



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

5113

Procedure No.

July 5, 2018

Date

- 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 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 given approval for exemption.
- III. **DEFINITIONS:**
- A. Attendance
- Students shall be considered in attendance at school when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the school principal or any persons duly authorized by the CEO or principal.
- B. Chronic Absences
- When a student misses 10% of the school days, whether lawful or unlawful absences, including suspensions, for at least:
1. Four days in a quarter;
  2. Nine days in a semester; or
  3. Eighteen days in a school year.
- C. Habitual Truant
- Any student who is unlawfully absent from school more than 20% of any grading period, semester, or school year. There may be legal consequences when a student is habitually truant for at least:
1. Nine days in a quarter;
  2. Eighteen days in a semester; or
  3. Thirty-six days in a school year.



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### D. Lawful Absence

1. Death in the immediate family – immediate family means a parent or guardian, brother, sister, or grandparent.
  - a) Four school days shall be considered excused upon death of an immediate family member.
  - 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.
3. 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.
4. Court Summons.
5. Hazardous weather conditions that would endanger health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school.
6. Work approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the Maryland State Department of Education, accepted by the Chief Executive Officer or the school principal, or their designee, as reasons for excusing the student.
7. Observance of a religious holiday
8. State emergency
9. Suspension



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10. Lack of authorized transportation. This shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.
11. Health exclusion
12. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Chief Executive Officer or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.

### 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.

## IV. PROCEDURES:

### A. **Recording Absences by Staff**

Recognizing the responsibility of administrators and teachers for developing and maintaining a system of recording and reporting student



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absences (lawful and unlawful), the following procedures are to be considered as minimum for each school level (elementary, middle, and high).

1. The classroom teacher is responsible for recording student attendance and tardiness on the online system daily. Capturing attendance daily in SchoolMax will serve as a daily attendance log for each day or class.
2. 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 that they are not in the classroom. The attendance secretary or assigned personnel will assign an applicable reason code (which can be accessed in SchoolMax) to ensure proper reporting on state and local reports.
3. 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 four hours or more of the school day.
  - b) A student is counted present for a half day if in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours.
4. 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.

### **B. Reporting Absences by Parents/Guardians**

Parents or guardians must notify the school when their child is absent in the form of a written note (email is acceptable).

Upon returning to school from an absence, the student is required to



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present a written note from his/her parent/guardian stating the dates and reason for the absence.

#### C. 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” 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



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credit courses is zero percent.

- b) Teachers should enter 0 (zero) in SchoolMax for unexcused absences and add a comment to the note section “unexcused 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.

#### **D. Notification to Parents/Guardians regarding consecutive or chronic absences**

1. If the student has missed 3 consecutive school days, 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 School Instructional Team (SIT) to address the underlying problems that lead to the absenteeism.
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 9 days per quarter or for secondary students 9 days per quarter per course.
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 SchoolMax.



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### E. **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.

### 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



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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 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:





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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 School Instructional Team (SIT) and the Supplemental Services 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 as appropriate



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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](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 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 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.



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#### 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 High School;
2. Summer School;
3. Online Courses;
4. If appropriate, alternative school placement (Annapolis Road Academy, Green Valley, Tall Oaks, Croom, Community Based Classroom; 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 time card, 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



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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 ACCOUNTABILITY:** 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 Principals 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 3 or more consecutive days. The documentation must be kept on file for four (4) years.



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### 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:

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

### F. Incoming Student Articulation and Orientation:

Area Office staff 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.

VII. **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.

### VIII. **RELATED PROCEDURES:**

Administrative Procedure 5119.3, Educational Programs/Services for Pregnant Girls;

Administrative Procedure 5121.1, Grading and Reporting for Elementary Schools, Early Childhood Through Grade Five;

Administrative Procedure 5121.2, Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools, Grade Six Through Grade Eight;

Administrative Procedure 5121.3, Grading and Reporting for High Schools, Grade Nine Through Grade Twelve; Administrative Procedure 5124, School Instructional Team (SIT), Supplemental Services Team (SST); and

Administrative Procedure 10101, [Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#)

IX. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** The Department of Student Services will have the responsibility for maintaining, evaluating, and updating these procedures.

X. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5113, dated July 1, 2018.

XI. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 5, 2018



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Distribution: Lists 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 13