

**ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance at school is essential for the educational process. It is mandated by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Schools in the diocese shall abide by the regulations of the Commonwealth governing school attendance. Parents and Guardians, by law, are responsible for the regular school attendance of their children. Schools shall monitor attendance, and when children have unexcused absences, take appropriate measures.

Excused Absences

Parents or guardians are required to provide a written, signed note to explain a student's absence from school. Excused absences may be for matters such as illness of the student, family emergencies, a death in the family, authorized school activity, medical appointments, court-defined appointments, educational travel with prior approval as defined in the local school policy, or other reasonable matters as determined by the principal.

If a student's absence due to illness is 3 or more consecutive days, the school may require a doctor's note.

Schools will determine policy and procedures for managing attendance, and publish these for the school community.

Long-Term and Habitual Absences

When a student begins to miss significant amounts of school, the school needs to be in regular contact with the parents or guardians to determine the reason for the absences, and to devise a plan that is appropriate to the circumstances. If a student has a chronic medical condition, arrangements should be made to assist the parents in keeping the student current with his or her academic work. This should be done in consultation with the student's medical provider. If the student's absences are potentially due to a psychological condition, the school should be in contact with the student's counselor to plan an effective strategy for the student.

Should a student, because of illness or other medical condition, be unable to attend school for a significant period of time, the family may need to make arrangements for tutoring services or for homebound services. These services may be available through the student's public school district of residence. Whenever possible, the school will cooperate with the tutor or district to maintain the student's educational progress.

Unexcused Absences

Absences that are not excused, either because of the nature of the absence or the failure of the parents or guardians to provide the school with the appropriate documentation, are unexcused. Parents are to be notified that the absence has been listed as unexcused.

Truancy on the part of the student, without the parent's knowledge, is also an unexcused absence. Students who are truant are to be sanctioned with an appropriate penalty, and the parents or guardians informed.

When unexcused absences occur the school should meet with the parents and the student, to discuss future steps to insure regular attendance at school.

When a student has 3 days of unexcused absences in one school year, the principal shall send a written letter to the parents and notify the student's public school district of residence.

In collaboration with the student's school district of residence, the student may be referred to a School Attendance Improvement Conference. A representative from the school district may elect to participate in the Conference.

Following the School Attendance Improvement Conference the student may be referred to either a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or referred to the County Children & Youth Agency. These steps are taken in collaboration with the school district.

The school district may file a truancy citation with the district magistrate. The school will provide the school district with the student's attendance record and all relevant actions the school has taken in regard to the student's trancies.

If the school determines that either the parents are uncooperative in the matter of absences, or the student's behavior is beyond the ability of the school to maintain effective school attendance, the student may be dropped from the school rolls. The student's public school district of residence is to be notified of the student's status and the reasons for the school's action.

Policy adopted: October 1, 2009

Revised: October 1, 2018

RWG/Bishop of Harrisburg