



Capital School District Board of Education Policy

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| Section: Student |
| Title: Student Attendance Regulations |
| Policy #: 700-02 |
| Date Approved: 6/18/14 |
| Date Revised: 06/12/14 |

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure regular attendance in school that is critical for students to fully take advantage of opportunities to learn and maximize their potential for success. This policy complies with Delaware state law regarding student attendance and further defines types of absenteeism and consequences for parents and students.

At the beginning of a school year, each school district or public school shall notify each student and the parent of each student of the school attendance requirements of the Delaware Code, including the procedures and penalties applicable to truancy. The school district or school may determine the form of the notification.

Delaware state law, Title 14, Chapter 27, which pertains to Compulsory Attendance, requires regular attendance for the school age child. Consistent with said policy, the Board of Education of the Capital School District requires regular and consistent attendance for all students between the ages of 5 and 16 who reside within its school boundaries. Students aged 16 to 21 who are enrolled in district schools are also required to follow these attendance policies. Delaware state law, Title 14, Chapter 27, further states, "Every student who is enrolled in a public school of this State shall attend the school each day of the minimum school term and any academic improvement activities required by §153 of this same title. A student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for more than 3 school days in a school year is considered truant. A truant and the parent of a truant are subject to the administrative procedures and court proceeding set out in subchapter II of this Chapter."

Elementary, Middle and High school teachers are responsible for maintaining high standards of attendance for their respective groups. Teachers are responsible for notifying the administration of students with whom they are having attendance or tardy difficulties.

The school administration, upon notification of unsatisfactory attendance or excessive tardiness, should investigate and take such action as they deem necessary to obtain satisfactory attendance. If action does not obtain satisfactory results, the case should be referred to the Visiting Teacher for further action. If the Visiting Teacher does not obtain immediate action, court action will be necessary.

Absenteeism (Time out of School)

It is recognized that occasionally there is a need for students to not be in attendance during school hours. Every minute of instructional time is important. Each minute lost cannot be regained. Parents are reminded to limit absences, late arrivals and early dismissals.

1. Official instructional time for each school

- a. All K-4 schools: 8:35a.m.-3:10p.m.
- b. William Henry Middle School: 7:40a.m.-2:22p.m.
- c. Central Middle School: 7:40a.m.-2:22p.m.
- d. Dover High School: 7:25a.m.-2:25p.m.
- e. Kent County Community School: 8:20a.m.-2:45p.m.
- f. Kent County Intensive ILC: 7:30a.m.-2:20p.m.

2. Types of missed time addressed in this policy

- a. Absent the entire school day
 - At the Principal's discretion, students with three (3) or more unexcused days absent per quarter may not be allowed to attend or participate in out of school time functions such as sporting events, musical or theatrical performances, prom, home coming or other special events.
- b. Late arrival to school
 - Students are considered tardy to school or class when they report after the official starting time of school or assigned class
 - Schools are to keep a careful record of all tardiness
 - The penalty for tardiness shall be worked out by each school. Teachers are instructed to report all cases of excessive tardiness to the principal. Excessive tardiness is defined as unexcused tardiness for more than three (3) days during one marking period
- c. Early dismissal from school

3. Excused time away from school

- a. Illness of the student, attested to by a physician, if necessary.
- b. The presence of a contagious disease at the child's home
- c. Death in the immediate family, of grandparents or of person residing in the home. Excused time will not exceed one week. Excused time allowed for the funeral of other relatives will not exceed one day. By written request to the building principal, additional time may be allowed when services are held at long distances from the student's home.
- c. Legal business.
- d. Suspension or expulsion from school for misconduct.
- e. Remedial health or dental treatment.
- f. Pre-arranged visit to college or university; participation in other educational experiences (maximum of two days).
- g. Emergency situations as determined by the school principal
- h. Religious holidays
- i. Pregnancy (with medical excuse)
- j. Exclusion by school nurse due to health reasons

4. Method of Determining Excused Time Away from School

The following methods are generally accepted:

- a. Parent's note to match bona fide signature.
- b. Note from dentist, health care provider, court, other professional
- c. Email to school's attendance clerk from parent/guardian to email address listed below

