

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 of Prince George’s County (Board) 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 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, extended family and close non-relatives.
  2. Illness of the student. The principal or a pupil personnel worker shall require a physician's certificate from the parent or guardian of a student reported absences reach six (6) consecutive days 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 of one (1) day 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 PGPCS, 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, PGPCS, or the State Department of Education, accepted by the Superintendent or the school principal, or their designees as reason for excusing the student.
9. Observance of a religious holiday.
10. State emergency.
11. Suspension or expulsion.
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. PGPCS 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

Superintendent/designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.

- B. *Private Career School* – A privately owned and 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* – 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.
  - 1. The student:
    - a. Is receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age;
    - b. Has completed an instruction program under item (c) of this subsection;
    - c. Is severely ill and requires home or hospital instruction;
    - d. Is married;
    - e. Is in military service;
    - f. Is committed by court order to an institution without an educational program;
    - g. Provides financial support to the student's family as documented by a local department of social services;
    - h. Subject to the approval of the Superintendent, has been expelled;
    - i. Is pregnant or a parent and is enrolled in an alternative educational program;
    - j. Attends an alternative educational program;
    - k. 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

1. Is waived from the provisions of this section by the State Superintendent.
- B. In addition to the categories identified in state law, the Superintendent is authorized to identify other emergencies or set of circumstances which constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school as a lawful absence.
- C. 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.
- D. A student who is charged with either a juvenile or adult offense and detained awaiting adjudication held at a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) secured facility will remain dually enrolled in the student's home school and the DJS facility until after the disposition of the student's case. During that time, the home school shall utilize an attendance code created specifically for this situation for the days that the student is attending the DJS facility.
- E. The Superintendent/designee is responsible for developing and maintaining a system of accurately recording and reporting student absences (lawful and unlawful).
- F. The Superintendent/designee shall provide training for all school staff with attendance reporting responsibilities to prevent incorrect reporting of absences.
- G. Schools are required to initiate positive and supportive interventions for students who exhibit behavior indicators of possible future truancy. Parents must be informed about their student's attendance and invited to meet with staff to develop strategies for improvement.
- H. 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 Superintendent will develop strategies to prevent truancy, and methods to use in monitoring the effectiveness of these strategies.
- B. The Superintendent 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. Code Ann., Educ. §§ 4-401, 7-101, 7-301, and 7-301.3

Md. Code Ann., Human Services § 9-604

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

Policy Amended

02/27/2025