

ATTENDANCE

All absences are unexcused except those caused by illness of the student, quarantine, death in the immediate family, recovery from an accident, required court attendance, educational tours and trips, and certain religious holidays.

If a student is absent from school, his/her parent/guardian should call the attendance office at 773-3443, ext 4008, report the absence by 9:00 AM. It does not alleviate your responsibility to provide a written excuse, as directed in this policy.

A child of compulsory school age, who is absent from school without legal excuse, will be marked as being unexcused for the period of each absence. Parents will be notified of their responsibility for their child's unexcused absences by the proper school authority. Administration is in charge of attendance.

- The office will also send a notice by mail to the parents of students who have accumulated ten (10) absences from school, informing them of the attendance policy and inviting them to contact the School Office to discuss the matter. The local magistrate's office will begin prosecution, punishable by a fine/or arrest of the parent or guardian.
- The office will send a notice by mail to the parents of students who have accumulated fifteen (15) days of absence from school, encouraging them to schedule a conference with the principal and the guidance counselor within one week of receiving the notice, and requiring verification of a doctor's visit for all subsequent absences. Failure to provide verification of a doctor's visit will result in the absence being marked unexcused..

Excused Absences

Excused absences may be granted for: illness, quarantine, death in the immediate family, impassable roads, school-sanctioned educational trips, family trips, religious holidays, and exceptionally urgent reasons which affect the child and which do not include work at home. Absences for other reasons will be considered unexcused. For an absence to be excused, the parent must send a note within three (3) days after each absence.

Unexcused Absence

An unexcused absence occurs when the parent does not provide, within three (3) days after an absence, an explanatory note signed by the parent, guardian or visitation by a physician, which satisfies the criteria for excused absence.

After three (3) days unexcused absences from school, an official notice of unexcused absence will be sent to the parents. The notice will list the dates of unexcused absences and notify parents that any further illegal absence constitutes a summary offense under the Public School Code.

Act 29 provides for a \$300 fine and allows the courts to impose parent education classes and community service sentences for parents of a truant child who do not show they took reasonable steps to ensure the child's school attendance. It provides

that the parent and child must appear at a hearing before the district magistrate. Act 29 provides that truant students may lose their driver's license for 90 days for a first offense, 6 months for a second offense.

Parents or guardians, who refuse to accept the registered letter from the magistrate, will bear the cost of having a local constable serve the letter. After repeated arrests, school officials will refer cases to the Schuylkill County Children and Youth Services. This agency will then file a petition before the Courts of Schuylkill County seeking further action. (Further action will consist of the implementation of Act 29 of 1995 (truancy)).

Unlawful Absence

An unexcused absence becomes an unlawful absence for all students of compulsory age (between 8 and 17 years). A student who leaves home and does not return to school shall be carried on the active roll for a maximum of ten (10) days after the police have been notified. Ten days after the police have been notified by the parents or school district, the child will be withdrawn from the rolls of the district.

ANY STUDENT WHO PARTICIPATES IN A SCHOOL ACTIVITY MUST REPORT TO SCHOOL BY 9:30 A.M. IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THAT DAY'S ACTIVITY (including practice or a game, school play, concert, dance, any activity).

ON WEATHER EMERGENCY DAYS, STUDENTS MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE START OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

Lateness/Tardiness

Tardy to school (after 8:00 AM) All tardy students must report directly to the office.

1-3 lates – Verbal warning by attendance officer/principal

4-7 lates – One (1) day detention for each day late

8 or more – One (1) day I.S.S. each day late

If a student's reason for tardiness to school is legal and verifiable such as a doctor or dentist appointment, funeral, late bus, etc., there will be no penalty. If, however, the tardiness is supported only by a parent's note, it will be an excused tardiness for a total of only three (3) times per school year. When a student arrives at school any time after 8:00 AM they will be considered tardy.

All unexcused tardiness to school AFTER THE 8TH OFFENSE will result in referral to magistrate for fine of \$25- \$200.

Illegal excuses such as "overslept", "missed the bus", etc., shall be dealt with by full disciplinary action. Notes do not excuse students in all situations. Final decisions will be made by administration.

All other lateness: Definition "lateness" refers to arrival to a class or to any other in-school event (assembly, pep rally, lunch, etc.) after the required beginning time for the class or event (as judged by supervising teachers/proctors). It does NOT refer to "tardiness" which is a school arrival violation.

Early Excusal

Students are not permitted to leave the school campus at any time during the school day without permission from the principal or designee. If you wish to be excused early during the school day, you must present a note to the office staff. The note should indicate (1) the date and time of dismissal; (2) reason; (3) your parent's signature. The secretary will issue an "early dismissal" slip to you, which you must present to the teacher (for his/her signature) at the time of your departure. If you return to school on the same day, you are to report to the office before going to class. **PARENTS MUST ENTER THE SCHOOL OFFICE TO SIGN THEIR CHILD IN/OUT.**

Early Morning Appointments

If you have an early appointment (e.g.; orthodontist, dentist, etc.) a note should be presented to the office on the day prior to the appointment or a telephone call should be made to the office the morning of the appointment. The office will be open at 7:30 AM and can be reached by calling 773-3443 ext 4008. A message may also be left on the voicemail at any time.

COLLEGE VISITS

In order for a student to be excused for a college visit, parents must:

- Request by calling or writing in advance, permission for this student to be excused from school. Requests made on the day of the absence or after the fact may be considered unexcused.

Understand that the student is responsible for securing and completing assignments missed. Obtaining assignments in advance is expected. Please see the section entitled "Make Up Work" for details.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

The Board believes that students must be in regular attendance in order to benefit fully from the educational programs and services offered by the district. In accordance with basic School Board Policy, it is necessary that family trips for educational purposes and educational tours be considered as excused absences for students.

By State Law, family vacations cannot be classified as legal absences from school. Although we cannot legally excuse you from such trips, we cannot and would not prevent you from accompanying your parents on the trip. However, you and your parents should be aware that (1) you are responsible for all missed work; (2) you may not have the opportunity to "make-up" tests and (3) your parents may be served a "Legal Notice of Absence" if the absence from school is for three or more days. (Note: the "first notice" does not carry a fine, but future illegal absences may require payment of a fine). Parents are advised to notify the school (in writing) well in advance of the planned trip, to be deemed "an educational trip" by the principal as described above.

The following procedures for non-school related trips/tours is established.

- Written request must be submitted to the building principal a minimum of five (5) days prior to the trip. Parent or guardian will be notified in any case when the request is denied.
- Approval will rest with the principal and will be based on whether the trip or tour is of educational value, and the academic achievement of the student.
- Requests will not be approved for the first ten (10) days of the year or during standardized testing periods in the early spring.
- No more than ten (10) school days per student will be approved for such trip requests per school year.
- All schoolwork missed during the absence must be made up immediately upon return to school. This is a student's responsibility.
- Honoring requests for schoolwork during a student's absence is at the discretion of the teacher involved and should depend upon workload and the teacher's evaluation of the student.
- A student's attendance up to the time of the request for educational trips will be taken into consideration for approval.