



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

AP 5113

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

I. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for recording and excusing absences and to indicate steps to prevent truancy.

II. **POLICY:** All students are expected to attend school regularly in accordance with state laws and regulations. (Board Policy 5113)

Each child who resides in Maryland and is five (5) years old or older, and under 18 shall attend a public school during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in public schools to children of the same age, or is exempted by law. If the child is home schooled, the PGCPS Home School Office must be notified and provided the required documentation for the exemption.

III. **DEFINITIONS:**

A. Attendance

Students shall be considered in attendance while instruction takes place face to face; approved online instruction; or other times when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the Superintendent, the school principal, or any person duly authorized by the Superintendent or principal.

1. Face to face – students attend class in the school buildings.
2. Online Instruction (Prince George’s County Public Schools Online Campus) – a form of education in which the main elements include physical separation of teachers and students during instruction and the use of various technologies to facilitate student-teacher and student-student communication.

3. Asynchronous – students learn the same material at different times and locations through online channels without real-time interaction.
4. Synchronous – students learn the same material at the same time through online or distance education that occurs in real time.

B. Chronically Absent

A student is chronically absent if the student has been enrolled in a school for at least 10 days and is absent 10% or more of the school days while enrolled at that school. For example, a student who is enrolled in a school for 30 days, and who is absent three of those 30 days, is considered chronically absent. A student can be counted as chronically absent in multiple schools, within the State, in the same year.

C. Habitually Truant

A student is habitually truant if the student has been enrolled in a school for 91 or more days in a school year and is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days equal to or in excess of 20% of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year. There may be legal consequences when a student is habitually truant.

D. Lawful Absence

1. Death in the immediate family (i.e., parent, guardian, brother, sister, grandparent), or extended family and close non-relatives.
 - a. Four school days shall be considered excused upon death of an immediate family member, extended family member or close non-relative.
 - b. The principal may grant extra days for extenuating circumstances.
2. Illness of the student. The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian of a student that is reported absent for illness at least three school days. If absences reach six days a physician's certificate will be required. If needed, student medical care may be available at a Prince George's County Public Schools Wellness Center.
3. Mental Health Day. 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.

4. Pregnancy and parenting related conditions:
 - a. Absences due to labor, delivery, recovery, prenatal and post-natal medical appointments.
 - b. Absences due to an illness or medical appointment of the student's child. After four days of such absences during a school year a physician's note may be required.
 - c. A parenting student is allowed a minimum of 10 days excused after the birth of the child.
 - d. Absences due to legal appointments related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody, and visitation.
5. Court Summons
6. Hazardous weather conditions that would endanger health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school.
7. Work approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the Maryland State Department of Education, accepted by the Superintendent or the school principal, or their designee, as a reason for excusing the student.
8. Observance of a religious holiday
9. State emergency
10. Suspension
11. Lack of authorized transportation. This shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.
12. Health exclusion, which includes immunizations and 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. Students excluded as a result of immunization noncompliance will be marked absent by the teacher using Code (IM).
13. 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. Accordingly, students must receive missed homework assigned during the time they were absent. Military orders may be requested.

14. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgement of the Superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, including but not limited to:

- a. Civic engagement (limited to three days); and
- b. College visits and interviews (limited to three days).

E. Regular Student

A student between the ages of 5 and 20 years whose parent/guardian is a bonafide resident of Prince George’s County and who resides with the parent or court-appointed guardian in the school’s attendance area. If a regular student is age 20, the student is eligible to attend school unless the student turns 21 years old before the first day of school.

F. Tardy/Tardiness

Anytime a student is not in the classroom when the class period begins.

G. Truant Student

A student that is unlawfully absent from school for the entire day or a portion of the day.

H. Unlawful Absence

Student absent from school for any reason other than those defined as a lawful absence. Students who are removed from school by their parent(s)/guardian(s) for more than 10 consecutive days for extended travel and not enrolled in another school or educational program may be withdrawn, then re-enrolled upon their return.