East Dover Elementary School at eastattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Fairview Elementary School at fvattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Hartly Elementary School at hartlyattendance@capital.k12.de.us

North Dover Elementary School at northattendance@capital.k12.de.us

South Dover Elementary School at southattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Towne Point Elementary School at tpattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Booker T. Washington Elementary School at btwattendance@capital.k12.de.us

William Henry Middle School at whmsattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Central Middle School at cmsattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Dover High School at dhsattendance@capital.k12.de.us

Kent County Community School at kccs@attendance@capital.k12.de.us

Kent County Alternative Programs at kcsilc@attendance@capital.k12.de.us

5. Unexcused times away from school are:

- a. Conditions or situations in which a student deliberately chooses to be absent:
 - Leaving school during the day without permission.
 - Absent without valid reason – truancy.
- b. Absences not supported by parent or other note

6. Absences and missed school work

Time away from school shall be excused without penalty should the reason meet the aforementioned criteria. A maximum of 12 (entire day) excused absences, 12 excused early dismissals and 12 excused late arrivals per year will be granted with the support of a parent note. Parent notes regarding absences must be turned in within three (3) days of the student's return to school. Parent notes explaining a late arrival must be presented at the time that the student arrives to school. Parent explanations regarding early dismissals must be noted on the student sign out log at the time of dismissal. Should a parent wish to submit a health care provider or other professional to excuse the absence, the note from the professional's office (on letterhead) must be submitted no later than the day that the student returns to school. The principal will have final discretion in determining excused and unexcused time away from school.

Students who are absent, whether excused or unexcused, will be given the opportunity to make up work or tests missed within a reasonable amount of time. A reasonable amount of time for the completion of homework is defined as two class sessions for every one session absent. A teacher will extend this time if the student is making progress towards completing assignments.

While students are making up work due to an absence or absences, teachers may use the following codes in eSchool Grade Book:

- a. ABS – Absent from Class – it assigns a zero for the assignment until the grade is entered.
- b. EX – Exemption – it excludes the assignment from being included in the student average if the teacher determines an exemption is needed.

Truancy Response Guidelines

The school administration, upon notification of unsatisfactory attendance or excessive tardiness, should investigate and take such actions as they deem necessary within the confines of the law to obtain satisfactory attendance. The actions may include a referral to the Visiting Teacher and ongoing home visits to assess familial needs/strengths and assist the family as needed to ensure compliance with the district’s attendance policy. Additional actions may include seeking parent and/or student participation in an Attendance Review Conference, the development of a contract designed to delineate parental and/or student responsibilities and possible consequences, and the filing of truancy charges against parents and/or selected students (age 12 or older).

Below are district guidelines to be used to help ensure overall continuity and consistency of services. It should be noted that these actions are in line with Delaware Law and, per the principals’ discretion, may or may not be used in a consecutive format.

| <u>Unexcused Days Absent</u> | <u>School Response</u> |
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| 3-5 | Contact with families will be made by the building principal or designee to discuss the unexcused absences and plan a course of remediation. |
| 6-9 | Notification letter sent and attendance review conference with school officials that may include counseling and/or the development of a contract in which the parent/guardian agrees to make every effort to have their child attend school regularly. In grades 6-12, the student may be included in the conference. The parent/guardian will also be advised that should the number of unexcused absences reach a total of ten (10) or more, the district may elect to file truancy charges. Visiting Teacher will contact parent/guardian. Further absence may require an excuse printed on letterhead (physician, therapist, court, etc.). |
| 10 | Truancy notice sent to home and charges filed in Justice of Peace Court. |
| 25 | Students who fail to comply with the provisions of the contract may be subject to retention in grade. Responsibility for the final decision rests with the attendance review committee. |

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Following the 30th day of unexcused absence by a student, the school shall continue to work with the courts to ensure compliance and will refer the family to the Division of Family Services.

The Capital School District may require any student to participate in academic improvement activities specified for the student as district policy. A student who refuses to comply with the district's requirement for participation in academic improvement activities shall be subject to the same disciplinary actions as for other acts of absenteeism or truancy.