

201: Attendance Policy

I. Purpose:

- a. Every parent, guardian, or other person having legal control of a child between the ages of 5 and 16 is required to send such child to school. Attendance standards are applicable to all students enrolled in the School.
School attendance is mandated by State law and regulations of the State Board of Education. The Student Attendance Policy of the Board of Directors establishes specific regulations related to attendance.

II. Policy Statement:

- a. The School is responsible for reporting violations of the attendance laws of the State. The School may excuse a child for necessary and legal absence, subject to the provisions of the Delaware Code.

The following conditions only will result in an excused absence or an approved day from school:

- i. Illness of the student with signature of the parent/guardian indicating dates of absence, for no more than 10 days of school unless the absence covered under the sections below:
- ii. Long-term absences for:
 1. Medical diagnosis and/or treatment where a student has been placed on homebound instruction.
 2. Treatment of medical conditions that do not allow for homebound instruction with a signed doctor's note indicating dates of treatment.
 3. Death in the immediate family; funerals of other relatives or close friends with signature indicating dates of absence, not to exceed five days
 4. Contagious disease in the home of the child subject to regulations of the Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services.
 5. Legal business requiring the student's presence
 6. Suspension or expulsion from school
 7. Observance of religious holidays
 8. Approved college visits
 9. Approved educational trips
 10. Authorized school-sponsored activities

11. Placement at an alternate residential facility with a letter with signature indicating dates of service
12. In accordance with the Interstate Military Compact, students who are out of school as a result of a parent's active deployment that have a signed parent and/or guardian note indicating dates of absence(s) with Head of School's signature as an assurance
13. Students who are out of school for reasons specifically and directly related to homelessness that have a signed note from the Homeless Liaison indicating dates of absence(s)
14. Students who are out of school for reasons specifically and directly related to foster care that have a signed note from the Foster Care Liaison that includes the dates of the absences
15. Students who are out of school for scheduled court appearance(s) that have Court-issued documentation indicating date(s) of appearance(s)

iii. Student Absences Due to Social, Emotional & Behavioral Wellness

1. The School recognizes that students have mental health, just like physical health. At times, students may miss school for reasons related to their mental well-being. When students miss school for mental health reasons, it is essential to connect them to resources based on their needs, similarly, to going to a doctor for a physical illness.
- iv. One excused absence per school year for students in grades 6 through 12 to attend civic engagements, such as visits to the United States Capitol, Delaware Legislative Hall, political or cultural significance sites, to advocate or testify on behalf of legislation, or to participate in a rally, march, or protest. The student's parent, guardian, or relative caregiver must submit a signed, written excuse which is received by the district or charter school at least three (3) days before the student's absence.
- v. A student shall be excused for any of the following religious holidays (including, but not limited to the holidays listed below) when the school district or charter school receives a student's parent, guardian, or relative caregiver's signed, written excuse at least three (3) days before the student's absence:
1. Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
 2. Yom Kippur (Jewish)
 3. Dussehra (Hindu)
 4. Sukkot (Jewish)

5. Diwali (Hindu)
6. Birth of Bahá'u'lláh (Baha'i)
7. Sangha Day (Buddhist)
8. Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
9. Naw- Rúz (Baha'i)
10. Holi (Hindu)
11. Ram Navami (Hindu)
12. Beginning of Ramadan (Islamic)
13. Theravada (Buddhist)
14. Laitlat Ul Qadr (Islamic)
15. Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) (Islamic)
16. Vesak (Buddhist)
17. Shavuot (Jewish)

vi. A student who misses a grading event due to excused absence for observance of a religious holiday must be allowed the opportunity to take the test on an alternate day or take an alternate test or be given some other means to recover credit.

1. A student at any school district or charter school who is absent due to a religious holiday observance shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility to compete for any award.
2. Teachers are discouraged from scheduling major grading events, such as tests, examinations, presentations, or project due dates on religious holidays.

b. Absences for other reasons are classified as “unexcused.”

c. School Day

- i. The School day begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m.
- ii. Instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy. If a student arrives at school after 8:10 a.m. they must report to the office for a tardy slip before going to class.
- iii. The adult who brings the student to school must accompany him/her to the main office and sign the student in before he/she proceeds to class. The student will receive a tardy slip before entering class.
- iv. School supervision is not provided for students arriving before 7:45 a.m.
- v. Breakfast is served beginning at 7:30 a.m.
- vi. Students may enter the classroom at 7:45 a.m.
- vii. The adult who picks up the student for early dismissal must report to the main office to sign him/her out. Please remember excuse note upon return to school.

- viii. Scheduled dismissal time is 3:30 p.m.
 - ix. Students must be picked up on time. Realizing unforeseen circumstances arise the school will send students who remain at school beyond dismissal time to After School Care. If late pickup becomes routine parents will be charged accordingly.
- d. A student enrolled in grades K through 8 inclusive is considered truant if such a student has been absent from school without valid excuse, as defined in Rules and Regulations of the State Board of Education, for more than three (3) cumulative or consecutive school days during a given school year. The School will take action regarding unexcused absences including, but not limited to, written communications, home visits, required parent/guardian conferences, and referral of the parent for prosecution. A Parent/guardian who is determined to violate the State's compulsory school attendance laws is subject to penalties as described by State law. The penalties for parents/guardians may include:
- i. First offense: fine of \$25 to \$300 or imprisonment for up to 10 days or both
 - ii. Second offense: fine of \$50 to \$500 or imprisonment for up to 20 days or both
 - iii. Third offense: fine of \$230 to \$1,150 or imprisonment for up to 30 days or both
 - iv. A parent may be ordered to perform unpaid community service in lieu of a fine. If imprisoned, the court may impose conditions of release.
- e. The penalties for students may include:
- i. Penalties may include community service, counseling, curfew, suspension or revocation of driver's permit or hunting license, prohibition of participation in extracurricular activities or school social events or recommendation that the student enroll in an alternative school.
Any pupil 16 years of age or older who is truant on more than three separate occasions during one school year may be expelled from school by the Board of Directors.

