

SECTION: STUDENTS

TITLE: ATTENDANCE

ADOPTED: April 20, 2010

REVISED: September 6, 2011 (1st Revision)
August 20, 2013 (2nd Revision)

WINDBER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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| <p>References to applicable law and regulations are set forth at the end of this policy.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">204. ATTENDANCE</p> <p>I. WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS:</p> <p>A. This policy deals with any absence from school. A late arrival to school is a form of absence, as is leaving during the school day or leaving early at the end of the school day (see section IX).</p> <p>B. Absences covered by this policy are of two types, excused and unexcused, which are explained in the policy. Unexcused absences are considered "unlawful" or "illegal" absences in various statutes and regulations.</p> <p>C. This policy also covers the consequences of absences from school, which differ depending on whether the absence is excused or unexcused.</p> <p>D. When the policy talks about "parents" that term also means "guardian" if the student's situation so requires. "Medical doctor" or "licensed medical professional" as used in this policy means a qualified and Commonwealth-licensed medical professional appropriate for the condition or disability involved. This will usually mean a doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathic medicine or dentist, but in appropriate circumstances could include a Commonwealth-licensed psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or speech therapist.</p> <p>E. Privately tutored or home schooled students, or students who attend private or parochial schools other than charter schools, are not covered by this policy, but the students, tutors, parents and private or parochial schools must meet all requirements of the School Code applicable to their situations.</p> <p>II. THERE ARE IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS TO AND MODIFICATIONS OF THIS POLICY:</p> <p>A. This policy and its enforcement and the consequences of non-compliance are subject to the requirements of federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and State statutes and regulations, including those implementing federal laws.</p> |
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- B.** The Board recognizes that certain students may have chronic or other significant medical conditions or disabilities that may affect the child's ability to attend school regularly or there may be other exceptional or extraordinary circumstances that make strict application of this policy inappropriate.
- C.** In cases specified in B., this policy shall be implemented to the extent feasible consistent with the student's medical condition or disability or with other extraordinary circumstances.
- D.** For an exception based on a child's chronic medical condition or disability, which could be physical or mental, depending on the circumstances, appropriate documentation from a qualified and licensed medical professional (as defined in section I.D.) appropriate for the condition or disability involved will be required. In the case of other exceptional or extraordinary circumstance, the appropriate administrator shall document the need for and appropriateness of an exception in such manner as is appropriate under the circumstances.
- E.** In all cases where the child is not required to have an Individual Educational Program ("IEP") or Service Agreement ("SA") pursuant to 22 Pa. Code Chapters 14 or 15 that spells out any modifications in this policy or its enforcement appropriate for that child's medical condition or disability, the applicable modifications or adjustments shall be specified in writing by the appropriate administrator and shall be mailed or given to a parent or guardian.
- F.** The Board recognizes that an IEP or SA or terms fixed by an administrator when there is no IEP or SA will excuse absences necessitated by a child's medical condition or disability (including absences during the school day for appointments for treatment related to a child's health, mental health or safety that must be scheduled during the school day) provided the need for such absences is documented as required by this policy, or as otherwise specified in the IEP or SA, all under such terms as may be specified in the IEP, SA or terms fixed by the appropriate administrator when there is no IEP or SA.
- G.** If the requirements of this policy are modified by an IEP or SA or in writing by an administrator when there is no IEP or SA, the student is expected to comply with this policy as modified.

III. WHY IS ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT:

- A.** Regular school attendance improves academic achievement and helps students develop a responsible approach to work habits which carry over to adult life.

- B.** When a student is absent, making up the missed work is not only a burden on the student but also (i) on teachers who must try to keep the absent student abreast of classwork while nevertheless focusing on the "new" work for the entire class; and (ii) on responsible parents who must help and support the student with make-up work as well as the current school work.
- C.** When students assume responsibility for regular and faithful attendance, this acceptance of responsibility carries over into post high school responsibilities and adult work and family life.
- D.** It costs parents and taxpayers money when a school has poor attendance because school reimbursements from the State factors in a concept of "weighted average daily membership," which relates to attendance.

