

Attendance

Purpose

The Board requires that school-aged students enrolled in district schools attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by this district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.[\[1\]\[2\]\[3\]\[4\]](#)

Authority

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in district schools during the days and hours that the school is in session, except that a principal or teacher may excuse a student for temporary absences when s/he receives satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent conditions which may reasonably cause the student's absence. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.[\[5\]\[6\]\[7\]\[8\]\[9\]\[18\]\[3\]](#)

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness.
2. Quarantine.
3. Recovery from accident.
4. Required court attendance.
5. Death in the immediate family.
6. Family educational trips.[\[11\]](#)
7. Educational tours and trips.
8. Impassable roads.
9. Exceptionally urgent reasons.

Absences shall be treated as unlawful 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 (including Educational Trips) verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond *ten (10)* cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed physician.

Unlawful Absences	Plan of Action
1. One unlawful absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents/guardians will receive written notification of absence with potential penalties for continued unlawful absence
2. Second unlawful absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second notification will be sent in order to alert parents/guardians of the absence and outline potential ramification of continued unlawful absence.
3. Third unlawful absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families will be notified via certified mail of the absence.• This notification will also inform parents of the requirement to meet with school district personnel in order to develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)

<p>4. Subsequent unlawful absence at any time during the school year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An official notice of unlawful absence will be sent via certified mail. • This notice will advise the parent/guardian that a citation will immediately be sent to the magisterial district judge.
<p>5. Case of habitual truancy</p> <p>6. Definition: Habitual truancy is defined as unlawful absence for more than three school days or their equivalent following the first notice of truancy given after a child's third unlawful absence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district may make a referral to Snyder County Children and Youth Services while simultaneously sending a citation to the magisterial district judge.
<p>7. If the parent/guardian is not convicted by the magisterial district judge because the parent/guardian took every reasonable step to insure the child's attendance at school and the child has attained the age of 13, the child may be:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to a fine of no more than \$300 for each offense, or · assigned to an adjudication alternative program pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 1520, and · alleged to be dependent under 42 Pa.C.S. §6303(a)(1) by the magisterial district judge if the child fails to pay the fine or comply with the adjudication program. • Referred by the school district for services or possible disposition as a dependent child as defined under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6302(5), in lieu of prosecution or assignment to an adjudication alternative program, if the child fails to comply with compulsory attendance provisions and is habitually truant
<p>8. For children convicted of violation of compulsory attendance requirements by the magisterial district judge, the court, including a court not of record, must send a certified record of the conviction or other disposition to the Department of Transportation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon first conviction, the child's operating privilege for operating an automobile will be suspended for 90 days. Upon the second or subsequent conviction, the child's operating privileges will be suspended for six months. Children who do not yet have a driver's license will be ineligible to apply for a license for the time periods of 90 days for the first conviction and six months for the second and any subsequent conviction.

Attendance need not always be within school facilities. A student will 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 care; 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. [\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)

All absences occasioned by observance of the student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused, and 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 given on the religious holiday. [\[34\]](#)

The Superintendent shall, upon written request of the parents or guardians, release from attendance a student participating in a religious instruction program acknowledged by the Board. Such instruction shall not require the child's absence from school for more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year, and its organizers must inform the Board of the child's attendance record. The Board shall not provide transportation to religious instruction. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for religious instruction.[\[17\]](#)

The Board 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.[\[7\]](#)[\[18\]](#)

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include:

1. Medical or dental appointments.
2. Court appearance.
3. Family emergency.
4. Independent activities.
5. Other urgent reasons.

The Board shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at the schools of this district:

1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.[\[19\]](#)
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 district schools shall be counted as being in attendance in this district.[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)
3. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools have been approved.[\[6\]](#)
4. Students fifteen (15) years of age, and fourteen (14) years of age who have completed sixth grade, who are engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.[\[19\]](#)
5. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.[\[19\]](#)[\[13\]](#)

The Board may excuse the following students 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.[\[12\]](#)
2. Homebound children unable to attend school on the recommendation of the school physician and the school psychologist or a psychiatrist.[\[22\]](#)
3. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit or by the Department of Education.[\[6\]](#)

