



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

5113  
Procedure No.

September 12, 2022  
Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures for recording and excusing absences and to indicate steps to prevent truancy.
- II. **POLICY:** All students are expected to attend school regularly in accordance with state laws and regulations. The schools, families, and communities must work together to foster exemplary attendance for all students. (Board Policy 5113)
- III. **BACKGROUND:** Each child who resides in Maryland and is five (5) years old or older, and under 18 shall attend a public school during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in public schools to children of the same age, or is exempted by law. If the child is home schooled, the PGCPS Home School Office must be notified and provided the required documentation for the exemption,

#### IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

##### A. Attendance

- 1. Students shall be considered in attendance while instruction takes place face to face; during approved online instruction; or at other times when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the school principal, or any person duly authorized by the CEO or principal.
  - a. Face to face – students attend class in the school buildings.
  - b. Online Instruction (Prince George’s County Public Schools Online Campus) – a form of education in which the main elements include physical separation of teachers and students during instruction and the use of various technologies to facilitate student-teacher and student-student communication.
    - 1) Asynchronous – students learn the same material at different times and locations through online channels without real-time interaction.
    - 2) Synchronous – students learn the same material at the same time through online or distance education that occurs in real time.

##### B. Chronically Absent

A student is chronically absent if the student has been enrolled in a school for at least ten (10) days and is absent 10% or more of the school days while enrolled at that school. For



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example, a student who is enrolled in a school for 30 days, and who is absent three (3) of those 30 days, is considered chronically absent. A student can be counted as chronically absent in multiple schools, within the State, in the same year.

### C. Habitually Truant

A student is habitually truant if the student has been enrolled in a school for 91 or more days in a school year and is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days equal to or in excess of 20% of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year. There may be legal consequences when a student is habitually truant.

### D. Lawful Absence

1. Death in the immediate family (*i.e.*, parent, guardian, brother, sister, grandparent), or extended family and close non-relatives.
  - a. Four (4) school days shall be considered excused upon the death of an immediate family member, extended family member or close non-relative;
  - b. The principal may grant extra days for extenuating circumstances.
2. Illness of the student. The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian of a student that is reported absent for illness at least three (3) school days. If absences reach six (6) days, a physician's certificate will be required.
3. Behavior health needs. The principal or a pupil personnel worker shall require a licensed or certified mental health practitioner's certificate from the parent or guardian of a student reported continuously absent for behavior health needs.
4. Mental Health Day. Students may receive as an excused absence one (1) day of absence in each semester of each school year for a student's mental health needs. A note from a physician to excuse a student's absence for mental health needs is not required.
5. Pregnancy and parenting related conditions:
  - a. Absences due to labor, delivery, recovery, prenatal and post-natal medical appointments;
  - b. Absences due to an illness or medical appointment of the student's child. After four (4) days of such absences during a school year a physician's note will be required;



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A parenting student is allowed a minimum of ten (10) days excused after the birth of the child;

- c. Absences due to legal appointments related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody, and visitation; and
  - d. Absence from class due to use of a lactation space to nurse or express breast milk.
6. Court Summons
  7. Hazardous weather conditions that would endanger the health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school.
  8. Work approved or sponsored by the school, PGCPS, or the Maryland State Department of Education, accepted by the CEO or the school principal, or their designee, as a reason for excusing the student.
  9. Observance of a religious holiday.
  10. State emergency.
  11. Suspension.
  12. Lack of authorized transportation. This shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.
  13. Health exclusion, which includes immunizations and other health related communicable or contagious diseases. Students with a documented medical condition that adversely places them at-risk for contracting a potentially life-threatening medical condition – *e.g.*, Coronavirus – shall be considered lawfully absent when absent from school. Students excluded as a result of immunization noncompliance will be marked absent by the teacher using Code (IM).
  14. Absence due to Military Families. PGCPS supports the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. A lawful absence shall be granted to students while visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat supporting posting. Accordingly, students must receive missed homework assigned during the time they were absent. Military orders may be requested.



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15. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the CEO/designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, including but not limited to:
  - a. Civic engagement (limited to three days); and
  - b. College visits and interviews (limited to three (3) days).
- E. Parenting Student - a student who is the mother, father or legal guardian of a child.
- F. Tardy/tardiness: Anytime a student is not in the classroom when the class period begins.
- G. Truant: An absence from school for the entire day or a portion of the day which is unlawful.
- H. Unlawful Absence:
  1. Students absent from school for any reason other than those defined as a lawful absence. Students who are removed from school by their parent(s)/guardian(s) for more than ten (10) consecutive days for extended travel and not enrolled in another school or educational program may be withdrawn, then re-enrolled upon their return.
  2. After ten (10) school days of consecutive unlawful absences, in which the student's whereabouts are unknown, the student shall be exited from the school with an Exit Status "W" and Exit Code 50. A PS105 form must be completed and filed in the student's record.

