

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Regular school attendance is an important element for success in school. When a student is frequently absent, tardy or dismissed early from school, students lose valuable instructional time. Because regular attendance is necessary for students to succeed in school, the Pennsbury School District encourages all parents and guardians to stress the importance of punctuality and regular attendance with their children. Our Student Conduct Policy sets forth the attendance policy for the District. In addition, Pennsylvania's Act 138 of 2016 requires every parent or guardian in charge of a child between the ages of eight and seventeen to send that child to school. As we begin the 2019-2020 school year, we want to review with you our policies regarding attendance and explain some improvements we have made to our attendance reporting practices.

Providing an Absence Excuse

- The preferred communication method is to email the attendance email address at your child's school. You can compose your own excuse note or complete the form that will be available on the school's website.
- The email address for sending in an excuse will be provided in the attendance notification email or can be found on each school's website.
- For your convenience, an excuse form will also be attached to the attendance excuse email. Parents may write their own email to excuse the absence OR complete the form provided.

Excused Absences

Any child who is absent from school must present a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian immediately upon his/her return. The note must clearly indicate the reason for absence and must be presented **within three (3) school days** from the child's return to school. Please note that a phone call does not excuse your child's absence. An email will be accepted as long as it is submitted within three days of the absence.

Acceptable Excuses for Absence

- Illness, quarantine or obtaining professional health care or therapy from a licensed practitioner
- Family emergency
- Required court appearance
- Death in family
- Observance of a religious holiday observed by bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request
- Educational trips (see more details below)

Educational Trips

Requests for permission to have children absent from school for educational trips must be made ten (10) days prior to the trip. The number of approved days absent cannot exceed five (5) days in a given school year. Days beyond this limit will be considered unlawful and/or unexcused. The student will be held responsible for making up missed assignments.

High School Absences

Pennsbury High School students who are absent ten (10) or more days from any semester-long course may be denied academic credit for that course.

Unexcused or Unlawful Absences

- If an excuse is not presented within three (3) school days, the absence will be marked unexcused. Only medical excuses, signed by a practitioner, will be accepted after three (3) days.
- All absences for reasons other than those listed above will be considered as unexcused.
- All unexcused absences for students under the age of 17 are also recorded as unlawful.

Three (3) Unexcused Absences

When a student accumulates three days of unlawful absence in a school year, the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian. In addition, a School Attendance Improvement Plan may be developed to improve student attendance.

Six (6) Unexcused Absences

After six (6) unexcused absences, the school must develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan.

More than six (6) unexcused absences

For each incident of unlawful absence after the sixth unlawful absence, a referral to Children and Youth may be made or a truancy citation may be filed with the District Magistrate.

Ten (10) Cumulative Absences

Whenever a student accumulates ten or more absences in a school year (excused and/or unexcused), a medical excuse will be required for every subsequent absence and a School Attendance Improvement Plan may be developed.

Ten (10) Consecutive Absences

Whenever a student has ten (10) consecutive absences and there is no evidence that these absences are excused, the district is required to remove the student from its active membership roll.

Tardiness and Early Dismissal

Whenever students arrive late or depart prior to the end of the school day, parents/guardians must present the school with a written note explaining the situation. These incidents are recorded as "excused" or "unexcused" applying the same criteria as those for full-day absences.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information and for partnering with us for your student's success in school.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth A. Aldridge
Director of Pupil Services