

ATTENDANCE POLICY INFORMATION

Students are expected to be in class and on time for class each day. Attendance is vital for student success. Poor attendance and tardiness impacts the continuity of the student's instructional program and the student's grade in a class.

Lawful Absence: In the event that a student needs to be lawfully absent, the student is expected to have an excused absence. In accordance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), a student will be considered lawfully absent from school for any portion of the school day under the following conditions:

- a. Death in the immediate family
- b. Illness of the student (the principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian in cases of extended absences for an illness)
- c. Court summons
- d. Religious holiday
- e. State emergency
- f. Suspension
- g. Hazardous weather conditions (weather conditions that would endanger a student on the way to or from school)
- h. Lack of authorized transportation (for example, if a bus does not show up)
- i. Permission from the principal

Parents/guardians must **email Ms. Noel Shark at Noel_L_Heard@mcpsmd.org** when their student is absent. When a student returns to school after a lawful absence, the student must present a written excuse signed by the parent/guardian to the attendance office **within three days after the student returns to school**. Failure to do so may result in the absence becoming an unexcused absence.

The written excuse must include the following:

- a. The student's full name and ID number
- b. The student's grade
- c. The date(s) of the absence(s) or tardy(ies)
- d. A phone number where the note can be verified
- e. A signature of the parent/guardian

Students who are requesting an early dismissal must present notes from a parent/guardian explaining the reason for leaving to the attendance secretary between 7:30am and 7:45am in order to receive

authorization. Upon leaving, students must sign out at the attendance desk, even if they are being excused from the health room to go home. Students who do not obtain permission to leave early or who fail to sign out are violating attendance procedures and will be changed to an unexcused absence.

Tardiness is defined as not being in the assigned classroom when the bell rings signaling the beginning of the instructional period. Tardiness of more than twenty minutes of any class period will be recorded as an unexcused absence. Three unexcused tardies in a class equals one unexcused absence for that period.

If a student is tardy for class without a legitimate excuse, the following continuum will be enforced:

- a. The teacher will issue a verbal warning to the student for the first offense.
- b. The teacher will issue a detention for the second offense.
- c. The teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian and issue a consequence for the third offense.
- d. If the student receives four unexcused tardies in a class, the teacher will refer the student to the administrator.

A student who receives four unexcused tardies will meet with his or her grade level administrator for disciplinary action and interventions. If the student receives the equivalent of three unexcused absences in a class, the student and parent/guardian will be warned of the possibility of failure by the student's administrator. The administrator will consult with the student or the parent/guardian to verify the reason for the absences and determine the appropriate interventions.

Unlawful Absences: If students are marked as having an unexcused absence, the student or parent/guardian may appeal the absence. Usually students having lawful absences are marked as unexcused when the student does not bring an excuse note to the attendance office within three days of returning to school. Students and parents/guardians may appeal the recording of their absences if they believe that any absences were recorded incorrectly. The appeal can be made to the student's administrator.

Students with three unlawful absences will be warned of the possibility of failure and referred to their administrator. The administrator will consult with the student and parent/guardian, verify the reasons for the absences, and determine the appropriate attendance interventions.

Students who are unlawfully absent from class five times will automatically be required to submit an attendance intervention plan. The administrator will work with the student to initiate the plan. The administrator will collaborate with the teacher, counselor, student and parent/guardian to develop and monitor the actions identified in the plan. If the student fails to adhere to the actions in the attendance intervention plan and/or continues to be unlawfully absent, the student may fail the course.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) generates letters when students receive three and five unlawful absences. These letters are sent to the student's home. If warranted, MCPS will automatically generate a warning letter or an email if a student has three unlawful absences. MCPS will generate a letter or email if a student has five unlawful absences to inform them and parents/guardians that the student may fail the course unless an appeal has been granted or an attendance intervention plan is completed.