

# ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

## THE SCHOOL DAY

School hours are from 8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Morning kindergarten sessions are from 8:15 to 10:55 a.m. Afternoon kindergarten sessions are from 12:05 to 2:45 p.m. Children who walk to school or who are dropped off by parents should not arrive before 7:50 a.m. (12:00 p.m. for afternoon kindergarten). During inclement weather, there will be a modified kindergarten schedule. The morning session will be from 10:15 to 11:55 a.m., and the afternoon session will be from 1:05 to 2:45 p.m.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in school is vital to a student's success. **Compulsory school age** in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires that all students between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school regularly. Students who are enrolled in school, but are not within this age range are also bound by the compulsory school attendance law.

Parents/guardians are expected to encourage their children to attend as many school days as possible so long as they are not ill. The local education agency and parents/guardians will work collaboratively to support student school attendance.

As stated in the Attendance Policy 204:

The following conditions 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.
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing

arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.

3. Quarantine.
4. Family emergency.
5. Recovery from accident.
6. Required court attendance.
7. Death in the family.
8. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
9. Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined in 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.
10. Observance of a religious holiday observed by bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request. In addition, students may be released from school for a total of not more than 36 hours per year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
11. Non School-sponsored educational tours or trips/family educational trip if the following conditions are met:
  - a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal prior to the absence per the District's procedures, including use of the appropriate Educational Trip Form
  - b. The student's participation has been approved by the principal. If over five (5) days in

duration, the approval of the Superintendent or Designee is also required.

- c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the parents/guardians and the Superintendent.
12. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
13. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.

An absence for any other reason is considered an unlawful/unexcused absence. When in doubt of the legality of an absence, parents are requested to contact the child's school principal.

After a student's absence from school, parents must send a signed note with the student explaining the reason and date(s) of the absence. The student must present this excuse to the Attendance Office upon returning to school. If the excuse is not provided within three (3) school days, the absence will be labeled **unexcused**.

When a student misses three (3) consecutive days and no communication from the parent/guardian has occurred, the school nurse or counselor will call home to check on the student to determine if the school can take steps to support the student during his/her absence and/or support transition back to school.

When a student misses more than ten (10) cumulative days, parents will receive written notice that an official doctor's excuse will be required for all subsequent absences for the remainder of the school year. Failure to obtain an official doctor's excuse will result in an unexcused absence. Unexcused

absences will be addressed in the manner described under the truancy section of school attendance.

### **Definitions of Truancy**

- A student is considered "truant" after three (3) or more unexcused absences during a single school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.
- A student is considered "habitually truant" after six (6) or more unexcused absences during a single school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.

Parents/guardians will be notified following each unexcused absence/occurrence. When a student is considered truant (**three unexcused absences**) the school principal will notify the parents. This notification:

- Will be in writing to the person of parental relation with a child within ten (10) school days.
- Will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future.
- Will include steps to arrange an attendance improvement conference.

If the child, of compulsory school age, continues to be truant and incurs additional unexcused absences that accumulate six (6) unexcused absences/occurrences becoming "**habitually truant**," the procedures to follow are based on the age of the child.

- Habitually truant children **under 15 years of age:**  
The school shall:
  - o Refer the child to a school-based or

community-based attendance improvement program

- o Refer the child to the county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act

The school may:

- o File a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under 15 years of age in a magisterial district court.

- Habitually truant children **15 years of age and older:**

The school shall:

- o Refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program
- o File a citation against the student or parent in a magisterial district court
- o If a habitually truant child aged 15 or older incurs additional absences after a school refers that child to an attendance improvement program or the child refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, the school may refer the child to the local CYS agency for possible disposition as a dependent child.

### **School Attendance Improvement Plan Conference (SAIC)**

Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing and by phone of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Plan Conference (SAIC).

Schools must create attendance improvement plans prior to referring truancy

to the courts. A school attendance improvement conference is defined as a conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services. The conference will include the following individuals:

- The child
- The person in parental relation to the child
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource (e.g., grandparent, sibling, family friend, advocate, etc.)
- Appropriate school personnel
- Recommended service providers (case managers, behavioral health providers, etc.)

The school must hold the conference even if the parent or guardian declines to participate or fails to attend after the school provides advance written notice and makes attempts to communicate via telephone. A legal requirement does not exist for either the child or parent to attend the conference. The school must document the outcome of any attendance improvement conference in a written attendance improvement plan. Schools may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled attendance improvement conference has passed.

### **Magisterial Referral**

After all necessary steps have been taken to foster a collaborative relationship between the local education agency and parents/guardians, a citation may be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled if a student continues to be habitually truant from school. Judges have considerable discretion

to impose appropriate penalties in individual cases.

**Students will be credited with full-day absence when they:**

Leave before: 9:45 AM

Arrive after: 1:30 PM

## **T**ARDIES

Any student entering school after the official beginning time (8:15 AM) must report to the attendance office to obtain a class admission slip. Any student who is tardy more than ten (10) days without proper medical documentation may be required to submit a doctor's note for subsequent excused tardiness. The school principal will notify parents when the child has accumulated four unexcused tardies. Disciplinary consequences may be assigned.

## **E**ARLY DISMISSAL

Parents are requested to schedule all medical appointments for their children after the regular school day. If it is essential that such appointments be scheduled during the school day, the parents must submit a note requesting an early dismissal. The student should present this note to the school office upon arriving at school for the day. The student will receive a form to present to the homeroom teacher. The child must return the early dismissal form to the school office prior to leaving the building. Students with early dismissals will meet their parents in the office.

**Students will be credited with full-day attendance when they:**

Arrive before: 9:45 AM

Leave after: 1:30 PM

**Students will be credited with half-day absence when they:**

Arrive or Leave between: 9:45 AM  
and 1:30 PM