



# ALTOONA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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|--------------|-------------------|
| Book         | Policy Manual     |
| Section      | 200 Pupils        |
| Title        | Attendance        |
| Number       | 204               |
| Status       | Active            |
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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.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

## **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 when receiving 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.[\[3\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[6\]](#)

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

1. Illness.[\[11\]](#)
2. Quarantine.
3. Recovery from accident.
4. Death in family.
5. Family educational trips.[\[12\]](#)
6. Educational tours and trips.

Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence. In the event of extenuating circumstances, a building principal may use his/her discretion in determining if an absence should be deemed unlawful if a written excuse is received after third day following the absence.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed physician.

The Superintendent shall report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of seventeen (17). The Superintendent 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.[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[6\]](#)

Attendance need not always be within school facilities. A student will 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; the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.[\[3\]](#)[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)

Upon written request by a parent/guardian, an absence occasioned by 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 Superintendent 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 Superintendent 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.[\[23\]](#)[\[22\]](#)

The Superintendent 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.[\[8\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

The Superintendent will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearances, family emergencies, and other urgent reasons.[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)

The Superintendent shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at the schools of this district:

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.[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[24\]](#)
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 counted as being in part-time attendance in this district.[\[3\]](#)[\[25\]](#)[\[26\]](#)

The Superintendent 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 Appalachia Intermediate Unit or the Department of Education.[\[3\]](#)

## **Educational Tours and Trips**

The Superintendent 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:[12]

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.
4. The student has not exceeded ten (10) days of absence prior to the date of the request.

The Superintendent may limit the number and duration of tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school term.

## **Foreign Travel**

Only one (1) world language area shall be permitted to solicit Altoona Area High School students for foreign travel per year. It is expected that the sponsoring languages shall rotate on a yearly basis. The students must be currently enrolled in a course in the sponsoring world language area. A student may only participate once while attending Altoona Area High School.

The objectives of the trip, a detailed itinerary, and a close approximate cost must be submitted to the building principal. The Superintendent or designee must approve the request upon the recommendation of the building principal.

The building principal must approve the travel agent; two (2) or more quotes are encouraged.

Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing by the administration that the travel is not sponsored by the school district, nor does the district claim any responsibility or liability for the student while participating in the foreign travel. A copy of the notice must be forwarded to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.

No monies may be solicited from students prior to the approval of the above.

Parents/Guardians must be informed that they must request a temporary absence approval for each school day missed by their child.

The sponsoring staff member must request, in writing, a leave without pay for workdays missed. Personal days may be used, if available by contract.

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

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.[27][28][29][30][31]
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with law.[32][33]
3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences and excusals.[5]
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.[13][34][14][35][36]

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 violation during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)

Repeated infractions of Board policy requiring the attendance of enrolled students may constitute misconduct and disobedience to warrant the student's suspension or expulsion from the regular school program.[\[37\]](#)[\[35\]](#)[\[36\]](#)

## Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1301
2. 24 P.S. 1326
3. 24 P.S. 1327
4. 22 PA Code 11.12
5. 22 PA Code 11.41
6. 22 PA Code 12.1
7. Pol. 200
8. 24 P.S. 1329
9. 24 P.S. 1330
10. 22 PA Code 11.23
11. 22 PA Code 11.25
12. 22 PA Code 11.26
13. 24 P.S. 1333
14. 24 P.S. 1354
15. 22 PA Code 11.8
16. 22 PA Code 11.22
17. 22 PA Code 11.28
18. Pol. 115
19. Pol. 116
20. Pol. 117
21. Pol. 118

22. 22 PA Code 11.21  
23. 24 P.S. 1546  
24. 22 PA Code 11.34  
25. 22 PA Code 11.5  
26. 22 PA Code 11.32  
27. 24 P.S. 1501  
28. 24 P.S. 1504  
29. 22 PA Code 4.4  
30. 22 PA Code 11.1  
32. 24 P.S. 1332  
33. 24 P.S. 1339  
34. 24 P.S. 1338  
35. Pol. 218  
36. Pol. 233  
37. 24 P.S. 1318  
24 P.S. 510  
22 PA Code 11.2  
22 PA Code 11.24  
22 PA Code 11.3  
Pol. 000