After 10 school days of consecutive unlawful absences, in which the student’s whereabouts are unknown, the student should be exited from the school with an Exit Status “W” and Exit Code 50. A PS105 form must be completed and filed in the student’s record.

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. Recording Student Attendance by Staff Members

Recognizing the responsibility of administrators and teachers for developing and

maintaining a system of recording and reporting student absences (lawful and unlawful), the following procedures are to be considered as minimum for each school level (elementary, middle, and high).

- A. The classroom teacher is responsible for recording student attendance and tardiness on the online system daily and by period as appropriate. Capturing attendance daily in the student information system (SIS) will serve as a daily attendance log for each day or class.

- B. When a student is not physically in the classroom but remains under the direct supervision of Prince George’s County Public Schools, students are considered present for state and local reporting purposes; however, students are marked absent by the teacher of record if they are not in the classroom, physically or virtually. The attendance secretary or assigned personnel will assign an applicable reason code, which can be accessed in the SIS, to ensure proper reporting on state and local reports. For example, students approved for Home and Hospital Teaching assign the absence reason Code 95.

- C. Attendance personnel will use the following guidelines for determining full day absent, full day present and half day present:
 - a. A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance 50% or more of the school day.

 - b. A student is counted present for a half day if in attendance for at least 10% of the school day, but less than 50%.

D. Home and Hospital Students

Attendance for students receiving home and hospital services—not home school instruction—should be maintained on the regular school roll. They should be marked present except when they are not available for home and hospital instruction and then he/she is marked absent (Code 95).

B. Attendance for In-Person Learning

Students returning to the school building for regular in-person learning, must adhere to attendance administrative procedure. Daily attendance is expected for all students unless there is a lawful reason for the student’s absence. For each absence, the parent/guardian must communicate the reason for the student’s absence with written documentation upon the student’s return to school. Students will be permitted to make-up missed assignments in accordance with the administrative procedure for all lawful absences.

Students notified to quarantine as a result of possible exposure to COVID-19 must remain home until the specified time. Teachers must mark students absent with a code

(QT), which will count the student absent from class but present for the day. The student will be provided virtual work asynchronously from their teacher(s) during the quarantine period.

A. Attendance for Students Approved for Online Instruction

The following guidance applies to students who are participating in Online Instruction offered in two categories: (Grade K-6) and (Grade 7-12)

1. Kindergarten – Sixth Grade (K-6)

Students are expected to participate in live instruction in order to be considered present. Daily attendance is expected unless there is a lawful reason for the student’s absence. As always, in the event of each absence, the parent/guardian must communicate the reason for the student’s absence with written documentation upon the student’s return to school. Students will be permitted to make-up missed assignments in accordance with the administrative procedure for all lawful absences.

2. PGCPS Online Campus: Seventh – Twelfth Grade (7-12)

- a. Students participating in the Online Campus will receive instruction in both synchronous and asynchronous learning models. Students will be marked present while attending synchronous instruction.
 - b. The process for marking a student “present” for asynchronous instruction will occur daily through a virtual check-in via Canvas.
- 3. Note:** Students participating in virtual learning may experience technical issues such as broken equipment or internet outages that may impede participation in live instruction. Such issues must be immediately communicated to the student’s teacher and designated school staff so support can be provided as soon as possible. When parents indicate these occurrences, the teacher must mark the student absent with code (TC) which considers the student absent from class but “present” for the day when the “TC” reason code is entered.

C. Reporting Absences by Parents/Guardians

Parents or guardians must notify the school in writing when their child is absent no later than three days after return to school. This applies to dual enrollment students who attend classes on college campuses. The explanation must indicate the dates and reason for the absence(s).

