

# EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: ATTENDANCE

ADOPTED: August 19, 2002

REVISED: June 27, 2005  
August 21, 2006  
November 20, 2006  
October 15, 2007  
July 21, 2014  
July 17, 2017

204. ATTENDANCE	
1. Purpose	<p>The Board of Education requires that school-aged students enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly, in accordance with the laws of the state. The educational program offered by this district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.</p> <p>The Board recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.</p> <p><b><u>Philosophy</u></b></p> <p>To be successful in today's society, a person needs to be educated. Attendance at school is a prerequisite to a successful education. Class attendance has a stronger impact on the student's academic progress than any other factor. Therefore, the district encourages all students to remain in school until graduation and urges students and <u>parents/guardianspersons in parental relation</u> to dedicate themselves to ensuring that students attend school.</p>
2. Authority	<p>Attendance shall be required of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except that authorized district staff may excuse a student for temporary absences <u>in accordance with applicable laws and regulations</u> upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.</p> <p>The Board shall establish and enforce attendance requirements, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.</p>
3. Definitions	<p><b>Absence</b> – The nonattendance of a student on any day(s) and/or partial-day(s) school is in session.</p> <p><b>Compulsory school age</b> shall mean the period of a <u>childstudent's</u> life from the time the <u>childstudent's</u> <u>parents/guardiansperson in parental relation</u> elects to have the <u>childstudent</u> enter school, and which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until the <u>childstudent</u> reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not</p>

<p>4. Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<p>include a <u>childstudent</u> who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.</p> <p><b>Habitually truant</b> shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a <u>childstudent</u> subject to compulsory school attendance.</p> <p><b>Truant</b> shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a <u>childstudent</u> subject to compulsory school attendance.</p> <p><b>Person in parental relation</b> shall mean a:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.</li><li>2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.</li><li>3. Guardian of the <u>person of a childstudent</u>.</li><li>4. Person with whom a <u>childstudent</u> lives and who is acting in a parental role of a <u>childstudent</u>.</li></ol> <p>This definition 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.</p> <p>School-based or community-based attendance improvement program shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a <u>childstudent</u>'s absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, <u>parents/guardiansperson in parental relation</u>, staff, <del>and</del> local Children and Youth Agency and local Magisterial District Judge(s) about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in student handbooks, newsletters, district website and <u>through</u> other efficient communication methods.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with the building principal and attendance officer shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.</li></ol>
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5.6. Guidelines

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 agency, or the appropriate magisterial district judge.

~~3.4.~~ Clarify the district's responsibility for collaboration with nonpublic schools in the enforcement of compulsory school attendance requirements.

~~4.5.~~ Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

**Compulsory School Attendance Requirements**

All students of compulsory school age who reside in the district shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.

A student shall be considered in attendance if 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; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction; or the student's placement is instruction in the home.

The Board may excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:

1. On certification by a physician, school psychologist or a psychiatrist or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children students who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.

~~1.2.~~ Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught, except that such students and students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in the schools of the school district shall be counted as being in attendance in this school district.

~~2.3.~~ Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business school has been approved.

~~3.4.~~ Students fifteen (15) years of age, and as well as students fourteen (14) years of age who have completed sixth grade, who are engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.

~~4.5.~~ Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly engaged in useful and lawful employment during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate. Regularly engaged means thirty-five (35) or more hours per week of employment.

~~5.6.~~ Students attending a home education program or receiving private instruction from a properly qualified tutor in accordance with the law.

~~6. Children unable to attend school on the recommendation of the school physician and the school psychologist or a psychiatrist, or both, and approval by the Secretary of Education.~~

7. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by an Intermediate Unit or the Department of Education.

**Excused/Lawful Absence** – The Board of Education considers the following urgent reasons to constitute reasonable cause for excusal from school attendance:

1. Illness of student, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons.
2. Quarantine of student.
3. Recovery from accident by student.
4. Required court attendance of student.
5. Death in the student's family, limited to five (5) days per occurrence.
6. Impassable/hazardous roads.
7. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the student.
8. Excused pursuant to a farm or domestic service emergency permit.
9. To receive professional health care or therapy services rendered by licensed practitioners of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth, or territory.
10. Pre-approved educational trips or tours in accordance with Policy 204.2.
11. Pre-approved college visits, for students in Grade 11 and 12, limited to five (5) days per year, upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of such visit.
12. Suspensions from school.

13. All absences occasioned by the observance of the student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused when requested. No student so excused shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test or any other schoolwork given on that day.

14. Participation in school sponsored activities.

15. The Board of Education shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group upon written request prior to the event.

16. Exceptionally urgent reasons such as affect the student, but which ordinarily would not include work at home.

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 Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.

2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:

a. The parent/guardian 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 parent/guardian person in parental relation shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.

3. School age children students unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education.

***Parental Notice of Absence***

The school district must receive a written excuse signed by a parent/guardian person in parental relation for any absence(s) within three (3) school days of one's return to school. The principal or designee will review the excuse to

determine whether or not the absence is excused. If an excuse is not received within three (3) days, the absence will be recorded as unexcused/unlawful. 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 which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

***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**

***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.

The notice shall:

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, also be provided to the child/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.

If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference.

***School Attendance Improvement Conference -***

District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC).

The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.

The following individuals shall be invited to the School Attendance Improvement Conference:

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 School Attendance Improvement Conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.

The outcome of the School Attendance Improvement Conference 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.

The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference has passed been held and the student has incurred six (6) or more days of unexcused absences.-

***Student is Habitually Truant -***

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff:

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. ]

When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, district staff shall:

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 program.

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 School Attendance Improvement Conference.

***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 person in parental relation to the student.

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.

**Special Needs and Accommodations**

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy



**Discipline**

The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.

Student absences due to employment are subject to the rules governing such absence as prescribed by the Child Labor Laws and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In order for an eligible student to be released from attending school for reasons of full-time employment, s/he must show proof of having acquired a job of not less than thirty-five (35) hours per week.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to enforce this policy and all applicable laws governing student attendance.

References:

School Code—24 P.S. Sec. 510.2,1301, 1302, 1326, 1332, 1333, 1333.1, 1333.2, 1333.3, 1326, 1327, 1327.1, 1329, 1339, 1330, 1546

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 11.12, 11.13,11.41, 11.5, 11.8,11.21, 11.22, 11.23, 11.24, 11.25, 11.26, 11.28, 11.31, 11.31a, 11.32, 11.34, 11.41, 12.1

42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302

Board Policies—103.1, 113, 113.3, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 137, 204.2