

Book: Policy Manual
Section: 200 Pupils
Title: Attendance
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Purpose

The Board requires that school age students enrolled in district schools attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by the district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress. Curricula are planned courses taught as a progression of learning activities and ideas with each day's work building on work previously done. Attendance in class is a basic student responsibility and is of the utmost importance in the awarding of credit.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8]

Authority

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in district schools during the days and hours that school is in session, except that a principal or teacher may excuse a student for temporary absences upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.[3][7][9][10][11][12]

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness.[12] (Medical Note required after three (3) days)
2. Quarantine. (Medical note required to be excused and to return to school)
3. Family emergency. (Approval of Building Administration)
4. Recovery from accident. (Medical note required to be excused and to return to school)
5. Required court attendance. (Note from Court)
6. Death in family. (Parent Note and Obituary/Mass Card)
7. Family educational travel, with prior approval. (Superintendent approval ONLY)
8. Educational tours and trips, with prior approval.[13] (Superintendent approval ONLY)

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative absences verified by written parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. Parent/Guardian signature is required on written notification. All absences beyond these ten (10) cumulative days shall require a legal excuse (see numbers 1 – 8 above).

All absences shall be treated as unlawful until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within five (5) days upon return to school. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to supply the excuse note.

Students who are unable to attend school due to leaving the country, state, or boundaries of the school district will be marked absent. The only exception being when the student is/was educated by another educational entity, in which case the student will be/has been withdrawn from the Hazleton Area School District and enrolled in another verifiable educational entity.

The Board shall report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of seventeen (17). The Board shall issue notice to those parents/guardians who fail to comply with the requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions will be prosecuted according to law.^{[7][14][15]}

Attendance need not always be within school buildings. A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; the student is receiving Hazleton Area School District approved tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.^{[3][11][16][17][18][19][20][21]}

Upon written request by a parent/guardian, an absence for observance of a student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for a religious holiday.^[22]

The Board shall, upon written request of the parents/guardians, release from attendance a student participating in a religious instruction program acknowledged by the Board. Such instruction shall not require the child's absence from school for more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year, and its organizers must inform the Board of the child's attendance record. The Board shall not provide transportation to religious instruction. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for religious instruction.^{[22][23]}

The Board shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group upon written request prior to the event.^{[6][9]}

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearances for the student, family emergencies, and other urgent reasons.^{[11][12]}

The Board shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:

1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.^{[9][10][24]}
2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught.^{[3][25]}
3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools.^[26]
4. Students attending a home education program in accordance with law.^{[27][28]}
5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.^[3]
6. Students fifteen (15) years of age, and fourteen (14) years of age who have completed the highest elementary grade, engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.^[10]

7. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.[10][17]

The Board may excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools:

1. Students receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.[3][16][19]
2. Homebound children unable to attend school on the recommendation of the school physician and the school psychologist or a psychiatrist and approval of the Secretary of Education.[24]
3. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by the Luzerne Intermediate Unit No. 18 or the Department of Education.[3]

In the case of a student with disabilities, where the absence is caused by or directly related to the student's disability, attendance regulations/grading shall be addressed by an IEP Team or Section 504 Team.[29][30]

Educational Tours/Trips

The Board may excuse a student from school attendance to participate in an educational tour or trip not sponsored by the district if the following conditions are met:[13]

1. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal **prior to the absence**.
2. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee.
3. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the parents/guardians and the Superintendent.

Absences due to an educational tour or trip may not exceed ten (10) cumulative days within the school year.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, district/school web site and other efficient methods.[6]

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of state law and regulations.[31][32][33][34][42][43]
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with law.[36][37]
3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences and excusals.[6]
4. Impose on truant students appropriate incremental disciplinary measures for infractions of school rules, but no penalty may have an irredeemably negative effect on the student's record beyond that which naturally follows absence from classroom learning experiences.[14][15][38][39][40]

5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of truant behavior, and consider modification of the student's educational program to meet particular needs and interests.
6. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.
7. Issue written notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance law, within three (3) days of any proceeding brought under that law. Such notice shall inform the parent/guardian of the date(s) the absence occurred; that the absence was unexcused and in violation of law; that the parent/guardian is being notified and informed of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student; and that further violations during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.[14][15]

Legal

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| <u>1. 24 P.S. 1301</u> | <u>36. 24 P.S. 1332</u> |
| <u>2. 24 P.S. 1326</u> | <u>37. 24 P.S. 1339</u> |
| <u>3. 24 P.S. 1327</u> | <u>38. 24 P.S. 1338</u> |
| <u>4. 22 PA Code 11.12</u> | 39. Pol. 218 |
| <u>5. 22 PA Code 11.13</u> | 40. Pol. 233 |
| <u>6. 22 PA Code 11.41</u> | <u>41. 24 P.S. 1318</u> |
| <u>7. 22 PA Code 12.1</u> | <u>42. 22 PA Code 11.2</u> |
| 8. Pol. 200 | <u>43. 22 PA Code 11.3</u> |
| <u>9. 24 P.S. 1329</u> | <u>22 PA Code 11.8</u> |
| <u>10. 24 P.S. 1330</u> | <u>22 PA Code 11.24</u> |
| <u>11. 22 PA Code 11.23</u> | <u>24 P.S. 510</u> |
| <u>12. 22 PA Code 11.25</u> | Pol. 000 |
| <u>13. 22 PA Code 11.26</u> | |
| <u>14. 24 P.S. 1333</u> | |
| <u>15. 24 P.S. 1354</u> | |
| <u>16. 22 PA Code 11.22</u> | |
| <u>17. 22 PA Code 11.28</u> | |
| 18. Pol. 115 | |
| 19. Pol. 116 | |
| 20. Pol. 117 | |
| 21. Pol. 118 | |
| <u>22. 22 PA Code 11.21</u> | |
| <u>23. 24 P.S. 1546</u> | |
| <u>24. 22 PA Code 11.34</u> | |
| <u>25. 22 PA Code 11.32</u> | |
| <u>26. 22 PA Code 11.5</u> | |
| <u>27. 24 P.S. 1327.1</u> | |
| 28. Pol. 137 | |
| 29. Pol. 103.1 | |
| 30. Pol. 113 | |
| <u>31. 24 P.S. 1501</u> | |
| <u>32. 24 P.S. 1504</u> | |
| <u>33. 22 PA Code 4.4</u> | |
| <u>34. 22 PA Code 11.1</u> | |