The Board may report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of seventeen (17). The Board shall issue notice to those parents and guardians who fail to comply with the statutory requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions of the statute will be prosecuted.[\[23\]](#)[\[24\]](#)[\[25\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of State Board regulations. [\[26\]](#)[\[27\]](#)[\[28\]](#)
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with state statutes. [\[23\]](#)[\[29\]](#)
3. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs and interests.
4. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.
5. Issue written notice to any parent or guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance statute, within three (3) days of any proceeding brought under that statute. Such notice shall inform the parent or guardian of the date(s) on which the absence occurred, that the absence was unexcused and in violation of law, that the parent must be notified and informed of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student, and that further violation during the school term will be prosecuted without notice. [\[24\]](#)[\[30\]](#)[\[25\]](#)[\[31\]](#)

Guidelines

Repeated infractions of Board policy requiring the attendance of enrolled students may constitute misconduct and disobedience to warrant the student's suspension or expulsion from the regular school program. [\[32\]](#)[\[33\]](#)

UNLAWFUL ABSENCES/TRUANCY ELIMINATION

The Selinsgrove Area School District will work closely with families in the event a student begins to accumulate unlawful absences. Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to prevent truancy and improve student attendance and achievement. The following process is outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and consistent with compulsory attendance laws for the state of Pennsylvania.

In the event of **one unlawful absence**, parents/guardians will receive a written notification of the absence with potential penalties for continued unlawful absence. If there is a **second unlawful absence**, a second notification will be sent in order to alert parents/guardians of the absence and outline potential ramifications of continued unlawful absence. If **three unlawful absences** are accumulated, families will be notified via certified mail of the absence. This notification will also inform parents of the requirement to meet with school district personnel in order to develop a **Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)**. If there is a **subsequent unlawful absence** at any time during the school year, an official notice of unlawful absence will be sent via certified mail. This notice will also advise the parent/guardian that a citation will immediately be sent to the magisterial district judge.

For any case of habitual truancy, the school district may make a referral to Snyder County Children and Youth Services while simultaneously sending a citation to the magisterial district judge. Habitual truancy is defined as unlawful absence for more than three school days or their equivalent following the first notice of truancy given after a child's third unlawful absence.

*Every parent/guardian of any child of compulsory school age is subject to penalties if compulsory school-age attendance requirements are not met.

Possible sentences for parents found to be in violation of compulsory attendance law:

- Paying a fine up to \$300 for each offense and court costs, or in lieu of or in addition to any other sentence the district justice may order the parent, guardian or person in parental relation to perform community service in the school district in which the offending child resides for a period not to exceed six (6) months.
- Completing a parenting education program, and
- In cases where the party convicted fails to pay the fine or complete the parenting education program, a subsequent sentencing to the county jail for no more than five days.

- Completing in lieu of, or in addition to the previous penalties, community service within the school district for a period of no more than six months.

If the parent/guardian is not convicted by the magisterial district judge because the parent/guardian took every reasonable step to insure the child's attendance at school and the child has attained the age of 13, the child may be:

- Subject to a fine of no more than \$300 for each offense, or · assigned to an adjudication alternative program pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 1520, and · alleged to be dependent under 42 Pa.C.S. §6303(a)(1) by the magisterial district judge if the child fails to pay the fine or comply with the adjudication program.
- Referred by the school district for services or possible disposition as a dependent child as defined under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6302(5), in lieu of prosecution or assignment to an adjudication alternative program, if the child fails to comply with compulsory attendance provisions and is habitually truant

For children convicted of violation of compulsory attendance requirements by the magisterial district judge, the court, including a court not of record, must send a certified record of the conviction or other disposition to the Department of Transportation.

- Upon first conviction, the child's operating privilege for operating an automobile will be suspended for 90 days. Upon the second or subsequent conviction, the child's operating privileges will be suspended for six months. Children who do not yet have a driver's license will be ineligible to apply for a license for the time periods of 90 days for the first conviction and six months for the second and any subsequent conviction.

Preplanned Trips Educational Experiences **(Not School Sponsored)**

The district recognizes that students may have the opportunity to participate in preplanned trips and educational experiences during the school year and will count toward the 10 days of absences. Pre-approval forms are available in the main office.

The pre-approval form must be submitted prior to the first scheduled day of the trip or experience. Each request will be evaluated and a determination will be made based on the following:

1. Educational value of the trip for the developmental level of the student.
2. Attendance record.
3. Number and frequency of prior requests for Educational Trips.
4. Current academic standing.
5. Effect of absence on academic standing.

The student's parents or other approved adult personage will be directly responsible for the educational program and will be responsible for the continued educational progress of the child. If the trip is approved, the student or parent is responsible for contacting teachers to obtain assignments that are going to be missed. All work, tests, quizzes, etc. must be made up in accordance with school policy.

1 day absence = 1 additional day granted for completion (max. 5 additional days)