IV. WHY IS AN ATTENDANCE POLICY NECESSARY:

- A.** Pennsylvania statutes and the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education require that all school districts have an attendance policy and that the district keep records of attendance.
- B.** Pennsylvania school law defines "compulsory school age" as "the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter school, which shall not be later than at the age of eight (8) years, until the age of seventeen (17) years." The Department of Education had said this did not apply to kindergarten but the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled on February 19, 2013, in the case of Commonwealth v. Kerstetter that if parents choose to enroll their child in kindergarten, then the compulsory attendance rules apply. The reasoning of the Court would also apply to pre-kindergarten.
- C.** State law provides that every parent, guardian, or person in parental relation to a child required to attend school is responsible to see that the child attends and can be charged before a magistrate judge if a child has more than three (3) unexcused absences.
- D.** A school district is required to enforce the attendance laws after three (3) **unexcused** absences. School administrators are subject to penalties if they fail to enforce the attendance laws.
- E.** Attendance regulations require that a student who is absent for ten (10) consecutive school days be removed from the active roster unless there is evidence that the absence is excused or that there is evidence that compulsory attendance prosecution is under way, which is an additional reason why the district must be diligent in enforcing this policy as to unexcused absences.

F. This policy is adopted to comply with the law.

G. When a school official calls or sends a letter, parents are requested to understand that the school administration is complying with the law, regulations and this policy.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS, STUDENTS AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS:

A. In addition to their responsibilities under the law, the Superintendent and other administrators are required by this Board to develop appropriate guidelines for the administration of this policy. Such guidelines must be approved by the Board.

B. In addition to their legal responsibilities set forth in section IV, parents are responsible for (i) helping their children understand the importance of regular attendance, promptness, and following rules; (ii) helping their children to make up missed work; and (iii) minimizing late arrivals, early departures, or absences during the school day by trying to schedule appointments before or after school or on non-school days when this is possible.

C. Parents, students, administrators and teachers should make every effort to have students present on State mandated testing days and, except for emergencies, appointments should not be scheduled for such days.

D. A student who reports to school must attend all classes during the school day and may only be excused from class(es) by the building principal. This can only be done through established building procedures. Requests for early dismissals must be made in advance so teachers can be properly informed.

VI. WHAT ARE EXCUSED ABSENCES:

A. Absences for the following reasons shall be considered excused absences provided (i) they are properly documented as required and (ii) documentation is submitted when required (see section VII):

1. a. Illness, injury or medical condition or disability that prevents a child from attending, verified by a licensed medical professional's (as defined in section I.D.) excuse or parental note indicating generally the reason for the absence.

