

**Attendance Improvement Plan  
Penn Wood High School  
Beginning 2004-2005**

**A. Attendance**

Compulsory attendance at school is a long-standing state statute and the courts of the state of Pennsylvania as well as the United States Supreme Court have upheld it. The Board of Education has an obligation to require that all pupils of this district be present every day school is in session in order that they may be taught. This procedure is for the benefit of the pupils, their parents, and the community at large.

Pupil participation in all regularly scheduled classroom-learning activities, in each area of study, is essential in order for each pupil to receive the maximum benefits of a thorough and efficient educational program. The process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning, and study.

The school cannot successfully fulfill its responsibility to the student unless the student is present for all regularly scheduled classroom activities. Therefore, it is essential that every parent/guardian, and student accept responsibility for the student's attendance at school as scheduled.

**Rules and Regulations for Administering the Attendance Procedure**

**1. ABSENTEEISM**

All students are required to attend every class during all days and hours that school is in session, except those days they have a legitimate, excused absence. Students who are unexcused absent from school are not permitted to:

- be on school property – Student will be charged with trespassing.
- participate in any school activities – this includes band, choir and all sports
- attend any school related activities – this includes band, choir, clubs, intramurals, activities, and all sports.

**2. EXCUSED ABSENCE**

For the purpose of this procedure, an absence is considered excused for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family
- Observance of a major religious holiday
- Religious education
- Power outage or natural disaster

**3. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents or guardians should notify the school by telephone in the event that a student is to be absent from school. These calls should be received by the school before starting time on the day of the absence. Phone duty teachers will call home on the day of absence to verify parental knowledge.

**4. ABSENCE NOTES**

Upon return to school following an absence, all students must present a written explanation of the absence. This is to be done using the official William Penn School District absence card provided by the school. For those absences where advanced notice is possible, students should submit the absence card before the absence. Failure to provide written explanation of absence within three (3) school days of return to school will result in that absence being considered unexcused or unlawful, and Pennsylvania school attendance laws will be applied accordingly. Any absence of five (5) or more consecutive days requires a written explanation from a doctor. In instances where the school believes that absences due to illness are chronic and irregular, the school will require a doctor's statement justifying such absences.

**5. TRUANCY**

Students who are absent from school without valid excuses are considered truant. These absences will be considered unlawful for those students who are sixteen (16) years of age and younger. Following truancy, the student must be accompanied to school by a parent or guardian for a Mandatory Parental Conference (MPC) with a dean or an administrator. In addition to having the absence marked unexcused/unlawful, the student will be assigned two (2) days of In School Suspension for each day of truancy.

**6. EXCESSIVE ABSENCE PROCEDURES/LOSS OF ACADEMIC CREDIT**

Absence from school jeopardizes the student's ability to satisfactorily complete the prescribed course of study, and it violates the state statutes requiring children to regularly attend school. We cannot succeed in our task of providing an education as proposed through accepted curriculum and courses of study unless the students for whom it is intended are present for all regularly scheduled classroom learning activities. Consequently, there is a responsibility on the part of the parents and students to attend school as scheduled. Students who exceed a combination of (16) unexcused/unlawful absences per school year, will not receive credit unless the time is made-up as per section A4 of this procedure. This translates into four (4) absences per quarter, or 91% attendance.

- a) On the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) unlawful absence from school, any student under the compulsory age of 17, will be reported to the juvenile court system through the three-day notice. Those students 17 and older will have their parent/guardian informed of the situation.

- b) Upon a student reaching the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence per school year, a Certified letter will be sent to the parent/guardian informing them of the situation. In addition, upon the 10<sup>th</sup> absence, working papers will not be issued and all class trips and privileges will be forfeited until an improvement plan is implemented and improvement is in evidence (principal's discretion).
- c) No student with 16 unexcused absences for the school year will be allowed to hold an office, get working papers, attend class trips, prom, graduation ceremony, college trips, athletics or any other school privileges.

**In addition:**

Upon the sixteenth (16<sup>th</sup>) day of a combination of unlawful/unexcused and/or out-of-school suspension absences, per school year, the student will be placed on loss of credit status. A conference will be set up by the principal or a designee, and will include parents/guardians, the student, the counselor, and if needed, a case load teacher. Appeals may be presented at this conference (See Attendance Exception Procedures).

**7. REGAINING CREDIT STATUS**

To regain credit status, a student will have to attend five hours of after school study sessions for every unexcused absence in excess of sixteen (16), or attend our four week summer school for four (4) hours a day.

