community partnerships designed to help students overcome barriers and attend school regularly.

Every Wildcat Matters

When your child is here, our school community is stronger and more complete. When a student is absent, we notice because we care about each child and their success.

Every day your child attends school is an opportunity to learn, grow, build friendships, and strengthen our school community. We look forward to partnering with you to make this a successful, connected, and positive school year.

Thank you for your continued support.

School attendance is a shared responsibility between the student, parent/guardian, and school community.

We appreciate your partnership and commitment to helping every Wildcat succeed.

Note that the Quinton Township School Attendance Policy is an established district policy and applies to all students and families, regardless of whether a signed acknowledgment form is completed. The electronic signature on the Student and Parent/Guardian School Expectations Agreement serves as confirmation that you have reviewed, and understand the attendance expectations and procedures outlined in the document. Failure to electronically sign the form does not exempt a student or family from complying with the attendance requirements and responsibilities established by the district and the State of New Jersey.