

SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

No: 204

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: ATTENDANCE

ADOPTED: MAY 20, 1998

REVISED: MAY 18, 2005; OCTOBER 12, 2005; DECEMBER 13, 2006;
DECEMBER 10, 2008; JANUARY 20, 2010; AUGUST 17, 2011; AUGUST 16, 2017

204. ATTENDANCE	
1. Purpose Title 22 Sec. 11.41	The Board recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.
2. Authority SC 1327, 1329 1330 Title 22 Sec. 11.23, 11.25, 12.1	Attendance shall be required of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except when a student may be excused for a temporary absence upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.
3. Definitions Title 22 Sec. 11.13 SC 1326	Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school, and which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until the child reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.
SC 1326	Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.
SC 1326	Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.
SC 1326	Person in parental relation shall mean a: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.3. Guardian of the person of a child.4. Person with whom a child lives and who is acting in a parental role of a child.
SC 6302	This definition shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.

<p>SC 1326</p>	<p>School-based or community-based attendance improvement program shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.</p>
<p>SC 1326</p>	<p>The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians, staff, local children and youth agency and local Magisterial District Judge(s) about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in student handbooks, newsletters, district website and other efficient communication methods.</p>
<p>4. Delegation of Responsibility Title 22 Sec. 11.41</p>	<p>The Superintendent or designee, in coordination with the building principal, Attendance Officer, Home and School Visitor, and the Shaler Area School Board shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.</p>
<p>SC 1332,1339</p>	<p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with state law. 2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences. 3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency, or the appropriate judge. 4. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work. <p><u>Compulsory School Attendance Requirements</u></p>
<p>5. Guidelines</p>	<p>All students of compulsory school age who reside in the district shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.</p>
<p>SC 1327</p>	<p>A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.</p>

<p>Title 22 Sec. 11.22,11.23 11.28 SC 1327, 1329 Pol. 115, 116, 117, 118</p> <p>SC 1329, 1330 Title 22 Sec. 11.34</p> <p>SC 1327 Title 22 Sec. 11.32</p>	<p>The following students shall be excused from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance. 2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by state law are taught. 3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools. 4. Students attending a home education program or private tutoring in accordance with state law. 5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved. 6. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.
<p>SC 1329 Title 22 Sec. 11.25</p> <p>SC 1329</p>	<p><u>Excused / Lawful Absence</u></p> <p>For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated district staff during school hours for health-related reasons. 2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory. 3. Quarantine. 4. Family emergency. 5. Recovery from accident. 6. Required court attendance. 7. Death in family.

<p>Title 22 Sec. 11.41</p>	<p>8. The Board shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.</p>
<p>Title 22 Sec. 11.21</p>	<p>9. Observance of a religious holiday observed by bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request.</p>
<p>Title 22 Sec. 11.26</p>	<p>10. Non-school-sponsored educational tours or trips, if the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal prior to the absence. b. The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or designee. c. The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the parents/guardians and the Superintendent. <p>11. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.</p>
<p>SC 1329 Title 22 Sec. 11.25</p>	<p>12. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.</p> <p>The district may limit the number and duration of non-school-sponsored educational tours or trips, college or postsecondary institution visits for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.</p>
	<p><u>Temporary Excusals</u></p> <p>The following students may be temporarily excused from the requirements of attendance at district schools:</p>
<p>SC 1546 Title 22 Sec. 11.21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the Superintendent, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies. 2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction. b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction. c. Following each absence, the parent/guardian shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction and the dates and hours of attendance.

	<p>3. School age children unable to attend school upon the recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education.</p> <p><u>Parental Notice of Absence</u></p> <p>Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.</p> <p>A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a state licensed practitioner of the healing arts.</p> <p><u>Unexcused / Unlawful Absence</u></p> <p>For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.</p>
SC 1326	<p>An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.</p>
	<p><u>Parental Notification</u></p> <p>District staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused absence via Phone messenger and Parent Portal.</p> <p><u>Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements</u></p> <p>Student is Truant:</p>
SC 1333	<p>When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, district staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.</p>
SC 1333	<p>The notice shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and

	<p>3. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the child’s biological or adoptive parent, if the parent’s mailing address in on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.</p>
<p>SC 1333</p>	<p>The notice may include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference.</p>
<p>SC 1333</p>	<p>If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice and a School Attendance Improvement Conference was not previously held, district staff shall offer a School Attendance Improvement Conference.</p>
	<p><u>School Attendance Improvement Conference</u></p>
<p>SC 1333</p>	<p>District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the School Attendance Improvement Conference.</p>
<p>SC 1326</p>	<p>The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.</p>
<p>SC 1326</p>	<p>The following individuals shall be invited to the School Attendance Improvement Conference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student. 2. The student's person in parental relation. 3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource. 4. Appropriate school personnel. 5. Recommended service providers.
<p>SC 1333</p>	<p>Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.</p> <p>The outcome of the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student’s file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student, and appropriate district staff.</p>

The district may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference has passed. During the period leading up to the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference, continued unexcused absences will continue to be recorded and they will continue to count towards the total number of total unexcused absences.

Student is Habitually Truant

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff:

1. Shall refer the student to:
 - a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
 - b. The local children and youth agency.
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, district staff shall:

1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

District staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate judge, district staff shall provide verification that the school held a School Attendance Improvement Conference.

Filing a Citation

A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled. The citation may be filed by the School Resource Officer, Principal, or other appropriate school district designee.

SC 1333.2	<p>Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.</p>
Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.3, 114	<p><u>Special Needs and Accommodations</u></p> <p>If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p>
Pol. 103.1, 113, 114	<p>For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p>
SC 1333	<p><u>Discipline</u></p> <p>The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.</p> <p>Every student absence from school, or from any class a student is required to attend which is not approved as an excused absence, shall be deemed to be an unexcused absence. The following penalties shall be imposed for unexcused absences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A student shall receive a failing "F" grade for each class the student fails to attend because of an unexcused absence. That "F" grade shall be averaged with all grades for the applicable grading period. 2. A student committing an unexcused absence shall not be permitted to make up any written work or take any tests or examinations missed as a result thereof. 3. If a secondary or middle school (7-12) student's excused or unexcused absences from any class total more than twelve (12) for a semester or twenty (20) for a full year on the last day of the semester or year, the student may not be granted credit toward graduation or promotion for any such semester or yearly course. 4. If a primary or elementary (K-6) student's excused or unexcused absences total more than twenty (20) days in any school year, that student may be subject to retention.

Repeated infractions of Board policy requiring the attendance of enrolled students may constitute such misconduct and disobedience as to warrant the suspension or expulsion of the student from the regular school program. In addition, a truancy citation will be filed with the local magistrate.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510.2, 1326, 1327, 1327.1, 1329, 1330, 1332, 1333, 1333.1, 1333.2, 1339, 1546, 42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302

State Board of Education Regulations – Title 22 PA Code Sec. 11.5, 11.8, 11.13, 11.21, 11.22, 11.23, 11.24, 11.25, 11.26, 11.28, 11.31, 11.31a, 11.32, 11.34, 11.41, 12.1

Board Policy – 103.1, 113, 113.3, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 137