#### IV. **PROCEDURES:**

##### A. **Recording Student Attendance by Staff Members**

1. Recognizing the responsibility of administrators and teachers for developing and maintaining a system of recording and reporting student absences (lawful and unlawful), the following procedures are to be considered as minimum standards for each school level (elementary, middle, and high).
  - a. The classroom teacher is responsible for recording student attendance and tardiness in in SchoolMAX daily and by period as appropriate. Capturing attendance daily in SchoolMAX will serve as a daily attendance log for each day or class.
  - b. When a student is not physically in the classroom but remains under the direct supervision of PGCPS, the student is considered present for state and local reporting purposes; however, the student is marked absent by the teacher of record



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if not in the classroom, physically or virtually. The attendance secretary or designated personnel will assign an applicable reason code (which can be accessed in SchoolMAX) to ensure proper reporting on state and local reports. For example, students approved for Home and Hospital Teaching are to be assigned the absence reason Code 95.

2. Attendance personnel will use the following guidelines for determining full day absent, full day present and half day present:
  - a. A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance 50% or more of the school day.
  - b. A student is counted present for a half day if in attendance for at least 10% of the school day, but less than 50%.
  - c. A student is counted absent for a full day if in attendance for less than 10% of the school day.
3. Home and Hospital Students

Attendance for students receiving home and hospital services—not home school instruction—should be maintained on the regular school roll. They should be marked present except when they are not available for home and hospital instruction and then they are marked absent (Code 95).

#### **B. Attendance for In-Person Learning**

1. Students receiving instruction in a school building for regular in-person learning must adhere to this attendance administrative procedure. Daily attendance is expected for all students unless there is a lawful reason for the student's absence. For each absence, the parent/guardian must communicate the reason for the student's absence with written documentation no later than three (3) days after the student returns to school. Students will be permitted to make-up missed assignments in accordance with the administrative procedure for all lawful absences.
2. Students who test positive for COVID-19 must remain home until the specified time. Teachers must mark students absent with a code (QT), which will count the student absent from class but present for the day. The student will be provided virtual work asynchronously from their teachers during the quarantine period.

#### **C. Attendance for Students Approved for Online Instruction**



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1. The following guidance applies to students who are participating in Online Instruction offered in: Grades 7-12.
  - a. PGCPS Online Campus: Seventh – Twelfth Grade (7-12)
    - 1) Students participating in the Online Campus will receive instruction in both synchronous and asynchronous learning models. Students will be marked present while attending synchronous instruction.
    - 2) The process for marking a student “present” for asynchronous instruction will occur daily through a virtual check-in via Canvas.
  - b. Note: Students participating in virtual learning may experience technical issues such as broken equipment or internet outages that may impede participation in live instruction. Such issues must immediately be communicated to the student’s teacher and designated school staff so support can be provided as soon as possible. When parent(s)/guardian(s) indicate these occurrences, the teacher must mark the student absent with code (TC) which considers the student absent from class but “present” for the day when the “TC” reason code is entered.

#### **D. Reporting Absences by Parent(s)/Guardian(s)**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) must notify the school in writing when their child is absent no later than three (3) days after return to school. This also applies to dual enrollment students who attend classes on college campuses. The explanation must indicate the dates and reason for the absence(s).

#### **E. Student Make Up Assignments**

1. Students who are considered **lawfully absent** from school or a class will have the opportunity to make up missed assignments.
  - a. Teachers are required to provide make-up work (within 48 hours) for students who are lawfully absent, including suspensions, and who have not qualified for home and hospital teaching.
  - b. For all suspensions, teachers are required to provide make-up work and assignments to all students, unless other educational alternatives are provided.
  - c. Students who are lawfully absent may not be penalized for work not provided by the school for periods of such lawful absence.