**8. ATTENDANCE EXCEPTION PROCEDURES**

Students who submit official documentation to verify absences will not have these count towards the sixteen (16) days. Documentation must be submitted to the attendance secretary upon the student's return to school. Failure to provide written documentation within (3) school days of return to school will result in that absence being recorded as unexcused or unlawful. If an absence has been recorded as unexcused or unlawful, and the parent/guardian has just cause or reason for the delay, he/she may send a written request to the principal or assistant principal, asking to be allowed to bring in documentation to make an adjustment to the child's records.

However, **ALL DOCUMENTATION MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN (3) DAYS AFTER THE END OF THE CURRENT MARKING PERIOD. NO ADJUSTMENTS TO AN INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE PROFILE WILL BE MADE THROUGH THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE AFTER THAT TIME!** For clarification purposes, the documentation must be in the following form:

1. Parent or guardian's note stating legitimate reason for absence (see sec. 2)
2. Medical/Dental note signed by a physician, with the specific date(s) and reason for absence indicated.
3. Official verification of required court appearance.
4. Official verification of a college visit (maximum of three days)
5. Verification of a death in the family
6. \*Religious holidays (parental note required)
7. Power outage or natural disaster

\*Religious holidays are to be submitted prior to the absence so that the family will not be contacted during their observance.

**9. FALSE NOTES FOR LATENESS/ABSENCE/EARLY DISMISSAL**

In the event that a student falsifies a note for absence or lateness, that absence/lateness will be considered unexcused/unlawful and the attendance procedures established for these offenses will apply. In the event that a student presents a falsified note for an early dismissal, the early dismissal will not be granted. If the student is absent from class due to a falsified note, the procedures for class cutting will be followed. In addition, the following action will be taken for falsifying a parental or teacher note:

First offense	MPC and detention(s)
Second offense	1 day In-school Suspension
Third and further offenses	3 days In-school Suspension up to 3 days Suspension out of school

**10. CLASS CUTTING**

Students are expected to attend all classes, study halls, lunch periods, assembly programs, meetings, etc., which are scheduled during the regular school hours. Failure to attend any of the above will be considered a class cut. Each class cut will be considered an offense. In the event of a class cut, the following actions will be taken:

First offense	MPC and up to three detentions
Second offense (or more than one cut in the same day)	1 day I.S.S. and up to three (3) detentions
Third offense	Up to three days I.S.S. and up to three (3) detentions

After the third offense, additional days of suspension may be assigned at the discretion of the appropriate school officials. Leaving class without permission will be considered a class cut and will be handled as any other class cut. This applies to all unauthorized departures from class.

**11. LATENESS TO SCHOOL**

Lateness to school can become a serious problem because it disrupts the orderly routine of the school, and it often interferes with the student's academic success. Some latenesses, depending on their nature, may be excused when a written explanation of the lateness is provided by the parent or guardian, and approved by the school. For example, oversleeping is never a valid excuse for lateness. Also, notes that do not state clear or specific reason for lateness will not be accepted. In instances where a student repeatedly arrives at school late, with notes stating that he or she is generally ill or not feeling well, the school may request a doctor's statement justifying those latenesses. No more than four (4) latenesses will be excused per marking period. Students who arrive late must check in at the office or designated late location upon arrival to school. Failure to do so will result in three (3) office detentions. The following action will be taken for unexcused lateness to school, per marking period:

First -Third offenses	1 detention per lateness
Four/Fifth offenses	MPC/parental contact and 1 detention
Sixth offense	1 day I.S.S.
Further offenses	1 day I.S.S. up to 3 days suspension out of school

**12. VO-TECH ATTENDANCE**

Vo-Tech School is considered an extension of the home school. Therefore, students who attend Vo-Tech school for one part of the day are expected to be present in the home school the other part of that day and vice-versa. If either part of the day is missed without a reasonable excuse, without prior notice, that student will be considered cutting that part of the day and the procedure for cutting class will be put into effect. Cutting Vo-Tech school will be considered the second cutting offense. Students who miss the bus will be unexcused and treated as any other cut. Additionally, all Vo-Tech students are to adhere to the attendance guidelines established by the Delaware County Area Vo-Tech Schools.

**13. LATENESS TO CLASS**

Students are expected to be in assigned rooms and seated when the class bell rings. The following action will be taken when students are late to class without valid reasons.

Any unexcused lateness to class that exceeds fifteen (15) minutes, shall be considered a class cut and will be treated as any other class cut.

First-Third offenses	Conference, notification to parent, and detention assigned by classroom teacher
Fourth offense	MPC/parent contact and detention
Fifth offense	MPC and 2 detentions or 1 day I.S.S.
Additional offenses	1 day I.S.S. or O.S.S. for each late