# 204. ATTENDANCE

## 1. Purpose

The Board requires that school-aged students enrolled in district schools attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by this 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.

## 2. 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/assistant principal may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent conditions that may reasonably cause the student’s absence.

Students are expected to be in school, on time. The Board shall establish and enforce attendance requirements, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.

### Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statute</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>22 PA Code 11.13</td>
<td>Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school, and which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until the child reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.</td>
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<td>24 P.S. 1326</td>
<td>Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.</td>
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<td>24 P.S. 1326</td>
<td>Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.</td>
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### 24 P.S. 1326
Person in parental relation shall mean a:
1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
3. Guardian of the person of a child.
4. Person with whom a child lives and who is acting in a parental role of a child.

### 42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302
This definition shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.

### 24 P.S. 1326
School-based or community-based attendance improvement program shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.

### Guidelines

#### Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

24 P.S. 1327
All students of compulsory school age who reside in the district shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.

22 PA Code 11.23
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 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; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.

The Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent’s designee(s) shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at the schools of this district:

SC 1329, 1330
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.

24 P.S. 1327
2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught, except that such students and students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in the district schools shall be
Sec. 11.5, 11.32  counted as being in attendance in this district.
24 P.S. 1327 3. Students attending a home education program or private tutoring in accordance with law.
Pol 117
22 PA Code 11.31
22 PA Code 11.31a
24 P.S. 1327.1
Pol. 137
24 P.S. 1327 4. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.
SC 1330 5. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.
Title 22
Sec. 11.28

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearance, driver examination and/or family emergency.

SC 1333, 1354  The Board may 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 statutory requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions will be prosecuted according to law.
Title 22
Sec. 11.23, 11.25

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians, staff, local children and youth agency and local Magisterial District Judges about the district’s attendance policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, district website and other efficient methods.

The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with the building principal, and school social worker shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.
2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences.
3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a
school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency, or the appropriate judge.

4. Details the school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences and excusals.

5. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

6. Identify district staff authorized to excuse a student for temporary absences.

Excused/Lawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code/Citation</th>
<th>Reason for Absence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 PA Code 11.25</td>
<td>1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health related reasons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 P.S. 1329</td>
<td>2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 P.S. 1329</td>
<td>3. Quarantine.</td>
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<td>24 P.S. 1329</td>
<td>5. Recovery from accident.</td>
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<td>24 P.S. 1329</td>
<td>7. Death in family.</td>
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<td>22 PA Code 11.41</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>22 PA Code 11.21</td>
<td>9. Observance of a religious holiday observed by bona fide religious group, upon written parental request.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 PA Code 11.25</td>
<td>10. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 P.S. 1329</td>
<td>11. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 PA Code 11.25</td>
<td>12. Adult-Sponsored Tours and Trips</td>
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<td>24 P.S. 1329</td>
<td>Upon receipt of a written request from the parents of the pupils involved, pupils may be excused from school attendance to participate in a family trip provided during the school term at the expense of the parents when such trip is evaluated by the district Superintendent or the</td>
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Superintendent’s designee(s). Pupil participants therein are subject to direction and supervision by an adult acceptable to the district Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee(s) and to the parents of the pupils concerned.

The following regulations are applicable:

1. Absences for non-school trips shall not be excused unless a written request by the parent has been approved by the building principal. Such requests are to be submitted in a format developed by school officials ten (10) days prior to the date of the trip.

2. Only ten (10) days of absence for non-school trips during any school year will be classified as excused. If a student already has a number of excused days (cumulative of sick, previous non-school trip or other excused reason) for that school year, only the difference between the number of accrued excused days up to ten (10) will be approved as excused. The remaining days will be considered unexcused. Additional days will be classified as unexcused and/or unlawful and will be subject to the legal procedure prescribed by attendance regulations.

3. Coursework missed during a period of excused absence to participate in a trip must be completed satisfactorily after return to school within fourteen (14) calendar days subsequent to the last approved day of absence. Given adequate notice of planned absences, teachers are requested, insofar as such is possible, to provide an outline of assignments for completion during the period of absence. Work submitted by students in conforming with this requirement is to be evaluated, without penalty, for late submission.

4. Absences from school to participate in adult-sponsored tours and trips may not be approved for students who are failing two (2) or more subjects; for students who are identified as habitually truants and/or, for students for whom a physician’s excuse is required.

5. Students who participate in non-school trips of educational merit shall, at the discretion of the teacher, give an oral or submit a written report concerning the highlights of the trip. At the discretion of the teacher, such report may be accepted in lieu of comparable course requirements.

6. Family or non-school sponsored trips that exceed ten (10) school days will result in the student being disenrolled from the school district. Upon return from the family or non-school sponsored trip, a parent or guardian will need to re-register with the District by first
Temporary Excusals –

The following students may be temporarily excused 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.

2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:
   a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction.
   b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction. The Board shall not provide transportation to religious instruction.
   c. Following each absence, the parent/guardian shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.
   d. All absences from school for religious holidays or for religious instruction shall be excused, and no student so excused shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday.

3. School age children unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education.

Parental Notice of Absence

Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) school days of the absence. Failure to submit a written excuse signed by the parent, legal guardian or attending physician within three (3) school days of the student’s return to school will be recorded as an unexcused and/or unlawful absence. Messages left on the district absentee hot line are not accepted in place of the written excuse note.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences (including excused days for non-school trips) verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days will require an excuse.
from a licensed practitioner or physician. An absence or period of absence shall be deemed unexcused if a physician’s statement is not submitted as required under the provisions of this policy.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

24 P.S. 1326 An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

Parental Notification -

District staff shall provide notice in the electronic student record or student management system to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused absence.

Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements

Student is Truant -

24 P.S. 1333 When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.

24 P.S. 1333 The notice shall:

1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;

2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and

3. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the child's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.

24 P.S. 1333 The notice may include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference.

24 P.S. 1333 If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference.
| 24 P.S. 1333 | *School Attendance Improvement Conference* -  
District staff shall notify the person in parental relation of the date and time of the School Attendance Improvement Conference. |
| 24 P.S. 1326 | The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services. |
| 24 P.S. 1326 | The following individuals shall be invited to the School Attendance Improvement Conference:  
1. The student.  
2. The student's person in parental relation.  
3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.  
4. Appropriate school personnel.  
5. Recommended service providers. |
| 24 P.S. 1333 | Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference. |
| 24 P.S. 1333 | The outcome of the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student and appropriate district staff. |
| 24 P.S. 1333 | The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference has passed. |

*Student is Habitually Truant* -  
When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff:  
1. Shall refer the student to:  
   a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or  
   b. The local children and youth agency.  
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.
| 24 P.S. 1333.1 | When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, district staff shall:  
1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or  
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.  

District staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency, if the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or if the student refuses to participate in such program.  

Regardless of age, when district staff refer a habitually truant student to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate judge, district staff shall provide verification that the school held a School Attendance Improvement Conference.  

Filing a Citation -  

| 24 P.S. 1333.2 | A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled.  

Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.  

Special Needs and Accommodations  

Pol. 113 | Pol. 113.3 | If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.  

Pol. 114 | For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.  

Discipline  

| 24 P.S. 1333 | The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior. |
## References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510.2, 1332, 1326, 1327, 1327.1, 1329, 1330, 1333, 1333.1, 1333.2, 1339, 1354, 1501, 1504, 1546

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 11.5, 11.8, 11.13, 11.21, 11.22, 11.23, 11.24, 11.25, 11.26, 11.28, 11.31, 11.31a, 11.32, 11.34, 11.41, 12.1

Board Policy – 115, 116, 117, 118, 137, 200, 218, 233