

POLICY TITLE: STUDENT ATTENDANCE		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: July 9, 1990	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: January 9, 2023	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: STUDENTS		

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the position and criteria of the Board regarding student attendance.

II. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Absence – The failure of the student to be physically present in school/class or at a school-sponsored activity during the school day.
- B. Attendance – The act of being physically present at school or at activities that have been approved as part of the student's instruction during the school day.
- C. Chronically absent – a year-to date absence rate of 10% or more, including both lawful and unlawful absences.
- D. Compulsory school age – Age required by the State for which a student must be enrolled in and attending public school or an equivalent approved education programs as set forth in Md. Code Ann., Ed. Art. §7-301.
- E. Extracurricular Activity – a school-sponsored activity that generally occurs after the regular school day is not graded and for which a credit is not earned, and is not described as a part of a course of study or subject offering in the course description guide, including, but not limited to, interscholastic sports.
- F. Lawful absence – an absence for any portion of the school day, under specified conditions that render the absence excused.
- G. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for a child:
 - 1. Biological parent – A person legally identified as the natural parent and who has not had parental rights terminated.
 - 2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted a child.
 - 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of a child.
 - 4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of a child.
 - 5. Caretaker – A person who is domiciled in Harford County and with whom a child resides who has a bona fide non-educational reason to reside with the caretaker.

- 6. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by Section 5-507 of the Family Law Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.
- H. School-sponsored activity – an event under the control and supervision of HCPS which is a component of instruction and which is not a regularly scheduled component of the student's school day.
- I. Tardiness – any time a student arrives at school after the official start of the school day or at class after the start of the class period.
- J. Truant student – a student who is absent from school or a portion thereof without lawful cause.
- K. Unlawful absence - an unexcused absence from school, or any portion of the school day or at a school-sponsored activity, for any reason other than those cited as lawful.

III. Statement of Policy

- A. The Board is committed to the goal that students shall attend school and classes regularly. Daily attendance is crucial to student achievement and required in order to demonstrate mastery of materials and receive credit for courses. Accordingly,
 - 1. Students are required to attend school and all classes regularly and to be punctual.
 - 2. Regular attendance is a shared responsibility by the community, the home, students and school personnel, and all must work together to ensure that regular attendance is achieved.
- B. Standards and Requirements – General
 - 1. Each child who resides in this State and is five years old or older and under eighteen years of age, 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 in accordance with applicable law.
 - 2. Any person who has legal custody or care and control of a child who is of compulsory school age (5 years old or older and under the age of 18) shall see that the child attends school or receives instruction as required by State law and regulations.
- C. Recording Attendance
 - 1. Students are recorded "Present," if the Student is in attendance for more than half of the time they are scheduled to be in attendance on a given day
 - 2. Students are recorded "Partial Day," if the Student is in attendance for 10%-50% of the time they are scheduled to be in attendance on a given day.
 - 3. Students are recorded "Tardy," if the Student is not present to school on time and present for more than 50% of their school day.

4. Students are recorded "Early Dismissal," if the Student leaves prior to the end of the school day and in attendance for more than 50% of their school day.
5. Students who have been absent from school may not attend any after school activities for the same day, unless special permission has been granted by the principal due to the reason for the absence.

D. Lawful Absences

1. Death in the immediate family.
2. Illness of the student. An administrator may require a physician's certificate from the parent(s) caretaker(s) of a student reported continuously absent for illness. Continuously absent means either a number of consecutive absences or a total absence in excess of the standard for regular attendance for which, in the principal's judgment, medical documentation is required. Students receiving Home and Hospital Teaching will be maintained on the regular school rolls and counted as present except when students are not available for home and hospital teaching, in which case they shall be marked absent.
 - A. In cases where a school would require a physician's note to excuse an absence, the school shall allow for a note from a licensed mental health provider if an absence is due to a mental health concern.
 - B. Staff will provide mental health resources to students upon their return to school following an absence that was due to a mental health issue using the following process:
 1. Teacher receives absence note stating the student was absent for a mental health issue.
 2. Teacher informs the student's school counselor about the contents of the note.
 3. School counselor provides the one-page "Mental Health Absence Resource" located at: <https://www.hcps.org/students/docs/MHAbsenceResource.pdf> to the parent via email and/or directly to the student. The decision about the best method of delivery of this resource is at the school counselor's discretion.
 4. School counselor shall decide whether or not to meet with the student based on prior experience with this student and whether or not they feel it is warranted.
 5. If the administration has decided a doctor's note is required to excuse the student's absence, a note from a licensed mental health provider shall suffice, if the absence is due to a mental health concern.
3. Court Summons.
4. Hazardous weather conditions - hazardous weather conditions that would endanger the 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 Department of Education, accepted by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal, or their designees, as reason for excusing the students.