III. Definitions:

- a. The school, in administering the State policy, defines the most commonly used attendance terms as follows:
 - i. Excused Absence:
 - 1. An excused absence from school or class is an absence for one of the reasons listed above and for which the required parental note of explanation has been presented on the first or second day of the

student's return to school or class. Following a valid excused absence, the student will be allowed to make up all work missed, to take tests which were missed, and to submit any assignments which became due during the absence. Following an excused absence from school or class, the time allowance for taking tests or turning in assignments shall be equal to the number of school days or number of class meetings missed due to the absence. A teacher may extend the time allowance for making up work missed if the specific circumstances of the situation merit such action. The responsibility for initiating make-up work and turning in assignments rests with the student.

ii. Unexcused Absence:

1. An unexcused absence from school or class is an absence:
 - a. Which is for a reason not listed as excused or
 - b. About which the parent/guardian has no knowledge or
 - c. For which the parental note of explanation was not provided on the student's first or second day of return to school following the absence
2. A student whose absence is unexcused shall receive no credit for assignments missed or tests given during the period of the unexcused absence unless otherwise permitted by the teacher. While an unexcused absence may result in no credit for assignments or tests missed, students may request assignments from their teacher at the initiation of the student. If the teacher provides assignments after an unexcused absence, the time allowance for requesting the instructional materials or assignments from the teacher shall be equal to the number of school days or number of class meetings missed due to the absence. A teacher may extend this time allowance if the specific circumstances of the situation merit such action.

iii. Lateness to Class:

1. At the beginning of each term, the teacher shall define guidelines regarding lateness to class. When, in the judgment of the teacher, lateness becomes excessive, the student will be reported to an appropriate staff member for administrative action. Lateness to class may have a detrimental effect on student learning.

iv. Tardiness to School:

1. All students are expected to be punctual to school. Students who arrive at their first-class assignment after the start of school are tardy. A student who is late to school should present a written explanation for the tardiness on the first or second day following the tardiness. Students should recognize that a written explanation from home does not automatically cause the tardiness to be excused. Such reasons as car trouble, personal business, heavy traffic, home obligations, etc., while understandable, are not acceptable excuses and will be listed as unexcused. Reasons such as personal illness, medical appointments, and appearances in court will be considered as excused tardiness when verified by a note from home. Students who do not attend at least half of the class periods on a given day will be marked absent for that day. Students who are absent for more than fifteen (15) minutes of a class may be considered absent from the class unless excused by proper authority.

v. Prearranged Absence:

1. A prearranged absence is a student's absence from school for one or more days to visit a college or university or for other educational activities approved by the school administration. The absence should be prearranged by writing the-school administration, giving the full particulars of the absence. Approval for such absences should be sought, where practicable, at least one (1) week prior to the date on which the absence is to occur. Upon the development of a plan by student and teacher for making up the assignments to be missed, the school administration may then define the absence as excused. Students who must leave the building due to an emergency or some other reason which did not permit a prearranged absence must receive approval from the school administration or his/her designee. The student is then responsible for completing the sign-out procedure before leaving the building and must present the required parental note of explanation upon his/her return to school.

b. This defines mental and behavioral health and provides resources to support students' social, emotional and behavioral wellness.

- i. **Mental health** is the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of a person. Mental health issues may include, but are not limited to, mood,

anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. Behavioral health encompasses mental health and relates to habits that have an impact on the overall mental and physical health.

- ii. **Behavioral health** issues may include, but are not limited to, examples such as substance abuse, eating disorders, self-harm and addiction.
- iii. **Connecting with Supports & Resources Within the School** It is important to establish and maintain communication with the student’s school counselor when absences are related to social, emotional or behavioral wellness. The school counselor can assist with supporting the student in school, as well as connect them to additional supports outside the school. School counselors can also help students communicate with teachers and return to school successfully.
 1. The school counselor can be reached by calling the school directly
 2. Dean of Students/Guidance Counselor will connect the student with resources needed.
- iv. Resources Outside the School Emergency (Local):

Police/Fire/Ambulance	911
Child Mental Health Crisis Line	1-800-969-HELP (4357)
Crisis Text Line	Text DE to 741741
Sexual Assault Crisis Services (Contact Lifeline)	1-800-262-9800

v. National Hotlines & Resources:

LGBT National Help Center	1-800-246-7743 <i>call/online chat</i>
LGBTQ Youth Crisis Line	1-866-488-7386 <i>call/text START to 678-678/online chat</i>
National Eating Disorders Association	1-800-931-2237 <i>call/text/online chat</i>
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE (7233) <i>call/online chat</i>
National Human Trafficking Resource Center	1-888-373-7888 <i>call/text/online chat</i>
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800-656-HOPE (4673) <i>call/online chat</i>
National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline	1-866-331-9474 <i>call/text LOVEIS to 678-678/online chat</i>
S.A.F.E. Alternatives (cutting/self-injury)	1-800-DONTCUT (366-8288)
SAMHSA National Helpline (substance abuse)	1-800-662-HELP (4357)
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)

IV. Related Policies:

- a. Truancy Policy

V. Related Procedures and Documents:

- a. Title 14 Chapter 27 Subchapter 1 School Attendance:
<http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c027/sc01/index.shtml>
- b. Title 14 Chapter 27 Subchapter II Truancy:
<http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c027/sc02/index.shtml>

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