



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

5113

Procedure No.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE,
ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

July 1, 2016

Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for recording and excusing absences and to indicate steps to prevent truancy.
- II. **POLICY:** All students are expected to attend school regularly in accordance with state laws and regulations. (Board Policy 5113)

Each child who resides in Maryland and is 5 years old or older, any child who turns 17 on or after July 1, 2016 (SY2016-17), and any child who turns 18 on or after July 1, 2017 (SY2017-18) shall attend a public school regularly doing the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in public schools to children of the same age, or is exempted by law. If the child is home schooled, the PGCPS Home School Office must be notified and given approval for exemption.

III. **DEFINITIONS:**

A. Regular Student

A student between the ages of 5 and 20 years whose parent/guardian is a bonafide resident of Prince George’s County and who resides with the parent or court-appointed guardian in the school’s attendance area. If a regular student is age 20, the student is eligible to attend school unless the student turns 21 years old before the first day of school.

B. Attendance

Students shall be considered in attendance at school when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the school principal or any persons duly authorized by the CEO or principal. Students shall be considered in attendance in an alternative setting when participating in activities during the day sponsored by the alternative program, and when that participation is approved by the director of a licensed child care center, registered family day care home, or head start 5-year-old program.

C. Truant Student

A child enrolled in school that is unlawfully absent from school for:

1. Eight days in a quarter;
2. Fifteen days in any semester; or
3. Twenty days in a school year.



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D. Habitual Truant

Any student who is unlawfully absent from school more than 20 percent of any grading period of the school year.

E. Lawful Absence

Students enrolled in public schools are considered lawfully absent from school or any portion of the day, only under the following conditions:

1. Death in the immediate family – immediate family means a parent or guardian, brother, sister, or grandparent.
 - i. Four school days shall be considered excused upon death of an immediate family member.
 - ii. The principal may grant extra days for extenuating circumstances.
2. Illness of the student. The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian of a student if the absences are three or more continuous days.

In the case of students who are also parents, the absence should be excused due to their child's illnesses or medical appointment. A physician's certificate will be required if the absences are 3 or more continuous days.
3. Court summons
4. Hazardous weather conditions that would endanger health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school.
5. Work approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the State of Department of Education, accepted by the Chief Executive Officer or the school principal, or their designee, as reasons for excusing the student.
6. Observance of a religious holiday
7. State emergency
8. Suspension
9. Lack of authorized transportation. This shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.



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10. Health exclusion
11. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Chief Executive Officer or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.

F. Unlawful Absence

Student absent from school for any reason other than those defined as a lawful excuse. Students who are removed from school by their parent(s)/guardian(s) for more than 10 consecutive days for extended travel and not enrolled in another school or educational program may be withdrawn; then, re-enrolled upon their return.

G. Tardiness

Anytime a student is not in the classroom when the class period begins.

IV. PROCEDURES:

- A. Recording Absences – 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 as minimum for each school level (elementary, middle, and high).
 1. The classroom teacher is responsible for recording student attendance and tardiness on the online system.
 2. If the student has missed 3 or more consecutive school days, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should be called by the teacher.
 3. If no change, the teacher of record will submit the student's name to the professional school counselor/and or administrator to schedule a conference with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).
 4. Students with excessive absences, both lawful and unlawful, will be referred to the School Instructional Team (SIT).
 5. Students who demonstrate a pattern of excessive absences will be referred to the school team, which will include the pupil personnel worker, for intensive interventions designed to increase regular attendance.
- B. Confirming Absences – Upon returning to school from an absence, the student is required to present a written note from his/her parent/guardian stating the dates and



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reason for the absence. Documentation may be requested for absences of three or more consecutive days.

- C. Home and Hospital Students – Attendance for students receiving home and hospital services—not home instruction—should be maintained on the regular school roll. They should be marked present except when they are not available for home and hospital instruction and then he/she is marked absent.
- D. Missed Classwork and Assignments – A student returning from a lawful absence shall be allowed a reasonable number of days at least equivalent to the number of days absent to make up missed classwork and assignments. A student with absences near the end of the marking period may receive a temporary “I” (incomplete) and be allowed a reasonable number of days, at least equivalent to the number of days absent to make up work.
- E. Procedures for Students Detained and Incarcerated Students – A student who is charged with either a juvenile or adult offense and is detained awaiting adjudication (temporarily held at a secured facility with an educational program) will be withdrawn from PGCPS.
 - 1. A student ordered to an institution with an educational program will be withdrawn from PGCPS with a code of T-22.
 - 2. A student ordered to an institution without an educational program is withdrawn with a code of W-38.

V. PREVENTING TRUANCY:

A. Identify At-Risk Students

Students often exhibit behaviors which, without intervention, can lead to truancy. To prevent unlawful absences, it is crucial to initiate positive and supportive interventions as soon as a student begins to exhibit such indicators. Some student warning symptoms, among others, may include:

- 1. Changes in behavior or behavior difficulties
- 2. Changes in friendships or having no friends
- 3. Poor or decreased academic performance
- 4. Bullying or being bullied
- 5. Listlessness or lack of focus
- 6. Agitation or withdrawal
- 7. Behaviors inappropriate for the age of the child



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8. A history of sibling truancy

B. Incoming Students: Articulation and Orientation

The following steps are to occur during articulation between elementary and middle school; and middle and high school.

1. Principals and/or their designees will transmit attendance information to receiving schools for all students highlighting students for whom the sending school has attendance concerns.
2. During the orientation process each year, school personnel are to discuss attendance issues with all incoming and returning students and their parents. For students, this may be done as part of the initial orientation assemblies or in special attendance assemblies, during classroom activities, and/or in other programs or communications. Parents are to be informed at back to school nights, PTA/PTSA/PTO meetings, school conferences, and other activities.
3. School personnel will discuss attendance issues with individual incoming students who have been identified as having substantial or unsatisfactory attendance and their parent(s)/guardian(s).
4. During regular registration for transfer students, professional school counselors and other appropriate personnel will discuss the importance of regular attendance.