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| | <p>b. A written excuse from a parent/guardian will be accepted for medical absences up to ten (10) total days during the school year. (If the excuse is for only part of a day, more than ten [10] excuses may be permitted but they may cover no more than a total of ten [10] school days of absences. See section IX regarding part-day absences.)</p> <p>c. After parental medical excuses have been received to cover ten (10) school days, the district will mail written notification to require parents/guardians to provide a specific written excuse from a licensed medical professional (as defined in section I.D.) for future absences under this section VI, paragraph A.1. This limitation of ten (10) days of absences verified by parents for medical absences is imposed pursuant to a Basic Education Circular of the Pennsylvania Department of Education which directs school districts that "all absences beyond ten cumulative days should require an excuse from a physician."</p> <p>d. To help parents, the District will mail periodic reports of a student's attendance when the student has seven (7) total days of absences, excused and unexcused, ten (10) total days of absences, excused and unexcused, and fifteen (15) days of total absences, excused and unexcused. These letters will also note how many medical days of absence have been excused by parental note. Days of absence are also available on the district's website with student grades and on report cards.</p> <p>e. Because of the requirements in paragraphs 1.b. and 1.c., after parent/guardian notes have been presented to verify absences totaling ten (10) days because of illness or injury, the parent/guardian will be required to provide a specific written excuse from a licensed medical professional (as defined in section I.D.) for further absences for illness or injury. To help parents in the case of chronic illness or disability, the District will accept an excuse/letter from the student's doctor that states that the student may miss school due to a specific illness, injury, medical condition or disability, and the parent/guardian may then submit additional excuses (beyond the ten [10] permitted above) that refer to that specified reason for each subsequent absence directly related thereto. These absences will then be excused. A new excuse/letter from the doctor must be provided every forty-five (45) days.</p> <p>2. Serious illness or death in the immediate family verified by a written excuse from a parent/guardian.</p> <p>3. Quarantine.</p> |
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| | <p>4. Medical or dental attention. Obtaining professional health or mental health care or therapy service if the following requirements are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The health care or therapeutic services are rendered by appropriate Commonwealth-licensed medical professionals as defined in section I.D.b. The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with the student's regular program of studiesc. Such services must be verified in writing from the parent/guardian. The administration may ask for additional verification from the service provider. As noted above, excused absences are permitted only for the reasonable time needed to get to the provider, keep the appointment, and return to school. <p>5. Absences permitted by a student's IEP or SA or written terms fixed by an administrator when there is no IEP or SA as explained in section II.</p> <p>6. Absence approved in advance by the principal, such as college visitations, military recruiting, required court attendance, preplanned educational trips and tours (meeting the requirements of the district's policy for Family Educational Trips), etc.</p> <p>7. Absence in connection with approved school activities, as more fully explained in section XIII.C.</p> <p>8. Authorized religious holidays documented to administrative satisfaction if other than those historically recognized by district. (See section XIII.F.)</p> <p>9. Religious instruction for up to a total of thirty-six (36) hours per school year. This shall require submission of a written request from the parents/guardians of the student prior to release of the student to attend and/or participate in religious instructional programs. Such written request shall include the dates and hours for which instruction is requested, and such "released time" instruction shall meet all requirements of the School Code. Any transportation involved is parents' responsibility.</p> <p>10. Impassable roads as determined by the Transportation Coordinator, or other unusual traffic conditions or circumstances deemed appropriate by the principal. For example, if a train regularly goes through town at a certain time, the train would not be an excuse, but if it was at an unexpected time, the principal could excuse lateness. Similarly, the principal could excuse a late arrival if there were an accident impeding travel or other appropriate unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>11. Other reasons provided for in this policy or by law or regulation (see, for example, 22 Pa. Code § 11.41(c)).</p> <p>B. As required by law and regulation, the following students shall be excused from the requirements of regular attendance at the schools of this district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who |
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are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons so urgent as to preclude regular attendance. *

2. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in a private trade or business school has been approved.
3. Children fifteen (15) years of age, and fourteen (14) years of age who have completed sixth grade, who are engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.
4. Children sixteen (16) years of age or more regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.
5. 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.
6. Homebound children unable to attend a school on the recommendation of the school physician and the school psychologist or a psychiatrist and approval of the Secretary of Education. *
7. Students who receive approved homebound instruction provided by this school district are not considered absent.

* In these situations, the student shall have an IEP or SA or written terms fixed by an administrator when there is no IEP or SA explaining how the child shall receive instruction while unable to attend the public schools or there shall be such other arrangements as may be required by the Secretary of Education or applicable laws and regulations.

VII. EXCUSE PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS ON RETURN:

- A.** After an absence for the foregoing reasons, the student (or parent/guardian) must submit an excuse signed by a parent/guardian and giving the name of the student, date, days of absence and reason for absence. The school cannot accept an e-mail excuse.
- B.** The excuse must be submitted to the proper authority or attendance secretary as directed by the procedures established for students in the particular building involved. Parents will be advised of special requirements, if any, applicable to a particular building.
- C.** Failure on the parents'/guardians' part to provide a written explanation for the student's absence and failure of the parent/guardian or student to present such

an excuse **within three (3) school days of the student's return to school**, except under extenuating circumstances as determined by the building principal, will result in an **unexcused** absence being recorded. Once an unexcused absence is recorded for failure to submit a timely excuse, a parental excuse or note will ordinarily not be accepted for that absence. [A Basic Education Circular of the Pennsylvania Department of Education specifically provides that an absence be permanently counted as unlawful (unexcused) if the written excuse is not provided within three (3) days.] The fact that a parent/guardian provides a written explanation for the student's absence does not in itself qualify the absence as excused. The absence must be for a reason that constitutes an excused absence.

