

<b>FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Reg. No. 400-70</b>
<b>Subject:</b> <b>STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES</b>	<b>Issued:</b> <b>1/4/99</b>
<b>Preparing Office:</b> <b>Office of the Superintendent</b>	<b>Amended:</b> <b>9/14/17</b>

I. Policy 430

II. Truancy

According to Maryland law, a “truant” is a student who is absent without lawful cause from the attendance for a school day or portion of it.

A student is a “habitual truant” if the student is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days in excess of 20 percent of the school days within any marking period, semester or year. Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) has the prerogative of defining habitual truancy in a more, but not less, stringent manner (e.g. unlawful absences in excess of 15 percent of the school days).

Any student attending kindergarten through grade 12 who is truant, which is defined as being unlawfully absent more than 8 school days in any quarter, 15 school days in any semester, or 20 school days in a school year, must immediately be referred to the pupil personnel worker for intervention.

III. Procedures

Absentee Report/Attendance Register

The absentee report/attendance register is maintained to meet the needs of the local school system and the requirements established by the Maryland State Department of Education. It sets forth the rationale and guidelines for the implementation of a continuous student accounting system, and it allows for flexibility in the manner in which records are maintained in the schools by providing a means for centralizing the function in the school. Attendance should be collected daily by the teacher. Schools are accountable for accurate reporting by creating an original source document, which is maintained in the school office for a period of three (3) years.

1. Tardy Students

Each school is responsible for maintaining a tardy log to record the arrival of tardy students. To the extent possible, the individual in the school office maintaining the tardy log should not be the same individual who maintains the attendance records. The tardy log which indicates late arrivals should be published and disseminated to staff the following day. The tardy log is to be maintained in the school office with the original source documents for attendance for a period of three (3) years.

2. Internal Controls

a. The security of the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Student Information and Gradebook Systems is a top priority within our organization. The following identifies the logical and physical security

regarding all Student Information and Gradebook System data, including enrollment and attendance data:

- The computer operations center is housed in an FCPS building that is secure, with authorized access only.
  - Software executable and source code is stored in a password-protected environment with update capability restricted to designated personnel only.
  - Database administration is handled by limited personnel, also with security protection.
  - Modifications to the Student Information System are made only at the request of known FCPS personnel via signed authorization.
  - User access to the Student Information System for each school is protected by end-user level logon security that is assigned by system functionality. All security is also school/building specific. Only those employees with the job assignment need for update capability to enrollment and attendance data are provided the security access to those functions.
  - Changes affecting the September enrollment extract data are restricted to one (1) person, who receives direction/supervision from the director of Student Services.
- b. School attendance secretaries have password-protected logon IDs to their individual school's absentee/attendance reporting in Student Information and Gradebook Systems. Only the director of Student Services and the office of System Accountability and School Improvement have the ability to update all school database programs.
3. Coding Absence and Tardiness

#### Days Absent

An absence record is the aggregate number of days the student was absent during the current school year, to the nearest half-day (implied decimal). If the student has multiple records, there must be an absence item for each record. Days absent for summer withdrawals must be zero (0).

- Students Scheduled for a Full Day
  - A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance four (4) hours or more of the school day.
  - A student is counted present for one-half (1/2) day if in attendance for at least two (2) hours of the school day, but less than four (4) hours.
- Students Scheduled for a Partial Day
  - A student scheduled for less than a full day is to be counted present based on the amount of time he/she is scheduled.

*Example: A student scheduled for a two-hour block of time will be counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for that entire block of time. If the student is absent for that entire block of time, he/she will be counted absent for a full day. A student scheduled for a two-hour block of time will be counted present for ½ day if the student is in attendance for one hour.*

- A student is counted present if at school or at another place at a school activity sponsored by the school and personally supervised by a member(s) of the school staff. This may include authorized independent study, work study programs, field trips, athletic events, contests, music festivals, student conventions, instruction for home bound students, and similar activities when officially authorized under policies of the local school board. It does not include “making up” school work at home or activities supervised or sponsored by private groups or individuals. Lawful and unlawful absences are both counted as an absence.

When recording an absence, the appropriate code regarding the cause of the student’s absence shall be designated as indicated below:

**Code Lawful Cause of Absence - COMAR 13A.08.01.03**

- 01 Death in the immediate family
- 02 Illness of the child - (The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent or guardian of a child reported continuously absent for illness.)
- 04 Court summons
- 07 Hazardous weather conditions - (Interpreted to mean weather conditions, which endanger the health or safety of the students when in transition to and from school.)
- 08 Work or activity approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the state education agency, accepted by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal, or any persons duly authorized by the superintendent or principal, as reason for excusing the students.
- 09 Observance of religious holiday (up to three [3] per school year)
- 10 State emergency
- 13 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.
- 17 Health Exclusion– Used when the school is excluding a student because of health concerns (i.e., lack of immunization, conjunctivitis, lice infestation, etc.)
- 18 Suspension – (Reference FCPS Regulation 400-04)

- In-School Suspension
- Short-Term Suspension
- Extended Suspension
- Expulsion (separate and exclusive from suspension)

19 Lack of authorized transportation – (Shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.)

**Code Other Causes of Absences - Lawful (determined by the principal)**

03 Doctor’s note

14 Illness in family

15 Impoverished Condition

16 Vacation - (Students who take trips with approval of their parents may be excused no more than two [2] times during the school year for a combined maximum of five [5] days with prior written notice to the principal.)

23 College Visits - (Visits by students to prospective colleges are excused up to four [4] days per year. In an unusual circumstance, the principal may allow additional excused days.)

**Code Other Causes of Absence - Unlawful**

20 Truancy - (A truant is a student who is absent without lawful cause as defined in COMAR 13A.08.01.03 from the attendance for a school day or portion of it.)

21 Other

At all times, the register should contain an accurate record of a student’s attendance to date and should be available for review. Schools maintaining student enrollment and attendance records by computer should design the system so that:

- a. Those data items specified for inclusion in the register may be collected and become integral parts of the student record maintained in the computer; and
- b. Required summaries and reports may be generated at appropriate times.

The absentee report/attendance register should be run at the end of each month during the school year. It should include all students who have attended each school for that month, regardless of enrollment status.

4. Attendance Summary Report

The attendance summary report will be compiled at the end of each school year.

IV. Attendance Procedures for Pregnant and Parenting Students

- A. A student's absence due to a student's pregnancy or parenting needs is a lawful absence as provided in Maryland law and acknowledged in Board of Education (Board) Policy 430 *Attendance at Schools*.
- B. Pregnant or parenting student absences due to pregnancy, or pregnancy-related conditions, shall be excused. Examples are:
  - 1. Labor;
  - 2. Delivery;
  - 3. Recovery; and
  - 4. Prenatal and postnatal medical appointments.
- C. At least ten days of excused absences will be provided for a parenting student after the birth of the student's child.
- D. Parenting-related absences due to an illness or medical appointment of the student's child, including up to four days of absences per school year for which the school may not require a note from a physician, shall be excused.
- E. Any absence due to a legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student that is related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody and visitation shall be excused.
- F. In addition to home and hospital services, a school may allow the pregnant or parenting student to make up the work that the student missed in a time period that equals at least as many days that the student was absent, and allow the student to choose one of the following alternatives to make up work that the student missed:
  - 1. Retake a semester;
  - 2. Participate in an online course credit recovery program; or
  - 3. Allow the student six weeks to continue at the same pace and finish at a later date.

References: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
*Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article, §7-301  
Cross reference Board Policy 430

Approved:

*original signed by*

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Theresa R. Alban  
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