



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Regular school attendance is necessary for a successful school experience. Instructional continuity is interrupted when a student is frequently absent, tardy, or dismissed early from school. Understanding that regular attendance in school is necessary for students to gain maximum benefits from public education, the Central Bucks School District urges all parents/guardians to stress punctuality and regular attendance habits with their children.

The school laws of Pennsylvania, specifically Act 138 of 2016 and the amended Act 16, dictate the requirements for mandatory school attendance as well as procedures to follow when students are absent/tardy. These laws and procedures are reflected in School Board Policy #204 of the Central Bucks School District. They require that every parent/guardian must elect to have their child enter school “no later than 6 years of age until the child reaches 18 years of age”, which is referred to as compulsory age.

As we begin the 2023-2024 school year, we want to remind you of the specific procedures regarding attendance.

**Parent/Guardian Alert About Student Absences:** When your child is not in school, you will receive both text message and email notification. The purpose of this is to ensure that you are aware that your child is not in school on a given day(s).

**Excused Absence:** Parent/guardian must notify the attendance office by 10:30am for elementary and 9:00am for secondary via Parent Portal. Emails are not accepted. Absences submitted through the Parent Portal will also serve as the excuse for the absence. For extenuating circumstances in which a parent/guardian does not have internet access and must excuse their student by phone, within 3 days after returning to school, the student must present a written excuse note signed by the parent/guardian, clearly indicating the reasons for the absence.

Consistent with state attendance law, the school will classify an absence as “excused” for one of the following reasons only:

- Illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Exceptionally urgent reasons
- Religious observances with prior approval
- Tutorial work
- Educational tours or trips with prior approval (not to exceed five days per year)
- Health care (must present a doctor’s note for the absence to be medically excused)

Any absence that can be anticipated beforehand should be brought to the attention of the building principal well in advance of the absence.

Secondary students who are absent more than twenty days from any year-long course may be denied academic credit for that course. Credit for semester courses may be denied if ten days of absence are exceeded. In addition, students who are absent for more than twenty days may be ineligible to

participate in extracurricular activities and/or compete in PIAA sports. Special consideration will be given to those students who are seriously ill.

**Religious Observation:** For full or part-time absence of a student to observe a religious holiday, it is necessary that the request be put in through the Parent Portal prior to the religious holiday(s).

**Educational Tours or Trips:** Requests by parents/guardians for permission to have children absent from school for educational tours or trips must be made to and processed by the principal or his/her designee. The request must be received by the principal at least ten (10) days prior to the anticipated absence. The total number of approved days of absence shall not exceed five (5) days in a given school year. Days exceeding these guidelines shall be considered unlawful and/or unexcused. The student shall be held responsible for making up missed assignments.

**Unexcused or Unlawful Absences:** All absences for reasons other than those cited above will be considered as “unexcused.” All “unexcused” absences for students under the age of eighteen are also recorded as “unlawful.” When a student accumulates three days of unlawful absence in a school year, the principal shall send an official “first notice” to the parent/guardian. In addition, a “School Attendance Improvement Plan” will be developed to improve student attendance. ***For each incident of unlawful absence after the sixth unlawful absence, the principal or designee shall do one or more of the following: refer the child to an attendance improvement program, refer to Children and Youth or file a truancy citation with the District Magistrate.*** Importantly, for students aged 18 and older, absenteeism may result in credit denial as outlined in sections above.

**Cumulative Absences:** Whenever a student accumulates ten (10) or more absences in a school year, the parent guardian will receive an official letter stating that every absence thereafter must be medically excused by a doctor. Failure to do so will then result in unexcused absences and potential truancy proceedings.

**Consecutive Absences:** Whenever a student has ten (10) consecutive absences and there is no evidence that these absences are “excused”, the district will begin the process to remove the student from its active membership roll.

**Tardiness and Early Dismissal:** Whenever students arrive late or depart prior to the end of the school day, parents must enter that information into the Parent Portal. These incidents are recorded as “excused” or “unexcused” applying the same criteria as those for full-day absences. Students arriving after the midpoint of the morning or departing before the midpoint of the school day will be recorded as ½ day absent. At the secondary level, this will affect the student’s ability to participate on the day of an extracurricular activity. Minutes accumulated due to tardiness or early dismissal will count towards overall attendance accounting. If significant minutes are missed, this will result in truancy proceedings and, at the secondary level, may impact the awarding of credit for a particular course missed.

Additional school district attendance information is available on the [Central Bucks School District Website](#). Please also review your student’s school parent handbook for school-specific information.

Sincerely,

Central Bucks Administration