D. Student Make Up Assignments

1. Students who are considered **lawfully absent** from school or a class will have the opportunity to make up missed assignments.
 - a. Teachers are required to provide make-up work (within 48 hours) when requested for students who are lawfully absent, including suspensions, and who have not qualified for home and hospital teaching.
 - b. For all suspensions, teachers are required to provide make-up work and assignments to all students, unless other educational alternatives are provided.
 - c. Students who are lawfully absent may not be penalized for work requested but not provided by the school for periods of such lawful absence.
 - d. The number of days allowed to make up missed work will be equivalent to the number of days of lawful absences. The timeline will begin when the teacher provides the student with the assignments within 48 hours of the request. Students who fail to complete missed assignments within the allotted time will receive 0 (zero) for each assignment.
 - e. If lawfully absent students return to school near the end of the first, second, or third marking period and do not have sufficient time as described above to make up the missed work, an “I” (incomplete) grade will be assigned.
2. Students who are considered **unlawfully absent** from a school or a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed assignments.
 - a. A student with unlawful absences will receive a “failing” grade for any day(s) of such absence(s). The failing grades will be averaged with other daily grades. Failing grades for credit courses is zero percent.
 - b. Teachers should enter 0 (zero) in the SIS for unlawful absences and add a comment to the note section “unlawful absence”.
3. Pregnant and parenting students

In addition to Home and Hospital Teaching, these students may make up work in ways other than home and hospital teaching by retaking a semester, participating in an online course credit recovery program, and continuing at the same pace with 6 extra weeks to complete the semester.

E. Notification to Parents/Guardians regarding consecutive or chronic absences

1. If the student has missed at least 10% of school days in a quarter, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should be called or emailed by the teacher.
2. If no change in absences, the teacher of record will submit the student's name to the grade level administrator or principal to communicate via telephone, letter, or email with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).
3. Students with chronic absences, both lawful and unlawful, will be referred to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) to address the underlying problems that lead to the absenteeism. This is inclusive of students with 504 accommodations and students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). A SIT or IEP meeting will be convened to discuss the attendance issues.
4. Students who demonstrate a pattern of truancy will be referred to the School Support Team (SST), which will include the Pupil Personnel Worker, for intensive interventions designed to increase regular attendance. Habitual truancy is defined as being absent at least 20% of the school days in a marking period.
5. Pupil Personnel Workers are required to report monthly, to the school principal, the names of students who have been habitually truant and chronically absent the previous month. This information can also be retrieved from the SIS.

F. Procedures for Students Detained and Incarcerated Students

A student who is charged with either a juvenile or adult offense and is detained awaiting adjudication (temporarily held at a secured facility with an educational program) will be withdrawn from PGCPS.

1. A student ordered to an institution with an educational program will be withdrawn from PGCPS with a code of T-22.
2. A student ordered to an institution without an educational program is withdrawn with a code of W-38.

G. Absence Due to a Mental Health Day

1. Students are permitted one mental health day and may be absent once each semester.
2. Students who are absent due to attending to his/her mental health needs will be marked as a lawful absence.
3. Written notification by the parent will be sufficient documentation the day the student is absent or provided immediately upon return.

4. The student must be allowed to make up all missed assignments. Teachers may exempt or modify makeup assignments.
5. When a student returns to school, he/she may meet with the professional school counselor to check-in.

V. PREVENTING TRUANCY:

A. Identify At-Risk Students

Students often exhibit behaviors which, without intervention, can lead to truancy. To prevent unlawful absences, it is crucial to initiate positive and supportive interventions as soon as a student begins to exhibit such indicators. Some student warning symptoms, among others, may include:

1. Changes in behavior or behavior difficulties
2. Changes in friendships or having no friends
3. Poor or decreased academic performance
4. Bullying or being bullied
5. Listlessness or lack of focus
6. Agitation or withdrawal
7. Behaviors inappropriate for the age of the child
8. A history of sibling truancy

B. Incoming Students: Articulation and Orientation

The following steps are to occur during articulation from elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school.

1. Principals and/or their designees will transmit attendance information to receiving schools for all students with 20 days or more absences in the prior school year.

School personnel will discuss attendance issues with individual incoming students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) who have been identified as having 20 or more absences. The students should be placed on the School Intervention Team agenda to discuss monitoring strategies.

