

ROSE TREE MEDIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Rose Tree Media School District Attendance Procedures

The Rose Tree Media School District considers regular school attendance essential for success in school. It shall be the intent of the attendance procedures to provide an opportunity for educational growth and development for all children of the Rose Tree Media School District. Curricula are planned and courses taught as a progression of learning activities and ideas, with each day's work building on work previously done. Children who are absent miss one or more steps in the learning process. Regular attendance also assists in developing a sense of responsibility, discipline and good work habits in the student.

The Compulsory Attendance Laws of Pennsylvania require that students be in attendance at school until the age of seventeen. Therefore, these established regulations apply to students in grade one to seventeen years of age. It is the intent of a sound attendance procedure to provide an effective and consistent educational program that benefits staff, students and the community. Students belong in school, not out of school. Opportunities for growth and development can only be provided when children are present.

The key concept in these procedures is RESPONSIBILITY. Parents have a responsibility, by law, to see that their children attend school every day as scheduled. As the children grow older, their parents must instill and develop in them this responsibility for regular school attendance. The school district's responsibility for regular school attendance by students and providing appropriate educational opportunities for all children is mandated by Pennsylvania law. School officials have the responsibility of enforcing student attendance through official policy and procedures according to Pennsylvania State School Code.

Compulsory School Age- Refers to the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school as a beginner which may be no later than at the age of 8 years, until the ages of 17 or graduation from a high school, whichever comes first. A beginner is a child who enters a school district's lowest elementary school grade that is above kindergarten.

Absence from School: Absence is the non-attendance of a student on those days and half days in which school is in session.

Excused Absences

refers to absence for any one of a number of legal reasons. Excused absences include: pupil illness, family death, major religious holidays, and other urgent reasons (i.e. court appearances, doctor/dentist appointments).

If a student will not be in school on a particular day, the parent or guardian is required to provide legitimate documentation to the appropriate school personnel. If this documentation is not received within three days, the absence will automatically be recorded illegal.

If a student is absent three or more consecutive days a doctor's note is required within three (3) days of his/her return to school or the absences will be considered unexcused/illegal. The statement from the physician or dentist must note the date of treatment and expected return of the student to school. Exceptions to this requirement can be granted by the building principal or a building assistant principal.

Illegal Absences pertain to students in first grade to age seventeen (compulsory school age), who are absent from school due to avoidable absences (i.e. parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations and/or truancy). Examples of illegal/unexcused absences:

Parental neglect: no documentation received from the parent or guardian, illness in the family, missed the school bus, overslept, helped the family to move, babysitting/ sibling care, vacation taken without principal's preapproval.

Truancy- student is absent from school without parental knowledge or permission

Illegal employment- student employed during school hours without prior consent from the school.

Unexcused Absences pertain to students in kindergarten and those students seventeen years or older who are absent from school due to avoidable absences (i.e. parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations and/or truancy).

After a student has accumulated twenty (20) excused, unexcused or illegal absences, school authorities will require medical verification for each subsequent absence. It must be obtained within three days after the return of the student to classes for the absence to be excused. If the verification is not received, the absence is illegal or unexcused. (Exceptions to this requirement are absences due to hospitalization, prolonged serious illness or a preapproved family vacation.)

First Offense Notice- If a compulsory school age student is absent three (3) days or more without a valid excuse/ reason, the "First Illegal Absence Notice" will be sent to the parent/guardian by mail. This applies to both accumulated and consecutive absences. This notice will service as a warning to parents that future illegal absences will be subject to a court fine.

Second Offense Notice- The accumulation of three (3) additional illegal days of absence following the First Offense Notice will result in a citation sent to the local district court magistrate. A summons for the second and/ or additional offenses is processed through the district court to the parent/ guardian indicating the complaint and the date of the hearing.

Unaccounted absences- Children whose names are on the active membership roll, who are at anytime in the school term absent from school for 10 consecutive school days, shall thereafter be removed from the active membership roll unless one of the following occurs:

The district has been provided with evidence that the absence may be legally excused.

Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued.

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1. Purpose

SC 1327, 1330

The Board requires that school-aged pupils enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. The educational program offered by this district is predicated upon the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

2. Authority

SC 1301, 1302, 1327, 1329

Title 22

Sec. 11.11, 11.13, 11.23, 11.25, 11.41

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session, except that a principal or designee may excuse a student for temporary absences when s/he receives satisfactory evidence of such mental, physical, or other urgent conditions which may reasonably cause the student's absence.

If parents would like their child to be absent for any reason other than illness, prior permission must be sought and granted from the grade level dean prior to the absence in order for it to be an excused absence.

Title 22

Sec 11.21

All absences occasioned by the observance of the student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused, and no student so excused shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday.