

LAUREL HIGHLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ATTENDANCE POLICY – Board Approved 8/12/2010

204. Attendance	
1 Purpose	<p>The board requires that school age students enrolled in district schools attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by the district is predicated upon the presence of the students and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.</p>
2 Definitions	<p><b>Absence</b> is the nonattendance of a student of those days or half days when school is in session.</p> <p><b>Excused Absence</b> refers to absence for a legal reason (s). Excused absences shall be classified in two (2) groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Nonattendance due to unpreventable causes.</li><li>2. Nonattendance due to other legal reasons. The Public School Code of Pennsylvania states that upon proper evidence a child may be excused for mental, physical or other urgent reasons. The term urgent reason shall be strictly construed and shall not permit irregular attendance. The term “strictly construed” implies that the reasons of nonattendance for unpreventable causes may be serious and that they apply to the child him/herself and not ordinarily to home conditions, sickness, impassable roads, quarantine, death in the immediate family, or inclement weather. Absences due to other legal causes would include, for example, minors who have employment certificates, a farm, or domestic permit, students who are absent for religious instruction, religious holidays, and who was absent because the school bus was delayed or did not operate.</li></ol> <p><b>Unexcused Absence:</b> is the absence of a student due to parental neglect, illegal employment or truancy.</p> <p><b>Unlawful / Illegal Absence:</b> is the unexcused absence of any student under seventeen (17) years of age.</p> <p><b>Tardiness</b> is the absence of a student at the time any morning or afternoon session begins, provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session.</p> <p><b>Excused Tardiness</b> is the absence of a student at the time any morning or afternoon session begins, provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session. A tardy may be granted excused only if the student turns in a medical or doctor’s excuse at the time of the infraction. A student may submit up to (4) parent excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within 3 days of the infraction for the tardy to be excused.</p>

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<p>3 Authority</p>	<p><b>Unexcused Tardiness</b> is the absence of a student at the time any morning or afternoon session begins, provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session. Once the student exhausted the allotment for excused tardies and can not provide a medical/doctor excuse the absence will be unexcused/illegal. The student is permitted to submit up to (4) parent excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within 3 days of the infraction for the tardy to be excused. After the permitted four (4) parental excuses for tardiness are exhausted all other tardies must have a medical/doctor excuse to be excused.</p> <p>Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in district schools during the days and hours that school is in session, except that a principal or teacher may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or others urgent reasons, that may reasonably cause the students, absence. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and did not permit irregular attendance.</p> <p>The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verification by a physician will be required if absences, excused or unexcused/illegal, exceed sixteen (16) days.</li><li>2. Death in the family, limited to five (5) days for the death of an immediate relative- (mother, father, child, sibling, or legal guardian). Death in the family of a grandparent or half-brother/sister is limited to three (3) school days from date of death. Death of a near relative like a cousin, aunt, or uncle is limited to one (1) day. For non-family member's deaths, pre-approved is required for a one-day absence. Documentation from the funeral home director stating the name of the person and the relationship to the student must be submitted for the day to be excused.</li><li>3. Impassable roads as certified by the bus-driver, township supervisor or state police.</li><li>4. Religious holidays: students may be excused for religious holidays and religious instruction for up to 36 hours per school year in accordance with the School Code. A written request from parents/guardians of the students must be submitted to the principal prior to participation in the religious instructional program. Proof of attendance in such program must also be provided upon the students return to school. The school shall not provide transportation to religious instruction. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for religious instruction. (Reference Early Dismissal Section)</li><li>5. Administrative reasons as certified by the principal (field trips organized by the school for educational endeavors, a college visit, reasons noted in an IEP.)</li><li>6. Calamity-fire, flood etc.</li></ol>
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7. Medical appointment which cannot be scheduled outside the school day when the absence is verified by a physician and verified by the school. We recommend that parents make appointments outside the school day.
8. Illness or injury when the student is absent verified by a physician.
9. Family Educational Leave maximum of five (5) days with paperwork completed prior to departure explaining where, which dates and the educational experience which may be gleaned. This paperwork must be submitted to the office at least two (2) days prior to departure. In addition, each student must go to all teachers and have the teacher sign off and write the assignments that he/she must complete while away. The Family Educational Leave journal must be completed and submitted within 3 days upon return or the days of family travel will automatically become unexcused/illegal. (See building secretary for forms).
10. College Visits are limited to seniors. Seniors are allotted three (3) days per year for college visits. A letter from the college stating the date and time of visit must be submitted within three (3) days or the day will be unexcused/illegal.
11. Required court attendance. Documentation of court attendance is required and must include time in and out.
12. Health exclusions, Students may be excluded from school for health reasons including, but not limited to:
  - Lice
  - Pink Eye
  - Scabies
  - Ring Worm
  - Missing Required Shots/Immunizations (School law requires students to obtain immunization shots; however, parents may get a legal exemption from the school law for medical reasons or conscientiously held beliefs.)

The length of these exclusions is 48 hours. Days absent after that time period will be considered unexcused unless a valid medical excuse is provided. For more serious communicable diseases, acceptable periods of exclusion will be determined by a district representative and the child's physician.

Attendance need not always be within school facilities. A student will be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the building principal; the student is receiving approval tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.

The building principal shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide organization and approved by an administrator.

The building principal will recognize other justifiable absences for part of

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4. Delegation of Responsibility	<p>the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearances, and family emergencies. (Reference Guidelines for Submitting a Doctor Excuse)</p> <p>The building principal shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at the schools of this district:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Students enrolled in nonpublic, or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught, except that such students and students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in the district schools shall be counted as being in part-time attendance in this district.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employed certificate. Students can withdraw from school with proof of full time employment and parent approval.</p> <p>The building principal may excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.</li><li>2. Homebound children unable to attend school on the recommendation of the school physician and the school psychologist, or a psychiatrist, and approval of the Secretary of Education.</li><li>3. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by the Intermediate Unit No. 1 or the Department of Education.</li></ol> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of state regulations.</li><li>2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with state statues.</li><li>3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences, and excusals.</li><li>4. Impose on truant students appropriate incremental disciplinary measures for infractions of school rules.</li></ol>
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<p>5. Guidelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of truant behavior, and consider modifications of the student’s educational program to meet particular needs and interests.</li><li>6. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.</li><li>7. Issue written notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance statute. Such notice shall inform the parent/guardian of the date (s) the absence occurred, that the absence was unexcused/illegal and in violation of law, that the parent/guardian is being notified and informed of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student, and that further violation during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.</li></ol> <p>Repeated infractions of Board policy requiring the attendance of enrolled students may constitute misconduct and disobedience to warrant the student’s suspension or expulsion from the regular school program.</p> <p><b><u>Excessive Absences</u></b></p> <p>The attendance record of each student shall be monitored during the school year and when excessive absences occur, action will be taken by the administration and the attendance officer. Such action shall include phone calls, home visits, and letters sent to the student’s home. The letters sent home shall contain the days on which the student was absent and will state that the student’s attendance records will be submitted to the home school visitor/attendance office for further investigation including possible prosecution</p> <p>If excessive absences continue to occur and are deemed to be unexcused/illegal, the district shall mail a citation warning to the student’s home while the pending magistrate hearing is scheduled. The building principal reserves the right to require a physician’s excuse at any time to verify the validity of an absence.</p> <p>In cases where teachers or school officials believe that attendance laws are being abused, a physician’s statement may be required for each absence, stating that the student was under his/her care and was too ill to be in school on a certain date. Without the required certification, the absence will be considered unexcused/illegal.</p> <p>The excuse must be presented to the home-room teacher with in three (3) school days upon the student’s return to school. If no excuse is presented, or if it is not presented in the specified amount of time, the absence shall be considered unexcused/illegal.</p>
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Whenever a student has been unlawfully/illegally absent to the extent that his/her parents/guardians have received a letter of notification explaining the student has been absent unlawfully/illegally, the parents/guardians will be prosecuted for noncompliance with compulsory attendance laws. If the absences continue a new citation shall be issued each week.

Students with excessive absences will be removed and will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities.

Students who drive to school and are chronically late shall lose driving privileges.

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**Early Dismissal:**

**An early dismissal is leaving school before the end of the school day for excused reasons.**

Early dismissals must be kept to a minimum because students leaving early miss instructional time. Failure to provide documentation supporting an excused reason for early dismissal will result in an unexcused/illegal absence.

All excused absences for early dismissals must be made by a parent/guardian in writing. The student is permitted to submit up to (4) parent excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within 3 days of the infraction for the early dismissal to be excused. After the permitted four (4) parental excuses for early dismissals are exhausted all other early dismissals must have a medical/doctor excuse to be excused.

Students will be permitted to makeup work/tests for **one early dismissal, tardy, and/or full day absence per semester** that are unexcused/illegal and receive full credit. Any unexcused early dismissals, tardies, and/or full day absence that is unexcused **beyond the one per semester** will result in a **0** for any classwork, quiz, and/or test.

All requests for early dismissals must be made by a parent/guardian in writing.

Written requests shall include:

1. Student's name
2. Date
3. Reason for the early dismissal
4. Telephone number parent/guardian can be contacted. If request can not be verified student will not be dismissed.

All early dismissal arrangements must be made through the school office.

Students being picked up must be picked up at the school office and signed out by a parent/guardian/designee.

Early dismissal for student drivers must also be verified by a parent/guardian.

Students must remain in school for the entire day. It is understandable that, on occasion, a student may need to leave early for an occasional appointment. However, students leaving early too often miss their last class of the day. Parents should consider doctor appointments after school. Appointments for haircuts, family trips, or shopping are not excusable.

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The following is progressive punishments when a student abuses the system and leaves early regularly and the absent is unexcused/illegal:

- Sixth (6) unexcused/illegal early dismissal—Warning Letter
- Seventh (7) unexcused/illegal early dismissal—1 Day Detention
- Eighth (8) unexcused/illegal early dismissal—2 Days Detention
- Ninth (9) unexcused/illegal early dismissal –1 Day Suspension  
Parents Notified in Writing
- Tenth (10) unexcused/illegal early dismissal—2 Days Suspension  
Parents Notified in Writing, Withdrawal of Privileges
- Eleventh (11) unexcused/illegal early dismissal – 2 Days  
Suspension, Parent Notified in Writing, Possible Administration  
Meeting
- Twelfth (12) or More unexcused/illegal early dismissal—Parental  
Hearing and a citation will be issued with the District Justice.

**At the secondary level** students leaving **2 hours or less** prior to dismissal will be charged a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students leaving **2 hours to 3 ½ hours** prior to dismissal will be charged half (.50) day absence.

**At the elementary level** students leaving **1 ½ hours or less** prior to dismissal will be charged a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students leaving **1 ½ to 3 ½ hours** prior to dismissal will be charged a half (.50) day absence.

Early dismissals will accumulate and be counted against the sixteen (16) total days of absence.



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**Tardies/Late Arrivals:**

**Tardiness: The arrival after the designated starting time. Failure to provide documentation supporting an excused reason will result in an unexcused/illegal tardy.**

Tardiness/late arrivals must be kept to a minimum because students arriving to school late miss instructional time. Failure to provide documentation supporting an excused reason for the tardiness will result in an unexcused/illegal absence.

All excused absences for tardiness must be made by a parent/guardian in writing. The student is permitted to submit up to (4) parent excuses per school year and must submit an excuse within 3 days of the infraction for the tardy to be excused. After the permitted four (4) parental excuses for tardiness are exhausted all other tardies must have a medical/doctor excuse to be excused.

Students will be permitted to makeup work/tests for **one early dismissal, tardy, and/or full day absence per semester** that are unexcused/illegal and receive full credit. Any unexcused early dismissals, tardies, and/or full day absence that is unexcused **beyond the one per semester** will result in a **0** for any classwork, quiz, and/or test.

Written excuses shall include:

5. Students name
6. Date
7. Reason for being tardy
8. Telephone number parent/guardian can be contacted.

Tardies/Late Arrivals are counted cumulatively throughout the school year.