- D.** Upon returning to school, students (students and/or parents in the Elementary School depending on the situation) should immediately make plans with their teachers to promptly make up all work missed during the absence. Obtaining missed work is the student's responsibility in grades 6-12. Parents should assist students in making up missed work. While teachers will, of course, help when they can, their first obligation is to continue with the planned work for the entire class.

VIII. WHAT ARE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

The following reasons for absence will be recorded as unexcused (sometimes called, especially in statutes and regulations, "illegal" or "unlawful"):

1. Absence without reason or absence **for which a timely (within three [3] school days) excuse was not submitted.**
2. Oversleeping or missing the school bus.
3. Trips not approved in advance by the building principal or trips that have been disapproved by the building principal. Educational trips that meet all requirements of the district's policy on Family Educational Trips, including prior approval, will not result in unexcused absences.
4. Shopping.
5. Hunting, fishing, attending ball games or sporting events. There could be rare exceptions when a hunting or fishing trip might be part of a prior-approved educational field trip under the district's policy on such trips.
6. Birthday or other celebrations.
7. Employment, except as otherwise provided above.

8. Inefficient private transportation or automobile breakdowns.
9. Any other reasons not listed as an excused absence above or as excused under the School Code or regulations or as otherwise provided in this policy.

IX. LATE ARRIVALS, EARLY DISMISSALS AND ABSENCES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY:

A. A late arrival, an early dismissal, and an absence during the school day are all considered absences. If the absence is for a reason that would qualify for an **excused** absence, the absence shall be considered excused provided a timely excuse is provided (if required) in accord with section VII.

B. Excused late arrivals, early dismissals and absences during the school

day: Excused absences will be recorded in fourths ($1/4^{\text{th}}$) of the school day

($1/4$, $1/2$, $3/4$, full day). There will be a minimum of one-fourth ($1/4^{\text{th}}$) day excused absence for an excused late arrival, early dismissal or absence during the school day. For purposes of this policy:

High School and Middle School

1. One (1) minute to one (1) hour and forty-five (45) minutes will be considered one-fourth ($1/4^{\text{th}}$) of a day.
2. One (1) hour and forty-six (46) minutes to three (3) hours and thirty (30) minutes will be considered one-half ($1/2$) a school day.
3. Three (3) hours and thirty-one (31) minutes to five (5) hours and fifteen (15) minutes will be considered three-fourths ($3/4^{\text{th}}$) of a school day.
4. More than five (5) hours and fifteen (15) minutes will be considered absence for a full day.

Elementary

1. One (1) minute to one (1) hour and forty (40) minutes will be considered one-fourth ($1/4^{\text{th}}$) of a day.
2. One (1) hour and forty-one (41) minutes to three (3) hours and twenty (20) minutes will be considered one-half ($1/2$) a school day.
3. Three (3) hours and twenty-one (21) minutes to five (5) hours will be considered three-fourths ($3/4^{\text{th}}$) of a school day.

4. Over five (5) hours will be considered absence for a full day.

The administration may modify the foregoing time periods if the length of the regular school day is changed.

C. Unexcused late arrivals, early dismissals and absences during the school day:

1. Each **unexcused** late arrival, early dismissal or absence during the school day will be recorded in one-fourth ($1/4^{\text{th}}$) day segments, calculated the same as in section IX.B. above for excused late arrivals, early dismissals or absences during the school day.
2. See section XI, paragraph I., denying participation in school activities on any day a student has an **unexcused** absence, late arrival, early dismissal or absence during the school day.

