**Title: 5030 ATTENDANCE**

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| Pennsylvania Statutes Title 24  P.S. Education  § 13-1327  PA Compulsory  School  Attendance  24 P.S. 13-1333  ACT 138 | **5030 Attendance, Absences and Excuses**  **Compulsory Attendance and**  **School Attendance Improvement Plans**  **5030.1 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 of Altoona-Johnstown will 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.  **5030.2 Excused Absences**  Parents are requested to make appointments outside school time whenever possible.  Parents or guardians are required to provide a written, signed note to explain a student’s absence from school. After an absence for any reason, 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 email excuse.  Pennsylvania law broadly defines absences as excused when a student is prevented from attendance for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons. An absence is lawful when a student is dismissed during school hours by a certified school nurse, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or a school administrator or designee, or if the student is absent to obtain professional health care or therapy care service rendered by a licensed practitioner in the healing arts. Additionally, schools and nonpublic schools should consider illness, family emergency, and death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities, and educational travel with prior approval as lawful absences. An absence that requires a student to leave school for the purposes of attending court hearings related to their involvement with a county children and youth agency or juvenile probation may not be categorized as unlawful.  Absence is considered unlawful until a written excuse is submitted to the school. If 3 days pass without a written excuse, the absence is considered unlawful. If a student’s absence due to illness is 3 or more consecutive days, the school may require a doctor’s note.  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 for future absences. 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.”  **5030.3 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. A child study team may be formed to help facilitate regular attendance. The local public school district will be alerted of excessive absences.  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.  **5030.4 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 in writing that the absence has been listed as unexcused.  A child is "truant" if the child is subject to compulsory school laws and has incurred three or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. A child is "habitually truant" if the child is subject to compulsory school laws and has incurred six or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.  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 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 truancies.  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.    **5030.5 Early Dismissal and Tardiness**  **EARLY DISMISSAL**  Students may be dismissed early for extenuating reasons if they bring a written request by their parent/guardian to the attendance desk prior to the beginning of the school day on which the early dismissal is to occur.  Any student dismissed early in excess of one (1) period (grades 5-8) or one-half (1/2) period (grades 9-12) shall be considered absent for one-half (1/2) day. This absence will count toward the 10 day attendance policy.  **TARDINESS**  Any incident of tardiness in excess of one (1) period (grades K-8) or one-half (1/2) period (grades 9-12) will considered one-half (1/2) day absence. This absence will count toward the 10 day attendance policy. |