



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Massachusetts has a Compulsory Attendance Law. It is the responsibility of a parent or guardian to ensure his/her child attends school regularly in order to obtain the maximum benefits from the educational program. There is an expectation by the District for attendance in both in person and remote learning situations.

A parent or guardian (Pre-School through Grade 12) is to telephone the school office within 30 minutes from the start of school to report a student's absence. Parents/Guardians who do not telephone the school will be contacted automatically regarding the child's whereabouts. For parents/guardians of students in grades 9-12 who do not telephone the school will be contacted within 3 school days (Chapter 222 of Acts of 2012).

When a student is absent, he/she will not be allowed to participate in any athletic or other extra-curricular activity on that day.

TYPES of ABSENCES

1. An **Excused Absence** includes:
 - a. Student illness or medical appointment (documented by parent, guardian and/or doctor note)
 - b. Bereavement / Family funeral
 - c. Family Emergencies
 - d. Observance of religious holy days
 - e. Registry of Motor Vehicles' appointment
2. An **Exempt Absence** includes:
 - a. School-sponsored field trips Class meetings approved by the administration
 - b. Court subpoenas
 - c. School imposed suspensions (out-of-school, in-school, short –term or long-term)
 - d. College visitation and job interviews which have received prior approval from the administration and are supported by verification by the college on college letterhead (see College Visitation below)
 - e. Technical / Electronic Issues reported within 48 hours to school or district administrator may be considered.
3. An **Unexcused Absence** is an absence that is not covered by the aforementioned definitions of "Excused Absence" or "Exempt Absence." Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but not limited to:
 - a. Undocumented or Unverified Absence (lack of communication or absence with no reason)
 - b. Repetitive or chronic absence due to illness not documented by a doctor or medical professional. Chronic absences due to COVID-19 are not considered unexcused.

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- c. Cutting class
- d. Truancy
- e. Frivolous excuses for being out of school
- f. Family vacations or other non-emergency family situations

PLANNED EXTENDED ABSENCES / FAMILY TRIPS / FAMILY VACATIONS:

Parents/Guardians are strongly discouraged to take extended absences outside the District's planned vacation times. Generally, planned family vacations and trips, either domestic or foreign, are considered unexcused absences unless they fall into the above categories of excused or exempt absences. In addition to compromising the Compulsory Attendance Law, extended absences interrupt the educational process for the student and the class. Make-up coursework cannot replace or reverse time on learning that is lost when a student is not in class. If a planned absence is necessary and unavoidable, a written request for the extended absence must be submitted to the Principal or Assistant Principal at least two weeks prior to the absence. It is the responsibility of the student and the parent/guardian to ensure that the student makes up the work he/she has missed as a result of the extended absence.

As described below under the Excessive Absenteeism / Truancy section, the District reserves its right to impose consequences for extended unexcused absences, including but not limited to, bringing excessive absenteeism to the Juvenile Court's attention by filing a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) petition or to the attention of the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) attention by filing a 51A under appropriate circumstances.

DISMISSALS

Students are expected to be in school each day. There are times, however, that emergencies and unavoidable appointments will require a student to be dismissed from school. Parents should attempt to schedule appointments outside of the school day or on other "non-school" days as outlined each year in the published district calendar. If a student is to be dismissed from school, they must bring a note from home specifying the date, the time, and the reason for dismissal. This note must have a phone number so that the parent(s) / guardian(s) may be contacted. The note should be brought directly to the appropriate school office as soon as the student arrives to school. Students will be dismissed directly from the office. A student will not be allowed to leave the building without checking out from the office first.

Each school is also staffed with a school nurse to address health concerns during the school day. Illness related dismissals during the school day will be coordinated by the nursing office. We encourage students to access the nursing office in the event they are not feeling well. We encourage parents to do the same before dismissing their child.



COLLEGE VISITS

College visits are encouraged for our high school students. However, every effort should be made to schedule visits when school is not in session. In the event that visits conflict with the school calendar, Juniors and seniors will be allowed three (3) excused college visitations per school year. A College Visitation Request Form with parental/guardian and administrative approval must be completed at least two (2) school days prior to the visitation. Verification of attendance at this appointment must be submitted to the Assistant Principal on the next school day following the absence. Failure to comply with the above regulation will result in an unexcused absence.

EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM / TRUANCY

Parents/Guardians will be notified if their child has five (5) or more unexcused absences in a year or if the child has missed two (2) or more classes due to absence for five (5) days or more. The Principal or designee will make a reasonable effort to meet with the parents/guardians of a child who has five (5) or more unexcused absences for the purposes of developing action steps to improve the child's attendance (Ch. 222 of Acts of 2012). A child who is chronically and habitually absent, truant, dismissed or tardy **with or without** valid cause (excused or unexcused) from school will be subject to the following non- exclusive list of consequences:

1. Parent or guardian conference
2. All future absences must be verified by a physician
3. Restriction or prohibition on the participation of extracurricular or intramural activities, field trips or other activities
4. School based consequences (e.g. detention, loss of course credit, grade retention, etc.)
5. Filing of a "Failure to send your child to school" with the court
6. Filing of a "Child Requiring Assistance" (CRA) with the court
7. Department of Children and Families (DCF) filing
8. The student and parent/guardian may be reported to the MPS Truancy Officer who may file with the local District Court



DISENROLLMENT

An Administrator from the school the student has last attended will need to send notice within a period of 5 school days from the students 10th consecutive absence to the student and his or her parent/guardian (M.G.L. c.76, sec.18)

MCAS APPEAL

Additionally, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has set 95% attendance as the minimum standard for students to appeal a failing grade on an MCAS

Approved: 6/9/98
Revised 7.25.16
Revised & Approved 2.14.17
Full Committee Approval 1/22/19
Approved 8.25.20