X. EFFECTS OF EXCUSED ABSENCES:

- A.** Even excused absences can have various effects on the student who misses school, some of which are listed here for the benefit of both parents and students.
- B.** As provided in section VII.D., students must make up all work missed promptly after they return to school. Since they will have their current work to do as well, this can put extra pressure on the student which may affect students in different ways. Student performance in class and on tests may suffer and, as a consequence, student evaluations and grades may be lower than if the student had not missed school.
- C.** Parents should recognize that students may need extra parental help to handle the missed work and current work, and should be prepared to help as needed. Teachers will try to help students as much as they can while fulfilling their duties as to other students. If parental and teacher help is not adequate, parents should contact the teacher or principal promptly so that efforts can be made to prevent a further deterioration in a student's academic performance that may result from excused absences.
- D.** If a student's excused and unexcused absences total ten (10) days and discussions with parents have not already taken place, the school will notify the parent(s) by letter and phone call suggesting a parent conference to discuss attendance and the development of an Attendance Improvement Plan when appropriate to improve attendance and to consider, when necessary, what might be done to minimize the adverse impact of absences on the student's academic performance. There may be resources available to parents or students if needs are communicated to the district. If there are twenty (20)

or more total absences, a parental conference shall be held to discuss the effects of such absences, and any available resources that might help deal with the effects of the absences or that might reduce the number of further absences. If appropriate, an Attendance Improvement Plan may be developed.

- E.** Since class attendance and class participation is important for student academic performance, if the principal or teachers feel in a particular case that absences are affecting a student's ability to do well in their classes, a student's discretionary absences may be limited, such as absences for field trips, for participation in school activities and events or absences for educational trips (see section XIII.C. and the school's policy on Family Educational Trips; see also section XIII.D.5.). [**Note:** The possibility of denial of discretionary absences under this policy should not be confused with other policies relating to denial of participation in field trips or school activities and events, such as the denial of participation in field trips if a student has a failing grade in two or more courses.]

XI. CONSEQUENCES OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

- A.** In cases of multiple unexcused absences, school officials will endeavor to contact parents to initiate development of an Attendance Improvement Plan (called a Truancy Elimination Plan by the Department of Education) in an effort to minimize unexcused absences and to help students to get the most out of their educational opportunities. Parents are urged to cooperate with the District to develop such a plan as early as possible once an unexcused absence occurs. If parents have not yet been contacted by the school, they may at any time after their child has an unexcused absence contact the school for a conference to discuss their child's attendance and to develop a plan to prevent further unexcused absences. Such a conference will be required after three (3) unexcused absences.
- B.** Parents will be notified by letter as required by the Basic Education Circular of the Pennsylvania Department of Education when a student accumulates one, two, or three unexcused absences. If these absences are consecutive, or nearly consecutive, only one (1) notice may be sent, depending on the circumstances.
- C.** After three (3) unexcused absences of children of compulsory school age, the District will give the notice required by 24 P.S. § 13-1333 as a precondition to filing a summary complaint before the magisterial district judge. If there is a further unexcused absence, the District will file a summary complaint before the magisterial district judge as required by law, except, in the discretion of the appropriate administrator, as otherwise permitted by Basic Education Circular 13-1327.

