



STUDENTS: Enrollment and Attendance

Attendance and Excuses

I. Purpose

- A. To implement Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) Policy 5120.
- B. To establish guidelines for recording and excusing absences and to outline procedures for monitoring student attendance.

II. Definitions

- A. *Attending School Regularly* – Defined in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), as the State standard of 94% for satisfactory attendance.
- B. *Eligible Student* – A student who is 18 years old or older or is attending an institution of post-secondary education.
- C. *Parent* – The biological or adoptive parent, legal guardian or person acting in the absence of the parent or guardian or otherwise has legal custody or care and control of a child.
- D. *Parenting Student* – A student who is the mother, father or legal guardian of a child.
- E. *Unlawful Absence* – An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful absences in State regulation.

III. 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 are expected to attend school and all classes regularly and punctually and may be excused from class or school only for reasons specified in State regulation, including lawful absences for pregnant and parenting students, or as authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

- C. Each school shall develop and implement programs to improve attendance.
- D. Students shall be considered “attending” school when the student is physically on school grounds or is participating in instruction, virtual instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location.
- E. Students will be deemed “absent” from school if the student is not physically present on school grounds and it not participating in instruction, virtual instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for less than 10% of the school day.

IV. 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, including for any portion of the school day, only under the following conditions:
 - a. Death in the immediate family.
 - b. Illness of the student.
The principal or pupil personnel worker (PPW) may require a physician’s certificate from the parent of a student reported continuously absent for illness.
 - c. Court summons.
 - d. Hazardous 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 and 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, which includes immunizations and other health related communicable or contagious diseases.
 - j. Suspension.

- k. Lack of authorized transportation. Lack of transportation does not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.
- l. Pregnancy and parenting student related conditions.
- 2. Absences are coded lawful when a note or other documentation that supports the reason for the absence is submitted to the school.

B. Pregnant and Parenting Students

- 1. A student's absence due to a student's pregnancy or parenting needs is a lawful absence as provided under this subparagraph.
- 2. Schools will excuse all student absences due to pregnancy or parenting-related conditions, including for labor, delivery, recovery and prenatal/postnatal medical appointments, including:
 - a. Providing at least 10 days of excused absences for a parenting student after the birth of the student's child;
 - b. Excusing any parenting-related absences due to an illness or a medical appointment of the student's child, including up to 4 days of absence per school year for which the school may not require a note from a physician;
 - c. Excusing any absence due to a legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student that is related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody and visitation; and
 - d. Excusing any parenting-related absence from a class due to use of a lactation space to nurse or to express breast milk.
- 3. In addition to home and hospital services, the school may allow the student to:
 - a. Make up work that the student missed in a time period that equals at least as many days that the student was absence; and
 - b. Choose one of the following alternatives to make up work that the student missed:
 - (1) Retake a semester;
 - (2) Participate in an online course credit recovery program; or
 - (3) Allow the student 6 weeks to continue at the same pace and finish at a later date.

C. Unlawful Absence

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

D. 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.

E. Truant Student

A truant student is a student who is unlawfully absent from school:

1. For more than 8 days in any quarter; or
2. For more than 15 days in any semester; or
3. For more than 20 days in any school year.

V. 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.

VI. Verifying Absences/Tardiness

- A. A written explanation of each absence is required from the parent/eligible student.
- B. 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.
- C. A student absent from school shall present a note to the school principal immediately upon return to school.
1. The absence note shall be signed by the parent/eligible student and include the name of the student, the date of the absence and the reason for the absence.
 - a. The absence note shall be submitted to the school principal no later than five days after the student's return to school.
 - b. The absence note may be submitted in person or by electronic mail (e-mail) to the school principal.
 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.
- D. Any absence or tardiness not supported by a parent/eligible student note will be marked as an unlawful absence.

VII. 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, *Student Behavior Code*.

VIII. Make-Up Work

- A. It is the responsibility of the student or the student's parent to request missed assignments for each lawful absence.
- B. Teachers will assist students in making up missed work for excused absences.
- C. This paragraph does not apply to students who are suspended in accordance with Board Policy 5560, *Suspensions and Expulsions*. In such instances,

make-up work will be allowed in accordance with state regulation and Board Policy 5560.

- D. Make up work for pregnant and parenting students shall be provided as outlined in paragraph IV(B) of this rule.

IX. Attendance-Monitoring

- A. Recording Absences
 - 1. The home room teacher is responsible for recording the attendance of students in class. Teachers shall record absences in the online Student Information System (SIS) reporting system daily.
 - 2. Teachers shall maintain records in accordance with the applicable records retention schedule.
- 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 PPW as outlined in the attendance manual.
- D. Report cards will record the number of excused and unexcused student absences and tardies.

X. 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.

XI. Parental Accountability

- A. Each person who has legal custody or care and control of a child who is five years old or older and under 18 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 responsible for the attendance of a child and may file charges in district court against a parent 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 § 4-139, Model Policy to Improve Educational Outcomes of Pregnant and Parenting Students – Items Included – Technical Assistant to County Board*
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article § 7-301, School Attendance Requirements
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article § 7-301.1, Absences Due to Pregnancy or Parenting Needs
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article § 7-302, Report of Absences and Maladjustment
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article § 7-302.2, Truant Students
COMAR 13A.08.01.01, *Attendance*
COMAR 13A.08.01.02-1, *Definitions*
COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2, *Exemptions to Kindergarten Attendance Requirement*
COMAR 13A.08.01.03, *Lawful Absence*
COMAR 13A.08.01.04, *Unlawful Absence*
COMAR 13A.08.01.05, *Student Attendance Policy*
COMAR 13A.08.01.07, *Student Withdrawal Status*
COMAR 13A.05.05, *Programs of Pupil Services*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 0100, *Equity*
Board of Education Policy 2380, *Records Retention*
Board of Education Policy 5100, *Compulsory Attendance*
Board of Education Policy 5110, *Admission*
Board of Education Policy 5230, *Student Records*
Board of Education Policy 5480, *Pregnant and Parenting Students*
Board of Education Policy 5500, *Code of Student Conduct*
Board of Education Policy 5550, *Student Behavior Code*
Board of Education Policy 5560, *Suspensions and Expulsions*
Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Responsibilities and Rights*

Other: BCPS School Records Retention Schedule

BCPS Student Records Retention Schedule
Maryland Student Records System Manual, Maryland State
Department of Education

| Rule | Superintendent of Schools |
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