

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Board of Education  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

5113  
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

STUDENTS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE, AND TRUANCY

**I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of a student's regular school attendance in the educational process. All students are expected to attend school regularly in accordance with state laws and regulations. The schools, families, and communities must work together to foster exemplary attendance for all students.

**II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to promote regular school attendance by students in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). The Board of Education encourages proactive and early intervention to increase student attendance, identify students who are irregularly attending class or school, and prevent truancy. The intent of this type of intervention is to raise the level of engagement with parents and students, and positively impact the level of academic achievement of students in PGCPS.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

A. "Lawful absence" means a student's absence, for any portion of the school day, only under the following conditions:

1. Death in the immediate family.
2. Illness of the student. The principal or a pupil personnel worker shall require a physician's certificate from the parent or guardians of a student reported continuously absent for illness.
3. Behavior health needs. The principal or a pupil personnel worker shall require a licensed or certified mental health practitioner's certificate from the parent or guardian of a student reported continuously absent for behavior health needs.
4. Mental health. Students may receive as an excused absence one (1) day of absence in each semester of each school year for a student's mental health needs. A note from a physician to excuse a student's absence for mental health needs is not required.

5. Pregnancy and parenting related conditions as determined by PGCPS, including absences due to:
    - a. Labor, delivery, recovery, and prenatal and postnatal medical appointments;
    - b. Illness or a medical appointment of the student's child; and
    - c. A legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody, and visitation.
  6. Court summons.
  7. Hazardous weather conditions. Hazardous weather conditions shall be interpreted to mean weather conditions which would endanger the health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school.
  8. Work approved or sponsored by the school, PGCPS, or the State Department of Education, accepted by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the school principal, or their designees as reason for excusing the students.
  9. Observance of a religious holiday.
  10. State emergency.
  11. Suspension.
  12. Lack of authorized transportation. This does not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.
  13. Health exclusion, which includes other health related communicable or contagious diseases. Students with a documented medical condition that adversely places them at-risk for contracting a potentially life-threatening medical condition – e.g., Coronavirus – shall be considered lawfully absent when absent from school.
  14. Absence due to Military Families. PGCPS supports the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. A lawful absence shall be granted to students while visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is an active-duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat supporting posting.
  15. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the CEO designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.
- B. "Private Career Schools" – is a privately owned and privately operated institution of postsecondary education other than an institution of higher education that furnishes or offers to furnish programs, whether requiring a payment of tuition or fee, for the purpose of training, retraining, or upgrading individuals for gainful employment as skilled or semiskilled workers or technicians in recognized occupations or in new and emerging occupations.

- C. “Truancy” is a student’s unexcused or unlawful absence from school for the entire day or a portion of the day without lawful cause as defined in COMAR 13A.08.01.03 and PGCPs policies and procedures.
- D. “Unlawful absence” means a student is absent from school for any reason other than those defined as a lawful absence.

#### **IV. STANDARDS**

- A. State law requires each child who resides in Maryland and is between five (5) and 18 years old to attend a public school during the entire school year. The exceptions to these requirements are listed below.

The student

- 1. Is receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age;
  - 2. Has completed an instruction program under item (3) of this subsection;
  - 3. Is severely ill and requires home or hospital instruction;
  - 4. Is married;
  - 5. Is in military service;
  - 6. Is committed by court order to an institution without an educational program;
  - 7. Provides financial support to the child’s family as documented by a local department of social services;
  - 8. Subject to the approval of the CEO has been expelled;
  - 9. Is pregnant or a parent and is enrolled in an alternative educational program;
  - 10. Attends an alternative educational program;
  - 11. Subject to written parental consent and written agreement with the county board, attends a public school on a part-time basis and attends a private career school; or
  - 12. Is waived from the provisions of this section by the State Superintendent.
- B. Students are eligible to attend public schools until age 21, unless the student graduates with a Maryland High School Diploma, is awarded a Certificate of Program Completion, General Educational Diploma (GED) or is otherwise exited from the school system.
  - C. In addition to the categories of “lawful absences” identified in state law, the CEO is authorized to identify other emergencies or set of circumstances which constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.

- D. A school must provide information to the student’s parent or guardian about school and community behavioral health resources that are available to the student, if the student or the student’s parent or guardian notifies the school that the student’s absences were due to behavioral health needs.

## **V. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The CEO will develop strategies to prevent truancy and methods to use in monitoring the effectiveness of these strategies.
- B. The CEO will establish administrative procedures consistent with this policy, including reports to parents and appropriate professional personnel regarding those students who are irregularly attending class or school, so that cooperative efforts may be made to improve the attendance of such students.

## **VI. REFERENCES**

- A. Legal
  - MD Ann. Code, Educ. Art § 4-401, 7-101, 7-301, and 7-301.3
  - Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.03-05
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 5119.3 – Pregnant and Parenting Students
- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
  - Administrative Procedure 5113 – Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy
  - Administrative Procedure 5119.3 – Educational Programs/Services for Pregnant and Parenting Students

## **VII. HISTORY**

- Policy Adopted 4/10/75
- Policy Amended 5/16/03
- Policy Reviewed-No Revisions Required 11/9/04
- Policy Reviewed-No Revisions Required 9/15/05
- Policy Amended 6/21/07
- Policy Amended 03/11/21
- Policy Amended 11/10/22