- D.** Parents may assert any defenses they may have before the magistrate. Although the District cannot control the magistrate's decision, if a parent has worked out an Attendance Improvement Plan with the District **and** the plan is followed, the magistrate is likely to look favorably on such circumstance.
- E.** Any other enforcement action permitted or required by law may be undertaken with respect to the parents or student. (See, for example, section XIII.I.)
- F.** Students are required to promptly make up all missed work the same as if they had excused absences, and parents must be prepared to help or get help for their children to make up the missed work, but students ordinarily will not receive course credit for such work in the case of such unexcused absences. Class participation is a factor in student grading and evaluations and excessive unexcused absences can also affect a student's evaluation or grades under such circumstances.
- G.** If a student has more than three (3) **unexcused** absences **and** more than twenty (20) total absences in one (1) school year, and depending on the extent and quality of their make-up work and overall performance and participation in a course, they **may** be denied credit in a course, be required to attend summer school in order to receive credit if summer school is offered and available, or they may be provided alternative education, or be required to undertake a project or extra work, all as may be determined in each case. If course credit is denied, it could jeopardize graduation or promotion to the next grade. If a student is denied course credit, he or she shall have an appeal right under section XII.
- H.** Students with more than three (3) unexcused absences in a school year, or students with a history of unexcused absences in prior school years, may be denied approval for a Family Educational Trip or may be denied participation in a field trip or in school activities or events that would require them to miss classes, if the principal believes further absences would negatively affect their academic performance, or if the principal determines that the student is not making a good faith effort to avoid unexcused absences, insofar as the student can do so. (See section XIII.C. and the District's policy on Family Educational Trips; see also section XIII.D.5.)
- I.** Except where the responsible administrator determines otherwise, on any day when a student has an **unexcused** absence, late arrival or early dismissal, or if the student has been absent without excuse during the school day, that student shall not be permitted to participate in field trips or school activities or events, including attendance at or participation in athletic events or practices, for that school day, including events which occur after the end of the school day.

Students should be aware that this provision does not alter coach or activity advisor-imposed rules. For example, if a coach does not permit a player to play in a game if they miss practice, and if they miss practice because of this provision, then they may also miss the game.

- J.** Items F., G., H. and I. also apply to students over 17 who are not subject to the compulsory education laws.
- K.** As noted in section II, the terms of this policy, its enforcement, and the consequences of non-compliance may be modified in IEPs, Service Agreements or otherwise in exceptional situations, and enforcement of this policy or application of these consequences will be modified as appropriate for students with severe or chronic medical conditions or disabilities that may affect the child's ability to attend school regularly, to the extent specified in the IEP, Service Agreement or other special accommodation.

XII. APPEAL PROCESS:

An appeal process has been established for parents/guardians or students who believe credit has been denied unjustly. A review committee will be created by the building principal. This committee will include an administrator.

At the review hearing the following procedure will take place:

1. The student is responsible to produce formal documentation at the hearing in order to overturn the decision and regain graduation credit/program promotion.
2. The parent/guardian may accompany the student at the hearing.
3. The hearing committee reaches a decision by majority vote; the student will receive the decision at the same meeting. The decision of the hearing committee will be final, except as may otherwise be provided by law.
4. Appeals from decisions involving provisions in an IEP or SA relating to this policy shall be in accordance with 22 Pa. Code Chapters 14 and 15.

XIII. OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO ATTENDANCE:

A. Attendance Records and Reports

All attendance records and data related to them shall be maintained in the respective building offices as directed by the Superintendent.

B. Doctor's Certificate Following Communicable Disease

A medical doctor's certificate is required for a student upon return to school after suffering a communicable disease or sickness.

C. School-Sanctioned Activities

Students may be released from school for approved participation in school-sponsored field trips, performances and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The student is responsible for making up the work, quizzes and/or tests missed during the released time. Students who, with approval, are participating in school-sponsored activities are considered present. A principal may deny requests to attend school-sanctioned activities where the principal, with the input of professional staff, determines that the student's grades, class participation and/or attendance record indicate that the request to miss class for the activity should not be granted. (See also section XI, paragraph I., for provisions denying participation in school activities on a day when a student has an unexcused absence, whether for a full day or part of a day.)

D. Releasing Students During School Hours

1. Students shall be released from school only to their parents/guardians or to persons authorized by their parents/guardians. Documentation of such authorization shall be furnished if it was not previously provided.
2. Students shall be released to police officers only if a warrant is issued.
3. In cases of family dissension, requests to prohibit one party of the conflict from taking the child from school shall be honored only if written legal status is established giving one party the exclusive right to pick up the child. In relation to those students whose parents/guardians are parties to divorce or custody proceedings, a student will be released from school only to the parent/guardian having primary legal custody of the student during the school week and during school hours. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to furnish the building principal with the most recent and currently effective custody order. Requests from the non-primary custodial parent/guardian to remove the student from school will be honored only where the primary custodial parent/guardian has furnished in advance written authorization permitting the release of the child on the day and at the time in question and the building principal has verified the authenticity of the authorization. The **primary custodial parent/guardian** is the parent/guardian who has custody of the child for the majority of time during the school week.
4. Teachers shall not admit otherwise unauthorized visitors to the classroom

without the approval of the building administrator.

