



**Title: Attendance Policy**

200 Pupils

Code 202

22 PA Code 11.41

22 PA Code 11.23

22 PA Code 11.25

22 PA Code 12.1

24 P.S. 1327

24 P.S. 1329

24 P.S. 1330

22 PA Code 11.13

24 P.S. 1326

42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302

24 P.S. 510.2

24 P.S. 1332

24 P.S. 1339

22 PA Code 11.22

22 PA Code 11.28

22 PA Code 11.34

22 PA Code 11.32

22 PA Code 11.5

22 PA Code 11.31

22 PA Code 11.31a

24 P.S. 1327.1

22 PA Code 11.21

22 PA Code 11.26

24 P.S. 1546

24 P.S. 1333

24 P.S. 1333.1

24 P.S. 1333.2

22 PA Code 11.24

22 PA Code 11.8

24 P.S. 1333.3



## **Purpose**

The Board recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing attendance issues.[\[1\]](#)

## **Authority**

The Board requires the attendance of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except that temporary student absences may be excused by authorized district staff in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy, and administrative regulations.[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

## **Definitions**

**Compulsory School Age** shall mean the period of a student's life from the time the student's person in parental relation elects to have the student enter school, which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until the student reaches seventeen (17) years of age. Beginning with the **academic year 2020-2021**, compulsory school age shall mean no later than age six (6) until age eighteen (18). The term does not include a student who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)

**Habitually Truant** shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.[\[9\]](#)

**Truant** shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.[\[9\]](#)

**Person in parental relation** shall mean a:[\[9\]](#)

1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
3. Guardian of the person of a student.
4. Person with whom a student lives and who is acting in the parental role of a student.



This term shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.[\[10\]](#)

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Educational Director or designee shall annually notify students, persons in parental relations, staff, local children and youth agencies and local magisterial district judges about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in student handbooks and newsletters, on the district website, and through other efficient communication methods.[\[1\]\[11\]](#)

The Educational Director may require the signature of the person in parental relation confirming that the policy has been reviewed and that the person in parental relation understands the compulsory school attendance requirements.

The Educational Director or designee, in coordination with the building administrator and Attendance Officer, shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

The Educational Director or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students that:

1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.[\[12\]\[13\]](#)
2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences.
3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agencies, or the appropriate magisterial district judge.
4. Clarify the district's responsibility for collaboration with nonpublic schools in the enforcement of compulsory school attendance requirements.
5. Ensure students who are legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.



## Guidelines

### Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

All students of compulsory school age who are accepted to William Penn Academy shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.[\[5\]](#)

A student shall be considered in attendance if he/she is 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; or the student's placement is instruction in the home.[\[2\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[20\]](#)

### Excused/Lawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for an absence from school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons.[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy services rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.[\[6\]](#)
3. Quarantine.
4. Family emergency.
5. Recovery from an accident.
6. Required court attendance.
7. Death in the family.
8. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.[\[1\]](#)[\[6\]](#)
9. Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined in law, for an event or funeral.[\[6\]](#)



- a. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location, and time of the event or funeral.
  - b. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the district prior to being excused from school.
10. Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.[\[28\]](#)
11. Nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips, if the following conditions are met:[\[6\]](#)[\[29\]](#)
- a. The person in parental relation submits the required documentation for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate timeframe.
  - b. The student's participation has been approved by the Educational Director or designee.
  - c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation and the Educational Director.
2. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
3. Other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness and foster care.[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[30\]](#)[\[31\]](#)

The district may limit the number and duration of nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips and/or college or postsecondary institution visits for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

*Temporary Excusals –*

The following students may be temporarily excused 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 Educational Director or designee, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.[\[5\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[18\]](#)



2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:[\[28\]](#)[\[32\]](#)
  - a. The person in parental relation submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction.
  - b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
  - c. Following each absence, the person in parental relation shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.

*Parental Notice of Absence –*

Absences shall be treated as unexcused until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

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

Unexcused/Unlawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, absences that do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be permanently considered unexcused.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.[\[9\]](#)

*Parental Notification –*

District staff shall provide prompt notice to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused absence.

Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements

*The Student is Truant –*

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who



resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.[\[33\]](#)

The notice shall:[\[33\]](#)

1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;
2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and
3. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, it shall also be provided to the student's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.

The notice may include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[33\]](#)

If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after the issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[33\]](#)

*School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) –*

District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the SAIC.[\[33\]](#)

The purpose of the SAIC is to examine the student's absences and the reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.[\[9\]](#)

The following individuals shall be invited to the SAIC:[\[9\]](#)

1. The student.
2. The student's person in parental relation.
3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
4. Appropriate school personnel.
5. Recommended service providers.



Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the SAIC shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.[\[33\]](#)

The outcome of the SAIC shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student and appropriate district staff.[\[33\]](#)

The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until the scheduled SAIC has been held and the student has incurred six (6) or more days of unexcused absences.[\[33\]](#)

*The Student is Habitually Truant –*

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff:[\[34\]](#)

1. Shall refer the student to:
  - a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program;  
or
  - b. The local children and youth agency.
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.[\[34\]](#)

When a student aged fifteen (15) years or older is habitually truant, district staff shall:[\[34\]](#)

1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

District staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency, if the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or if the student refuses to participate in such a program.[\[34\]](#)





Regardless of age, when district staff refer a habitually truant student to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate magisterial district judge, district staff shall provide verification that the school held a SAIC.[\[34\]](#)

#### *Filing a Citation –*

A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge, whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled, against the student or any person in parental relation to the student.[\[35\]](#)

Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.[\[35\]](#)

#### Discipline

The district shall not expel or impose an out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment, or transfer for truant behavior.[\[33\]](#)