



5310 Attendance

Approved: 8.05

Reviewed: 6.24

Revised: 8.24

The DWC DoCS promotes regular attendance and punctuality as necessary for success in school. Research shows that daily school attendance positively impacts students' social, emotional, and cognitive development. We also recognize that there may be circumstances that prevent a student's attendance, such as illness. This policy sets *minimum* attendance expectations. Each school shall establish a system for monitoring student attendance and provide additional guidelines for attendance and consequences for absences.

Compulsory Attendance

It shall be the policy of the DWC DoCS that students enrolled in the Catholic schools follow the compulsory school attendance laws of West Virginia. Compulsory school attendance begins with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to July 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a full-time publicly funded kindergarten program and continues to the 17th birthday or for as long as the student continues to be enrolled in a school system after the 17th birthday. (WV Code 18-8-1a).

Collaborative Catholic School Preschool Programs (4-year-old programs only)

Students who are enrolled in a public-school collaborative 4-year-old PreK program located within a Department of Wheeling-Charleston Catholic school are also considered of compulsory school attendance age unless the parents, in consultation with the school, withdraw the child from the program. To enroll in a 4-year-old program, the child must turn four years old by July 1 of the year of enrollment. The school principal, program director or teacher may consider circumstances for any child who may not meet attendance expectations.

Private Catholic School Preschool Programs (non-collaborative with any WV school district)

Students enrolled in private preschool programs within the Catholic schools shall adhere to each program's established attendance expectations based on their schedules. However, chronic absenteeism can result in disruptions to the learning and socialization processes and environment. Principals and/or preschool directors/teachers of private preschool programs shall make meaningful contact with parents/guardians of students who are chronically absent to determine if continued enrollment is in the best interest of the child.

Disenrolling after the age of 17

Any student who chooses to discontinue his/her education will be disenrolled from his/her school. School staff will work with the student and his/her family to encourage continuing his/her education through graduation. All school dropouts shall be reported to the county board of education in which the student resides.

Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism

The principal and/or his/her designee(s) shall investigate the cause for a student's truancy and/or chronic absenteeism.

Attendance Reporting/Recording

Each school will utilize diocesan attendance reporting systems to record attendance for each student. Each school shall establish guidelines and expectations for reporting/recording school attendance based on the following:

1. Reported Attendance

- A. Full-day attendance credit for being present at least .75 of the school day.
- B. Half-day attendance credit for being present at least .50 of the school day.

2. Excused Student Absences

- A. Absences that result from school-approved curricular/co-curricular activities.

- B. Personal illness or injury of the student. A written excuse must be provided.
- C. Personal illness or injury of the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or family member. The excuse must provide a reasonable explanation for the student's absence caused by the illness or injury in the family.
- D. Medical or dental appointment with valid written excuse from physician or dentist.
- E. Documented chronic medical conditions or disabilities shall be in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, that may require multiple or regular absences. These conditions must be documented annually with a valid physician's note that explains the condition and anticipated impact on attendance.
- F. Participation in homebound or hospital instruction due to an illness or injury or other extraordinary circumstances that warrants home or hospital confinement. To satisfy the requirements of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2510, Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs, Policy 2412 - Homebound/Hospital Instruction Program is incorporated by reference into this policy.
- G. Calamity, such as a fire or flood.
- H. Death in the family.
- I. Judicial obligation or court appearance involving the student.
- J. Military requirements for students enlisted or enlisting in the military.
- K. Personal or academic circumstances approved by the principal. This may include college visits up to one (1) day for juniors in their second semester, and up to three (3) days for seniors with satisfactory attendance.

3. Absence During the School Day for Appointments

Parents are to be encouraged to schedule medical, dental, legal, and other necessary appointments other than during the school day. Since this is not always possible, when a student is to be absent for part of the day:

- A. the student shall have a statement to that effect from his/her parents;
- B. the student shall bring a signed statement from the doctor, dentist, lawyer, counselor, etc., to the effect that s/he reported promptly for the appointment;
- C. the student shall report back to school immediately after his/her appointment if school is still in session.

4. Unexcused Absence

- A. Any absence not specifically included in the definition of excused absence.
- B. No excuse or documentation provided within a reasonable time period not to exceed three (3) days of any previously excused absence.

5. Tardy

Any student who arrives at school after the start of the school day or is late reporting to his/her assigned location during the school day shall be marked as tardy. A tardy may be excused or unexcused and shall be determined by the school based on their daily schedules. Each school shall have a written policy regarding guidelines and consequences for accumulated tardies.

6. Process and Procedures to Ensure Satisfactory Attendance

Principals and/or his/her designee(s) shall develop and implement a system of support to encourage satisfactory attendance. This system of support shall include a progression of intervention and support as follows:

- 1. After three (3) *consecutive* unexcused absences, the principal and or his/her designee(s) shall contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of student to review expectations. This may be through a telephone conversation or in-person meeting.
- 2. After five (5) *total* unexcused absences, the principal and or his/her designee(s) shall send a certified letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s) requiring an in-person meeting to discuss the reasons for the unexcused absences. At

that meeting, the principal and/or his/her designee(s) shall inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that continued unexcused absences may lead to discipline and/or voluntary withdrawal or dismissal from the school.

3. In the case of ten (10) *total* unexcused absences. The principal and/or his/her designee(s) shall send a certified letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s) requiring an in-person meeting to discuss the reasons for the unexcused absences. At that meeting, the principal and/or his/her designee(s) shall inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the unexcused absences will lead to discipline, up to and including dismissal from the school, as set forth in the school's Handbook.
4. The principal and/or his/her designee shall use his/her discretion to determine the appropriateness of including a student in any of these meetings or conversations with parent(s)/guardian(s).
5. All communication related to attendance concerns shall be documented and filed in the student's cumulative folder.

7. Make-Up Work

Each school shall include a "Make-Up Work Policy" that meets the following *minimum*: Students shall have an opportunity to make-up work for excused or unexcused absences. Each school shall also outline procedures for make-up work due to unexcused absences and anticipated absences.

8. WVSSAC Attendance Policies

All schools shall follow student attendance and participation rules and regulations as outlined in the *West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC) Rules and Regulations Handbook*.