5. Requests for released time for needs not otherwise covered in this attendance policy will be decided by the administration on an individual basis and may be denied because of prior attendance problems, frequency of requests, poor academic progress, conflicts in the academic calendar, or other reasons deemed appropriate by the administrator involved.

E. Other Principal-approved Excusals

A School Principal or his/her designee may excuse a student from attendance for other lawful reasons, such as but not limited to counseling or support groups, or social service agency appointments including, but not limited to, Children and Youth Services.

F. Religious Holidays

1. A student may be excused from classes for observance of school-approved religious holidays by particular religious groups provided the parent/guardian of the child informs the school by written excuse that the absence will be for that purpose. These written requests must be presented to the building administration prior to the time of the observance.
2. Such excuse should be received by the building administration within a reasonable time prior to the student's absence.
3. The student is to have a reasonable time to complete any work missed or to take any test administered during the time of the absence.
4. The student's absence from school for school-approved religious holidays will be recorded as an excused absence.

G. Excuse of Students from Classes for Religious Belief

1. It has been ruled by the State Secretary of Education that a school district has authority to excuse students from those portions of science and health courses which conflict with their religious beliefs.
2. It shall therefore be the responsibility of teachers of health and biology and the building principal to excuse students from portions of those courses which conflict with their religious beliefs. The excuses shall be granted only upon the following conditions:

- (a) A letter must be on file from the parents/guardians of such excused

children explaining in specific detail what parts of the course are objectionable. This letter shall be approved by the principal and a copy filed in the child's permanent record and with the teacher of the subject.

- (b) Students shall not be excused from the course, but shall be excused from the class only when such material as is specified in the approved letter is presented. When excused, the student will report to an assigned supervised area with some other research assignment in the course to be submitted in substitution for the work missed.

H. Sending Students Home During the School Day

If a student is sent home from school for any reason, the person in charge must contact the parents/guardians before allowing the student to leave school. If parents/guardians are not home, satisfactory arrangements must be made before permitting the student to leave the school. If unable to locate parents/guardians, the student must remain in school unless there are known provisions for the care of the student in such an emergency by a friend or relative as indicated in the student's emergency information. In this case, these persons should be contacted before allowing the student to leave school. If the student must remain in school following an illness or emergency, s/he should be properly treated or transported to an emergency facility or hospital at the parent/guardian's expense.

Note: Nurses may not release students without the principal's approval.

I. Referral to County Children and Youth Services (Students Under Age 13)

Any student of compulsory school age who has not attained age 13 and who fails to comply with compulsory attendance and is habitually truant*, shall be referred to Children and Youth Services. The referral may be in addition to filing a citation with the local district judge. The principal may refer a student 13 years of age or older to CYS in lieu of filing a citation with the local district judge.

- * "Habitually truant" as defined in 24 P.S. § 13-1333 means absence for more than three (3) school days or their equivalent following the notice of truancy which is required to be given after three (3) unexcused absences.

XIV. REFERENCES:

- A.** Pennsylvania School Code, Purdon's Statutes, 24 P.S. § 13-1326 to § 13-1330; § 13-1332 to § 13-1334; § 13-1338 to § 13-1339; § 13-1341 to § 13-

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| | <p>1343; § 13-1354; § 13-1371; The Juvenile Act, 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 6301-6364.</p> <p>B. Basic Education Circulars of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, including those relating to 24 P.S. § 13-1327, and attachments thereto.</p> <p>C. Regulations of the State Board of Education, 22 Pa. Code § 11.13, § 11.25, § 11.34, § 11.41 and § 12.1.</p> <p>D. Federal laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |
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