



STUDENTS: Enrollment and Attendance

Attendance and Excuses

I. Purpose

- A. To implement policy 5120.
- B. To establish guidelines for recording and excusing absences and to outline procedures for monitoring student attendance.

II. Guidelines

- A. Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) shall provide annual notice of the student attendance policy to students and parents/guardians by publication in the student handbook and by other means.
- B. Students shall be expected to attend school and all classes regularly and punctually.
- C. Each school shall develop and implement programs to improve attendance.
- D. Students shall be considered in attendance at school when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day that have been approved by the Superintendent or the school principal.

III. Lawful and Unlawful Absences

A. Lawful Absence

- 1. In accordance with *Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)*, a student enrolled in BCPS will be considered lawfully absent from school for any portion of the school day under the following conditions:
 - a. Death in the immediate family.
 - b. Illness of the student.
 - (1) The principal or pupil personnel worker (PPW) may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian of a student reported continuously absent for illness.
 - c. Court Summons.

- d. Hazardous weather conditions.
 - (1) Weather conditions which would endanger the health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school.
- e. Work approved or sponsored by the school, BCPS, or the Maryland State Department of Education, accepted by the Superintendent or the school principal, or their designees, as reason for excusing the student.
- f. Observance of a religious holiday.
- g. State emergency.
- h. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.
- i. Health exclusion.
- j. Suspension.
- k. Lack of authorized transportation.
 - (1) Lack of transportation does not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.

B. Unlawful Absence

- 1. An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed to be unlawful and may constitute truancy.

C. Tardiness and Early Dismissal

- 1. Students reporting late to school/class are considered tardy.
- 2. Leaving school/class before the day/period ends is considered early dismissal.
- 3. School personnel will designate tardiness and early dismissal as lawful or unlawful.

IV. Standards for Regular Attendance

- A. Students are expected to maintain satisfactory attendance at the state standard of 94%.
- B. In order to foster continuity of the instructional program, students should not exceed an absence rate of 10% in a given quarter.

V. Verifying Absences/Tardiness

- A. Each school principal shall implement the following procedures for verifying student absences and tardiness.
 - 1. Unless the parent has notified the school of their child's absence, the parent will be notified, to the extent possible, by 10 a.m. of their child's absence each day the child is absent, unless the opening of school is delayed.
 - a. In the event of a delayed opening of one hour, the parent will be notified of a student's absence, to the extent possible, by 11 a.m.
 - b. In the event of a delayed opening of two hours, the parent will be notified of a student's absence, to the extent possible, by 12 noon.
 - 2. Notice of the student's absence must be made via phone, e-mail, or text message.
 - 3. The principal will ensure that parents are notified of these absence procedures at the beginning of each school year.
 - 4. Annually, the principal shall designate the person(s) responsible for providing notice under this paragraph.

- B. A student absent from school shall present a note immediately upon return to school.
 - 1. The note, signed by the parent/guardian, shall include the name of the student, the date of, and the reason for the absence no later than five days after the student's return to school.
 - 2. Upon receipt of the absence note, the school will certify the absence as excused or unexcused.
 - 3. Absences not supported by a note will be considered unexcused and unlawful.
 - 4. If a student is absent for an extended period of time due to illness, a written statement of explanation may be required from the physician no later than five days after the student's return to class.

- C. Any absence or tardiness not supported by a parent/guardian note will be marked as an unlawful absence.

VI. Disciplinary Action

Excessive unlawful or unexcused absences are identified as a Category I offense. Disciplinary action may be applied in accordance with Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5550, *Disruptive Behavior*.

VII. Make-Up Work

- A. It is the responsibility of the student or his/her parent/guardian to request missed assignments for each lawful absence.
- B. Teachers will assist students in making up missed work for excused absences.
- C. Students absent for unlawful reasons are not entitled to make-up work.
- D. This section does not apply to students who are suspended in accordance with Board policy and Superintendent's rule 5560, *Suspensions, Assignment to Alternative Programs, or Expulsion*. In such instances, make-up work will be allowed in accordance with state regulation and Board policy and Superintendent's rule 5560.

VIII. Attendance-Monitoring

- A. Record Keeping
 - 1. The home room teacher shall take attendance and accurately code absences in the STARS online reporting system daily.
 - 2. Teachers shall maintain records in accordance with the *Baltimore County Public Schools Attendance Manual*.
- B. Schools should utilize the interventions outlined in the attendance manual for students who are not meeting the attendance standard, without a documented and approved excuse.
- C. Students who have not shown improvement should be referred to the student support team or the pupil personnel worker as outlined in the attendance manual.
- D. Report cards will record the number of excused and unexcused student absences and tardies.

IX. Attendance Recognition

Each school shall establish strategies to encourage regular school attendance and incorporate motivational programs in the school's attendance program to improve student attendance.

X. Accountability

- A. Any person who has legal custody or care and control of a child who is five years older or under 17 on or after July 1, 2015, and under 18 on or after July 1, 2017, shall see that the child attends school regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise exempted from attendance as provided by state law.
- B. BCPS will hold the parent/guardian accountable for the attendance of a child and may file charges in district court against a parent/guardian who fails to see that the child attends school or receives instruction under the Maryland Compulsory Attendance law.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §7-301, *Compulsory Attendance*
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-302, *Report of Absences and Maladjustment*
 COMAR 13A.08.01.01, *Attendance*
 COMAR 13A.08.01.03, *Lawful Absence*
 COMAR 13A.08.01.04, *Unlawful Absence*
 COMAR 13A.08.01.05, *Student Attendance Policy*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5100, *Compulsory Education*
 Board of Education Policy 5110, *Admission*
 Board of Education Policy 5500, *Code of Student Conduct*
 Board of Education Policy 5550, *Student Behavior*
 Board of Education Policy 5560, *Suspension, Assignment to Alternative Programs, or Expulsions*
 Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Responsibilities and Rights*

Rule		Superintendent of Schools
Approved:	07/14/83	
Revised:	05/15/90	
Revised:	01/13/09	
Revised:	06/10/14	
Revised:	12/16/14	

Revised: 07/14/15