2. During the orientation process each year, school personnel are to discuss attendance issues with all incoming and returning students and their parents. For students, this may be done as part of the initial orientation assemblies or in special attendance assemblies, during classroom activities, and/or in other programs or communications. Parents are to be informed at back to school nights, PTA/PTSA/PTO meetings, school conferences, and other activities.

3. During regular registration for transfer students, Professional School Counselors and other appropriate personnel will discuss the importance of regular attendance.

For transfer students - specifically those who have missed 20 days or more in the prior school year - Professional School Counselors will specifically note attendance as they review records of incoming students. The Professional School Counselor, Pupil Personnel Worker, parent engagement assistants, or other appropriate staff member will contact parents of students whose attendance are unsatisfactory and will hold conferences to develop an individual attendance plan for these students.

4. All communication to parents will occur in a language which the family understands. Whenever written documents are available in the native language of the family, they shall be provided. When needed, professional interpreters shall also be provided for oral communication.

School staff members should contact the Office of Interpreting and Translation for assistance with translating and interpreting services, per Administrative Procedure 1400.

C. Addressing At-Risk Students

By the last day of September, the Pupil Personnel Worker and the Professional School Counselor will meet with returning students who were identified as habitual truant the previous year to:

1. Discuss the importance of regular school attendance.
2. Meet with the student and parent/guardian to develop strategies for improvement.
3. Complete attendance contract with student.
4. Provide copies for the family, Pupil Personnel Worker, and the student's cumulative folder.

D. Addressing Attendance Matters

The most effective approach to increase attendance and prevent truancy requires the school, family, and community working together. It is strongly recommended that the Student Intervention Team (SIT) and the Student Support Team (SST) meet a minimum of once per month to discuss attendance issues.

The SST will consist of:

1. Principal or designee

2. Parent
3. Pupil Personnel Worker
4. Professional School Counselors
5. Special Educator
6. Teacher
7. Attendance Secretary
8. School Psychologist
9. Nurse (if needed)
10. Other staff members as appropriate

E. Additional Measures to Address Students Over the Compulsory Age of Attendance

All students shall be made aware of the attendance policy located in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (http://www.pgcps.org/student_rights_responsibilities.htm). Students over the age of compulsory school attendance are subject to the same attendance procedures as those under the age of compulsory school attendance. If all strategies and interventions for the student's successful completion of school have not eliminated habitual truancy, then the case shall be reviewed.

1. The Pupil Personnel Worker shall review the case and provide guidance to school staff members on appropriate actions needed prior to the withdrawal of the student from school. If withdrawal is recommended, the Professional School Counselor will offer in writing, as part of the withdrawal letter an exit interview with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss again the student's options for continuing his or her education. In addition, the withdrawal letter and withdrawal form PS 105 will be completed and placed in the student's cumulative folder.
2. If the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) are unavailable to participate in the exit conference, school staff members, and the Pupil Personnel Worker should make reasonable efforts to contact the student and parent or guardian using a certified letter, home visit, email, etc. A copy of the student's options for education must be provided.

F. Appeal for Withdrawal Due to Attendance for Students over the Compulsory Age of Attendance

If the parent(s)/ guardian(s) protest such a withdrawal the parent may appeal to the appropriate Area Office. The student shall remain enrolled in the regular school program during the appeal process. Upon the successful appeal of the withdrawal, the school, parent/guardian, and student shall develop an attendance contract. Documented failure by the student to adhere to the conditions of the contract shall result in withdrawal.

G. Continuing Education After Withdrawal for Truancy

Notwithstanding any of the above, withdrawal from the day school program due to truancy shall not preclude the student from participating in:

1. Evening Program;
2. Summer School;
3. Online Courses;
4. If appropriate, alternative school placement (Nontraditional Program -North, Nontraditional Program - Middle, Nontraditional Program - South); and/or
5. GED preparation program or other educational/career programs.

H. Withdrawal of Special Education Student

The withdrawal of a special education student, regardless of age, must be in compliance with special education procedures. Such a withdrawal usually mandates that an IEP team meeting be convened to discuss options for continuing the withdrawal. Form (PS 105) must be completed and placed in the student's file.

