



Pocono Mountain School District

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Dear Parents:

The Pocono Mountain School District's Attendance Policy (#204) can be found on our website at www.pmsd.org. Please review the district's attendance policy as several changes have been made. These changes include providing written notice of multiple unexcused/unlawful absences, holding a Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) and creating a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). It may also include referral to an attendance improvement program, notification to Children & Youth Services and the filing of a citation with the local magistrate.

Any student missing more than (10) percent of school days across the academic year or 18 days, excused or unexcused, will be counted as chronically absent for Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) reporting of regular attendance.

Research shows that attendance is the single most important factor in school success. There are, of course, legitimate reasons for children being absent. If they are sick, we certainly want them to stay home to get well. However, many of our students are absent without good reasons. These, for example, are unacceptable excuses: they are tired, they are going on a "fun" trip, they overslept, or they missed the bus. Learning builds, day by day. A child who misses a day of school misses a day of "learning."

Regular and punctual patterns of attendance are expected of each student within our district. Students should strive to maintain a good attendance record because of the distinct connection between attendance, grades, citizenship, and success in school.

Frequent absences of students from the classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained. It is difficult to teach students who are not present. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experience and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual student.

Prompt arrival to school each morning at 9:05 a.m. is equally important. A student who is ten (10) minutes late every day will miss thirty (30) hours of instruction during the year. It is quite true that the first few moments in a school day set the tone for the rest of the instructional day. When a child arrives late, he has to "jump in" after the day has been set in motion. Compare this to the frustration an adult feels when arriving to an appointment or work late, possibly due to a traffic jam or accident. No one wants a child to start the day with an unsettled feeling. If possible, try to schedule medical and dental appointments after school. Early dismissals on a chronic basis also deny your child of important instructional time in much of the same way as tardiness.

There are many ways parents can support their children and help them to succeed in school. The following is a list of ways to encourage student attendance:

- Show an interest in your child's school.

- Attend school meetings and programs that provide support or enrichment for your children.
- Participate in school activities whenever possible.
- Discuss the importance of regular school attendance with your child, know the school's policy on attendance, and discuss the attendance policy with your child.
- Help your child to manage his time.
- Make sure that your child gets enough sleep and gets up for school on time.
- Keep in contact with the school and your child's teachers.
- Check on your child's progress in school.
- Notify the school when your child is to be absent.
- Plan family vacations/trips during school vacations to prevent your child from missing school.
- Discourage unnecessary school absences.

Overall, regular, punctual attendance is extremely important for success in school and in the world of work. From experience we have found that the longer poor student attendance patterns are allowed to continue, the more difficult they are to change. The attendance habits established in school have affects upon your child's future. In addition to the law, we all know learning is enhanced by regular school attendance. Parents have the responsibility to ensure children are not deprived of this opportunity.

There are only 180 days in a school year. I would like to encourage parents and guardians to help ensure that each of these days are of an educational benefit to their child. Let's work together to instill in our children the habit of being present, and on time, in school each day. Someday an employer will expect the same.

With Concern,

Catherine Sweeney

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Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

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