

**Administrative Procedures for Policy #3005 (Students)
Regarding Student Attendance**

I. Guidelines

- A. Each child who resides in the State of Maryland and is five years old on or before September 1 of the current school year and under age 18 (unless the child turned 17 on or before July 1, 2017) shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age or the child is exempted under Maryland State Board of Education regulations which allow parents/guardians to:
1. Apply for a home instruction (parental teaching) program as an alternative.
 2. Exempt a child who is 5-years-old from mandatory school attendance for one year if the child's parent or guardian believes that a delay in school attendance is in the best interest of the child and the parent or guardian files a written request with the Director of Student services asking that the child's attendance be delayed due to the child's level of maturity.
 3. Exempt a child from attending kindergarten if the parent or guardian of the child files in writing their intent to place the child in an alternative setting and verifies that the child is enrolled full time in a licensed child care center; full-time in a registered family day care home; or part-time in a Head Start 5-year-old program.
- B. Attendance directly affects the academic achievement of students. Students with excessive absences cannot fully profit from educational programs and activities offered at school. Students are encouraged, therefore, to attend classes regularly and promptly.

II. Definitions

- A. Habitual Truant – A student is a habitual truant if the student is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days in excess of 10% of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year.
- B. Lawful Cause of Absence (COMAR 13A.08.01.03) – Absence from school, including absence for any portion of the day, of students who are presently enrolled in public schools shall be considered lawful only under the following conditions: death in the immediate family; illness of the student; court summons; suspensions; state emergencies; hazardous weather conditions; extenuating circumstances; health exclusions; emergencies declared by the superintendent as sufficient cause of an absence; observance of a religious holiday; work approved or sponsored by the school, the Local School System or State Department of Education; and/or lack of authorized transportation. Lawful causes of absence are still counted as absences.

- C. Present/Absent/Partial Days – A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance four hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present ½ day if in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than 4 hours.
 - 1. A student scheduled for less than a full day is to be counted present based on the amount of time he/she is scheduled. Example: A student scheduled for a two hour block of time will be counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for that entire block of time. If the student is absent for that entire block of time, the student will be counted absent for a full day. A student scheduled for a two hour block of time will be counted present for ½ day if the student is in attendance for one hour.
- D. A student is counted present if at school or at another place at a school activity sponsored by the school during the regular school day and personally supervised by a member(s) of the school staff. This may include work study programs, field trips, athletic events, contests, music festivals, student conferences/workshops, instruction for home bound students, and similar activities when officially authorized under policies of the Calvert County Board of Education . This does not include “making up” school work at home, or activities supervised or sponsored by private groups or individuals. Lawful and unlawful absences are both counted as absences.
- E. Tardiness/Early Dismissal – Students arriving to school after the start of the student day will be considered tardy. Students leaving early before the end of the school day will be counted as having an early dismissal.
- F. Truancy – A truant is a student (age 5 to 17) who is absent from school without lawful cause as defined by COMAR 13A.08.01.03 for a school day or a portion thereof.
- G. Unlawful Cause of Absence (COMAR 13A.08.01.04) – An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful is presumed unlawful and may constitute truancy.

III. Family Vacations

- A. Vacations are not recognized as lawful absences in COMAR 13A.08.01.03. If a family anticipates that their child may miss school for a reason that is not defined as a lawful absence, the family should petition the principal in writing and in advance of the absence with the following information: student’s name, grade, parent/guardian name, the reason for the absence, and a phone number where a parent/guardian can be reached. The principal has the authority to approve or deny the request for a lawful absence.

IV. Standards for Regular Attendance and Penalties for Unmet Standards

- A. The standard for regular attendance is the minimum requirement for student attendance. The actions taken when the standard is not met should reflect a continuum of consequences. School officials may waive these actions when they are aware of circumstances beyond the student’s control, such as documented chronic illness.
 - 1. ALL SCHOOLS (ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH)
 - a. Each school staff will encourage a positive attitude on the part of the students for regular and prompt attendance.

- b. Report cards will be considered appropriate notification of the number of student absences.
 - c. School officials will notify parents when students are found to be truant from school or are found to have cut classes.
 - d. Students with excessive absences will be referred the Department of Student Services.
 - e. Parents and school staff are encouraged to work cooperatively to ensure regular/daily attendance of students. Pupil Personnel Workers, school administrators, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and school nurses are also available to work with students and families who are experiencing unusual or extenuating circumstances.
2. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (GRADES K-5)
- a. Elementary school students who miss 20 or more days, lawful and unlawful, within the school year will be considered for retention. Students who are absent 14 or more days will be considered having chronic absenteeism and may be required to provide notes from a physician for any absences thereafter.
 - b. Parents/guardians of elementary school students will be notified in writing after students have accumulated 14 or more absences. Additionally, the principal may consider the following penalties:
 - 1) Verbal agreement or written contract with parent/guardian;
 - 2) Removal of school privileges;
 - 3) Restriction of school extracurricular activities; and/or
 - 4) Summer school attendance.
3. MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 6-8)
- a. Students who miss 18 or more days, whether they are lawful or unlawful absences, in a school year will be considered for retention. Students who are absent 12 or more days will be considered having chronic absenteeism and may be required to provide notes from a physician for any absences thereafter.
 - b. Parents of middle school students will be notified in writing after students have accumulated 12 or more absences. Additionally, the principal may consider the following penalties or actions:
 - 1) Verbal and/or written contract with parent/guardian;
 - 2) After-school detention;
 - 3) Removal of school privileges;
 - 4) Restriction of extracurricular activities; and/or
 - 5) In-school suspension; and/or

6) Summer school attendance.

4. HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

- a. Students who miss 16 or more days within the school year, whether they are lawful or unlawful absences, may receive no credit for courses taken regardless of their course grade average. Students who are absent 10 or more days will be considered having chronic absenteeism and may be required to provide notes from a physician for any absences thereafter. Additionally, students missing 16 or more days from any individual class may not receive credit for the year in that class.
- b. Students and parents will be notified after students have accumulated 10 or more absences from school and/or individual classes. The principal may also consider the following penalties or actions:
 - 1) Denial of parking privileges;
 - 2) After-school detention;
 - 3) In-school suspension;
 - 4) Removal of school privileges;
 - 5) Restriction of extracurricular activities;
 - 6) Written contracts or verbal agreements; and/or
 - 7) Summer school attendance.

V. Procedures for Recording Lawful/Unlawful Absences, Tardiness and Early Dismissal

- A. A student is counted present for a full day if a student is in attendance for 4 hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present ½ day if in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than 4 hours.
- B. A student is counted present if at school or at another place at a school activity sponsored by the school during regular school hours and personally supervised by a member(s) of the school staff. This may include work study programs, field trips, athletic events, contests, music festivals, student conferences/workshops, instruction for home bound students, and similar activities when officially authorized under policies of the Calvert County Board of Education. It does not include “making up” school work at home, or activities supervised or sponsored by private groups or individuals.
- C. Out-of-School Suspensions are lawful absences thereby providing students the opportunity to make up any work missed during the period of the suspension. It is the responsibility of the student to request missed work upon returning from the suspension.
- D. Lawful and unlawful absences are both counted as absences.

VI. Procedures to Monitor and Verify Absences/Tardiness

A. REPORTING ABSENCES

Students 3005.1

Procedures Written: 8/11/05

Procedures Revised: 1/31/07; 7/2/07; 4/24/09; 3/31/10; 6/30/16; 8/18/16; 7/11/17

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1. Recognizing the responsibility of administrators and teachers for developing and maintaining a system of recording and reporting student absences (lawful and unlawful), the following procedures are to be considered the minimum for each elementary, middle and high school:
 - a. A daily attendance record will be maintained by teachers of each student's tardiness and/or absence from school or class.
 - b. A student's tardiness and/or absence from school will be reported to the school office daily.
 - c. A student's unlawful absence from an individual class will be recorded by the teacher and reported to the school office as appropriate.
 - d. Attendance information recorded on Report Cards will be considered appropriate notification to parents and students of the student's absences.

VII. CONFIRMING/VERIFYING ABSENCE

- A. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide school authorities with verification of the reason for each student absence. Any absence not certified by the parent, guardian, physician, court or other appropriate person/agency will be considered unlawful.
 1. Students returning from absences without notes with appropriate signatures certifying lawful absences will be given three (3) school days to provide such certification. Absences not certified at the end of three (3) days will be considered unlawful. Absences for reasons that do not meet the criteria for excused absences will also be recorded as unlawful absences.
 2. Absences due to acute or life-threatening medical conditions: To ensure optimum safety of a student, medical documentation is required when a student returns to school after experiencing acute distress or a life-threatening condition. This medical documentation should include any safety precautions or measures that the school should take to ensure the welfare of the child. Parents/guardians will be required to meet with the school nurse to discuss the student's health issues.
 3. The school principal or designee may require a doctor's note for any student who is chronically absent from school.
 4. Parents/guardians will be contacted when students are found to be truant from school or found to have cut class.
 5. School officials will work with the Pupil Personnel Worker when students develop patterns of poor attendance or excessive absences.
 6. A student 18 years of age or older and living independently of his/her parent/guardians may be considered emancipated and responsible for confirming and verifying absences. However, verification of emancipation must first be established by the Department of Student Services.

VIII. Waivers

Students 3005.1

Procedures Written: 8/11/05

Procedures Revised: 1/31/07; 7/2/07; 4/24/09; 3/31/10; 6/30/16; 8/18/16; 7/11/17

- A. Any student with a chronic health condition or other serious problem may petition the school principal for a waiver of the attendance policy. This petition must be in writing and clearly state the reason(s) for the request. The student and parent/guardian must provide medical documentation or other evidence to support the request.
- B. If the request for a waiver is denied, an appeal may be filed with the Director of Student Services or his/her designee within five days of the principal's decision.

IX. Reward Process

- A. Each school will develop an incentive program to reward and encourage regular school attendance. The required awards and certificates for schools are:

1. PERFECT ATTENDANCE

- a. All students, kindergarten through Grade 12, having perfect attendance for a given school year, shall be awarded a certificate of perfect attendance.
- b. All students who have attained three consecutive years of perfect attendance shall:
 - 1) Receive a certificate of perfect attendance denoting the three consecutive years of perfect attendance; and
 - 2) Be recognized by the Calvert County Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools at a regular meeting of the Board of Education.
 - 3) All students who have attained perfect attendance in Grade 9-12 for 4 years shall receive a certificate of perfect attendance denoting the attainment of the four consecutive years of perfect attendance.

2. EXEMPLARY ATTENDANCE

- a. All school principals are encouraged to recognize exemplary attendance.
- b. Reward and incentive programs in all schools are encouraged. Exemplary attendance is defined as five or fewer absences during the school year.

X. Information Dissemination

- A. The principal of each school will take the necessary steps to ensure that parents, students, and staff members are aware of the student attendance policy and procedures. Methods for disseminating policy information might include:

- 1. Explaining it to staff members at a meeting;
- 2. Publishing a summary for all parents/guardians;
- 3. Encouraging teachers to discuss the policy with students;
- 4. Discussing it at PTA/PTSA meeting;
- 5. Publishing a summary in school newsletters or student newspapers; and/or

6. Having a copy of the complete policy and procedures available in the school library and other public locations.