

Book	Policy Manual
Section	430 - Students: Student Attendance
Title	Attendance Philosophy
Number	430.00
Status	Active
Legal	Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §4-108, §4-205, §7-301; COMAR 13A.08.01.02 & 13A.08.01.05
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I. Policy Detail:

Maryland Public School Law Section 7-301 requires that, "each child who resides in this state and is 5 years old on or before September 1st of the current school year or under 18 shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children, of the same age."

The Dorchester County Board of Education believes education requires a continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences and study in order for students to receive maximum benefits from their school attendance. It further acknowledges a definite

relationship between scholastic achievement and the regular and prompt attendance of students in all classes in which they are enrolled.

Quality education requires continuity of instruction in order for students to realize maximum benefits. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and the participation of all students in well-planned instructional activities under the direction of teachers are essential for learning to be meaningful and effective. Many learning experiences that take place in the classroom cannot be duplicated elsewhere so student attendance on a regular basis is critical. Daily grades received by students for taking part in class discussions and group work, quizzes and tests, and the knowledge gained from labs and technology experiences, all contribute to a student's final evaluation.

The Board further believes attendance habits learned in school generally remain with the student as they enter post-secondary education, the world of work or the military. The maintenance of close communication and cooperation between the home and school is highly encouraged and expected in order to promote regular attendance and academic success.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the requirements for student attendance, guidelines for attendance monitoring and recording, and procedures for supporting chronically absent and habitually truant students.

III. Definitions

A. Absence

The failure of a student to be physically present in school/class or at a school-related activity approved by the Principal or Designee during the school day

B. Attendance

The act of being physically present at school or school-related activities during the school day

C. Attendance Source Documents

Documents on which the classroom teacher, homeroom teacher, substitute or other staff member records the student's attendance

D. Exemplary Attendance

A final attendance rate of 96% or more of the student year with no unlawful absences

E. Lawful Absence

An excused absence for any portion of the day under the following conditions (COMAR 13A.08.01.03):

1. Death in the immediate family
2. Illness of the student
3. Behavioral/Mental Health needs of the student
4. Court Summons
5. Hazardous weather conditions
6. Work approved or sponsored by the school
7. Observance of a religious holiday
8. State emergency
9. Suspension
10. Lack of authorized transportation
11. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school

F. Parent

Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:

1. Biological parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated
2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and shows parental rights have not been terminated
3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and privileges
4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and

granted parental rights and privileges

5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Dorchester County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian

6. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by section 5-507 of the Family Law Article

G. School-related Activity

Any school system activity, whether held on or off school property, in which a student directly participates (e.g., school field trip, athletic event, or class/graduation activity), or in which the student does not directly participate but represents the school or student body simply by being there (e.g., spectator at a school event).

H. Truant

A student who is absent for a day or any portion of a day for any reason other than those cited as lawful in COMAR 13.08.01.03 and/or failure to bring a note written by a parent to verify a lawful absence.

I. Unlawful Absence

An unexcused absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful, are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy. Students unlawfully absent are considered truant (COMAR 13A.08.01.04).

IV. Standards

A. Annual Notification

Attendance guidelines will be communicated annually to all students, parents, and staff.

B. Attendance Expectations

All students are expected to attend school regularly in accordance with state law and regulation and this policy and may be excused from class or school only

for reasons as specified in state law and regulation and this policy.

C. Discipline

A student may not be suspended or expelled solely for attendance-related offenses. This does not apply to in-school suspensions for attendance-related offenses. (HB 660 Suspension and Expulsion Procedures-Attendance-Related Offenses)

D. Entry/Withdrawal

For enrollment purposes, students will be entered and withdrawn using the procedures outlined in the Maryland Student Records System Manual.

E. Exemplary Attendance

Schools will recognize students with exemplary attendance.

F. Make-up Work

A student may make up work missed due to lawful absence and receive a recorded grade in accordance with Policy 430.7.

G. Monitoring of Attendance

Teachers will maintain daily/period attendance records for all students.

H. Retention of Attendance Source Documents

Attendance source documents will be retained in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Maryland Student Records System Manual.

I. Support for Students

Support and interventions will be provided through school problem-solving teams for students (e.g. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Attendance Committee, etc.) who are chronically absent and/or habitually truant.

V. Compliance

- A.** The Superintendent/designee is responsible for monitoring standards and procedures related to attendance as set forth in state law and policy.
- B.** Principals are responsible for informing students, staff, and parents annually of the provisions of this policy.
- C.** High School Principals and Student Services are responsible for making determinations regarding denial of credit.
- D.** Principals are responsible for assigning and overseeing personnel to monitor the recording of daily/period attendance, the reporting of student absences (lawful and unlawful), and the entering and withdrawing of students for purposes of enrollment.
- E.** Teachers are responsible for maintaining daily/period attendance and retaining attendance source documents in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Maryland Student Records Systems Manual.
- F.** Teachers are responsible for providing make-up work for students who are absent.
- G.** Parents/Guardians are responsible for students being in school or attending a school-related activity each day school is in session.
- H.** Students are responsible for making up work when they are absent.
- I.** School-based problem-solving teams (e.g. MTSS, Attendance Committee, etc.) are responsible for developing interventions and providing support to students who are chronically absent or habitually truant.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures for the implementation of this policy.

***A MTSS Team is a group of concerned staff members who meet on a regular basis to discuss students of concern, determine the types of intervention assistance these students may receive, to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts, and to do so in a coordinated way. This group may consist of:**

- **Principal/Assistant Principal**
- **Teachers**
- **School Psychologist**
- **Guidance Counselor**
- **Pupil Personnel Worker**
- **Wellness Center staff**
- **Social Worker**
- **After school program staff.**