I. Police Cooperation with Truants

1. The Prince George's County Police have agreed to stop and question children at large in the community who appear to be under the compulsory age of school attendance and unlawfully absent during regular school hours.
2. If such children do not have verification, such as an early departure slip, a release timecard, or other authorization showing they are legitimately out of school, the police may document such children, take them to school, and release them to the appropriate school administrator. Students are responsible for securing departure documentation from the school officials.
3. When the police escort a student to school, the principal and/or the designated school official will admit the student to school, notify the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the circumstances, and take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with this Administrative Procedure 5113 and Administrative Procedure

10101, Code of Student Conduct found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

4. Principals should encourage store managers who call regarding loitering of school-aged children to contact the police. A conference that includes the police, principal, and store manager to discuss the details of the situation may be appropriate should a particular shopping center or store have significant problems with truants.

VI. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:

In an effort to ensure that the student attendance, absence and truancy process is implemented, the following monitoring tools and processes will be utilized annually.

A. Annual Notification:

The principal or designee, Professional School Counselor, and Pupil Personnel Worker at each school will collaborate to take the necessary steps to ensure that parents, guardians, students, and staff members are aware of the procedures contained herein. Such measures may utilize student handbooks, PTA discussions, faculty meetings, etc. Students should be warned particularly of possible penalties when identified as truant. Documentation to signify completion of this task will be kept on file in the Principal's office for four (4) years.

B. Missing Attendance Report:

Principals, or a designee, must run the Missing Attendance Report weekly to ensure all teachers are recording student attendance daily. Written notification must be provided to teachers that are not adhering to the daily attendance entry requirement.

C. Parental Contact:

A file must be kept in the attendance or main office that contains the teacher of record documentation that communication has been made with the parent/guardian of students who were absent 10% or more days in a quarter. The documentation must be kept on file for four (4) years.

Pupil Personnel Workers, Teachers and Professional School Counselors are expected to reach out to families to encourage their participation with distance learning.

D. Monthly List to Principals:

The Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Workers must maintain documentation to show that all principals received their list of habitually truant and chronically absent students monthly.

E. Referrals to SIT/SST:

[Student Intervention Team \(SIT\)/Student Support Team \(SST\) Manual](#)

The principal must ensure that students who are identified as habitually truant and chronically absent are referred to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) and/or School Support Team (SST).

F. Incoming Student Articulation and Orientation:

Area Office, Pupil Personnel Workers and Professional School Counselors must ensure that the incoming student articulation and orientation process has been utilized for students with 20 or more excessive absences before the end of first quarter.

G. Students Taking a Mental Health Day:

Teachers must utilize the code (MH) when marking a student as absent due to taking a mental health day. The student must be marked as lawfully absent. Schools must review attendance reports to identify students who are accessing mental health days. Counselors should review the reports to have knowledge of students who have taken a mental health day in order to follow up. Counselors will ensure that students are aware of available mental health resources.

VII. RELATED PROCEDURES:

Administrative Procedure 5111 - Registration and Withdrawal of Students

Administrative Procedure 5119.3 - Educational Programs- Services for Pregnant and Parenting Students

Administrative Procedure 5121.1 - Grading and Reporting for Elementary Schools, Early Childhood through Grade 5

Administrative Procedure 5121.2 - Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools Grade 6 through Grade 8

Administrative Procedure 5121.3 - Grading and Reporting for High Schools Grade 9 through Grade 12

Administrative Procedure 5124 - Student Intervention Team (SIT) and Student Support Team (SST)

Administrative Procedure 10101 - Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

VIII. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, §7-301 and 7-302;

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.02.06.02; 13A.08.01 et seq.;

Maryland Student Records Manual

IX. MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THIS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: The Department of Student Services will have the responsibility for maintaining, evaluating, and updating this administrative procedure.

X. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5113, dated September 2, 2021.

XI. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2024

Additional Resource: [Student Intervention Team \(SIT\)/Student Support Team \(SST\) Manual](#)

Attachment: [Attendance Codes](#)