For transfer students, professional school counselors will specifically note attendance as they review records of incoming students. The professional school counselor, pupil personnel worker, parent engagement assistants, or other appropriate staff member will contact parents of students whose attendance are unsatisfactory and will hold conferences to develop an individual attendance plan for these students.

5. All communication to parents will occur in a language which the family understands. Whenever written documents are available in the native language of the family, they shall be provided. When possible, professional interpreters shall be used when oral communication is necessary.

C. Addressing At-Risk Students

During the first month of the school year, the pupil personnel worker and the professional school counselor will meet with returning students who were identified as truants the previous year to:



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1. Discuss the importance of regular school attendance.
2. Meet with the student and parent/guardian to develop strategies for improvement.
3. Complete attendance contract with student.
4. Provide copies for the family, pupil personnel worker, and the student's cumulative folder.
5. By the second week of each month, the pupil personnel worker shall report to the supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services the outcome of the school team's collaboration to address attendance. The pupil personnel worker will monitor the attendance of these students.

D. Addressing Attendance Matters

The most effective approach to increase attendance and prevent truancy requires the school, family, and community working together. It is strongly recommended that the School Instructional Team (SIT) and the Supplemental Services Team (SST) meet a minimum of once per month to discuss attendance:

The SST will consist of:

1. Principal or designee
2. Parent
3. Pupil Personnel Worker
4. Professional School Counselors
5. Special Educator
6. Teacher
7. Attendance Secretary
8. School Psychologist
9. Nurse (if needed)
10. Other staff as appropriate



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E. Additional Measures to Address Students Over the Compulsory Age of Attendance

All students shall be made aware of the attendance policy. Students over the age of compulsory school attendance are subject to the same attendance procedures as those under the age of compulsory school attendance. If all strategies and interventions for the student's successful completion of school have not eliminated truancy, then the case shall be reviewed.

1. The pupil personnel worker shall review the case and provide guidance to school staff on appropriate actions needed prior to the withdrawal of the student from school. If withdrawal is recommended, the professional school counselor will offer in writing, as part of the withdrawal letter an exit interview with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss again the student's options for continuing his or her education. In addition, the withdrawal letter and withdrawal form PS 105 will be completed and placed in the student's cumulative folder.
2. If the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) are unavailable to participate in the exit conference, school staff and the pupil personnel worker should make reasonable efforts to contact them using a certified letter, home visit, email, etc. A copy of the student's options for education must be provided.

F. Appeal for Withdrawal Due to Attendance for Students over the Compulsory Age of Attendance

If the parent(s)/ guardian(s) protest such a withdrawal the parent may appeal to the appropriate Area Office. The student shall remain enrolled in the regular school program during the appeal process. Upon the successful appeal of the withdrawal, the school, parent/guardian, and student shall develop an attendance contract. Documented failure by the student to adhere to the conditions of the contract shall result in withdrawal.

G. Continuing Education After Withdrawal for Truancy

Notwithstanding any of the above, the withdrawal due to truancy shall not preclude the withdrawn student from enrolling into:

1. Evening High School
2. Summer School
3. Online Courses

If appropriate, special school or class placement, e.g., Annapolis Road Academy, Green Valley, Tall Oaks and Croom Vocational, and Community Based Classroom. Neither



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shall the above preclude the withdrawn student from obtaining assistance with respect to: GED preparation program or other educational/career programs.

H. Withdrawal of Special Education Student

The withdrawal of a special education student, regardless of age, must be in compliance with special education procedures. Such a withdrawal usually mandates that an IEP team meeting be convened to discuss options for continuing the withdrawal. Form (PS 105) must be completed and placed in the student's file.

I. Police Cooperation with Truants

1. The Prince George's County Police have agreed to stop and question children at large in the community who appear to be under the compulsory age of school attendance and unlawfully absent during regular school hours.
2. If such children do not have verification, such as an early departure slip, a release time card, or other authorization showing they are legitimately out of school, the police may document such children, take them to school, and release them to the appropriate school administrator. Students are responsible for securing departure documentation from the school officials.
3. When the police escort a student to school, the principal and/or the designated school official will admit the student to school, notify the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the circumstances, and take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with this Administrative Procedure 5113 and Administrative Procedure 10101, Code of Student Conduct found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.
4. Principals should encourage store managers who call regarding loitering of school-aged children to contact the police. A conference that includes the police, principal, and store manager to discuss the details of the situation may be appropriate should a particular shopping center or store have significant problems with truants.

VI. **DISSEMINATION OF PROCEDURES:** The principal and pupil personnel worker at each school will collaborate to take the necessary steps to ensure that parents, guardians, students, and staff members are aware of the procedures contained herein. Such measures may utilize student handbooks, PTA discussions, faculty meetings, etc. Students should be warned particularly of possible penalties when identified as truant.

VII. **LEGAL AUTHORITY:** Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, §7-301 and 7-302; Code



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of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.02.06.02; 13A.08.01 *et seq.*

- VIII. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** Administrative Procedure 5121, Examinations and Grading for Elementary and Secondary Schools; Administrative Procedure 5124, School Instructional Team (SIT), Supplemental Services Team (SST); Administrative Procedure 10101, Code of Student Conduct.
- IX. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** The Department of Student Services will have the responsibility for maintaining, evaluating, and updating these procedures.
- X. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5113, dated July 1, 2007.
- XI. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2016

Distribution: Lists 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 13