The following is progressive punishments for those students who abuse the system and report tardy/late regularly:

- Sixth (6) unexcused/illegal tardy/late arrival—Warning Letter
- Seventh (7) unexcused/illegal tardy/late arrival –1 Day Detention
- Eighth (8) unexcused/illegal tardy/late arrival –2 Days Detention
- Ninth (9) unexcused/illegal tardy/late arrival –1 Day Suspension  
Parents Notified in Writing
- Tenth (10) unexcused/illegal tardy/late arrival –2 Days Suspension  
Parents Notified in Writing, Withdrawal of Privileges
- Eleventh (11) unexcused/illegal tardy – 2 Days Suspension, Parent  
Notified in Writing, Possible Administration Meeting
- Twelfth (12) or More unexcused/illegal tardy/late arrival –Parental  
Hearing and a citation will be issued with the District Justice.

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**At the secondary level** students who arrive **2 hours or less** after the start of the school day will be charged with a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students who arrive **2 hours to 3 ½ hours** after the start of the school day will be charged with a half (.50) day absence.

**At the elementary level** students who arrive **1 ½ hours or less** after the start of the school day will be charged a quarter (.25) day absence.

Students who arrive **1 ½ to 3 ½ hours** after the start of the school day will be charged a half (.50) day absence.

Tardies will be accumulated and count towards the sixteen (16) total days of absence.

After the mid-day cut-off point, students can only arrive to school if they have a doctor's excuse/legal excuse or a parent/guardian must escort the student to the office and sign the student into school. Students who do not meet these requirements will be referred to administration.

**Attendance Procedures**

All teachers and administrators shall assume responsibility for enforcing compulsory attendance laws in conformity with the School Laws of Pennsylvania and the regulations of the State Board of Education.

- **1<sup>st</sup> computer generated letter**  
2 unexcused/illegal absences
- **2<sup>nd</sup> computer generated letter**  
3 unexcused/illegal absences
- **1<sup>st</sup> citation**  
4 unexcused/illegal absences
- **2<sup>nd</sup> citation**  
5 unexcused/illegal absences
- **3<sup>rd</sup> or more citation(s)**  
Every additional 4 combined unexcused/illegal absences

The student will be allotted sixteen (16) absences per school year. Parental excuses, unexcused/illegal absences, early dismissals and late arrivals/tardies will count towards the allotted sixteen (16) absences.

After sixteen (16) absences a student must have a mandatory doctor excuse. All absences will be considered unexcused/illegal after the allotted sixteen

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(16) absences per school year unless a doctor's excuse is provided.

All parent and doctor excuses must be submitted within 3 days of absence or the day(s) absent will remain unexcused/illegal.

Citations will be filed with the District Justice (Magistrate) according to state regulations. A student may be referred to Children and Youth Services.

After ten (10) doctor excuses, a meeting may occur with the family, attendance designee, school nurse, and physician to discuss concerns about missing school and student progress.

An attendance committee will be available to review individual cases.

**Guidelines for Submitting a Parental Excuse**

A **Parental Excuse** must include all of the following in order for it to be acceptable.

- Student Full Name
- Date(s) of absence
- Specific Reason
- Parents Full Name (printed)
- Parents Signature

The excuse must be submitted within 3 days of absence.

In the situation more than one child in the household was absent on the same day a separate excuse must be provided for each student, following the same criteria.

**Guidelines for Submitting a Doctor Excuse**

A **Doctor Excuse** must include all of the following in order for it to be acceptable.

- Student Full Name
- Date(s) of absence
- Time of visit
- Include if the student is excused from school all day or ½ day
- Specific Reason (if applicable)
- Doctors Name (printed)
- Doctors Signature

The excuse must be on original medical stationery. Photo copied excuses

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will not be excepted.

The excuse must be submitted within 3 school days of absence.

In the situation more than one child in the household was at the doctors a separate excuse must be provided for each student, following the same criteria.

Disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken against any student who falsifies or alters an excuse.

**Make-Up Work**

Make up work. It is imperative that students make up work when they miss school. Failure to complete the make up work could result in a failing grade or even a zero for that assignment, exam, paper, etc.

Students returning from an excused absence must contact the classroom teachers within three (3) days of their return to school concerning make-up work. The teacher and the student shall arrange a schedule to make up work and tests.

Students will be permitted to make up missed work for one unexcused absence, tardy, or early release **per semester**. Any unexcused absences thereafter will result in a 0 grade for any class work missed due to the absence.