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- d. The number of days allowed to make up missed work will be equivalent to the number of days of lawful absences. The timeline will begin when the teacher provides the student with the assignments. \_\_\_\_\_. Students who fail to complete missed assignments within the allotted time will receive 0 (zero) for each assignment.
2. Students who are considered **unlawfully absent** from school or a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed assignments.
3. Pregnant and Parenting Students

In addition to Home and Hospital Teaching, these students may make up work in ways other than home and hospital teaching by retaking a semester, participating in an online course credit recovery program, and continuing at the same pace with six (6) extra weeks to complete the semester.

#### **F. Notification to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Regarding Consecutive or Chronic Absences**

1. If the student has missed at least 10% of school days in a quarter, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be called or emailed by the teacher.
2. If there is no change in the student's absences, the teacher of record will submit the student's name to the grade level administrator or principal to communicate via telephone, letter, or email with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).
3. Students with chronic absences, both lawful and unlawful, will be referred to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) to address the underlying problems that lead to the absenteeism. This is inclusive of students with 504 accommodations and students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). A SIT or IEP meeting will be convened to discuss the attendance issues.
4. Students who demonstrate a pattern of habitual truancy will be referred to the School Support Team (SST), which will include the Pupil Personnel Worker, for intensive interventions designed to increase regular attendance.
5. Pupil Personnel Workers are required to report monthly, to the school principal, the names of students who have been habitually truant and chronically absent the previous month. This information can also be retrieved from SchoolMAX.

#### **G. Procedures for Students Detained and Incarcerated Students**



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1. A student who is charged with either a juvenile or adult offense and is detained awaiting adjudication (temporarily held at a secured facility with an educational program), will be withdrawn from PGCPS.
  - a. A student ordered to an institution with an educational program will be withdrawn from PGCPS with a code of T-22.
  - b. A student ordered to an institution without an educational program is withdrawn with a code of W-38.

#### **H. Absence Due to a Mental Health Day**

1. Students are permitted one (1) mental health day and may be absent once each semester;
2. Students who are absent due to attending to their mental health needs will be marked as lawfully absent;
3. Written notification by the parent/guardian will be sufficient documentation the day the student is absent or provided immediately upon return;
4. The student must be allowed to make up all missed assignments. Teachers may exempt or modify makeup assignments; and
5. When a student returns to school, he/she may meet with the Professional School Counselor to check-in.
6. Teachers must utilize the code (MH) when marking a student as absent due to taking a mental health day. The student must be marked as lawfully absent. Schools must review attendance reports to identify students who are accessing mental health days. The Professional School Counselor should review the reports to have knowledge of students who have taken a mental health day in order to follow up. The Professional School Counselor will ensure that students are aware of available mental health resources.

#### **I. Absence Due to Behavioral Health Need**

A school must provide information to the student's parent or guardian about school and community behavioral health resources that are available to the student, if the student or





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the student's parent or guardian notifies the school that the student's absences were due to behavioral health needs.

#### V. PREVENTING TRUANCY:

##### A. Identify At-Risk Students

1. Students often exhibit behaviors which, without intervention, can lead to truancy. To prevent unlawful absences, it is crucial that the Student Intervention Team (SIT) and the Student Support Team (SST) recommend positive and supportive interventions to be initiated as soon as a student begins to exhibit such indicators. Some student warning symptoms, among others, may include:
  - a. Changes in behavior or behavior difficulties;
  - b. Changes in friendships or having no friends;
  - c. Poor or decreased academic performance;
  - d. Bullying or being bullied;
  - e. Listlessness or lack of focus;
  - f. Agitation or withdrawal;
  - g. Behaviors inappropriate for the age of the child; or
  - h. A history of sibling truancy.

##### B. Incoming Students: Articulation and Orientation

1. The following steps are to occur during articulation from elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school.
  - a. 1) Principals and/or their designees will transmit attendance information to receiving schools for all students with 20 days or more absences in the prior school year.
  - 2) School personnel will discuss attendance issues with individual incoming students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) who have been identified as having 20 or more absences. The students should be placed on the School Intervention Team agenda to discuss monitoring strategies.



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- b. During the orientation process each year, school personnel are to discuss attendance requirements with all incoming and returning students and their parent(s)/guardian(s). For students, this may be done as part of the initial orientation assemblies or in special attendance assemblies, during classroom activities, and/or in other programs or communications. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are to be informed at back to school nights, PTA/PTSA/PTO meetings, school conferences, and other activities.
- c.
  - 1) During regular registration for transfer students, the Professional School Counselor and other appropriate personnel will discuss the importance of regular attendance.
  - 2) For transfer students - specifically those who have missed 20 days or more in the prior school year - the Professional School Counselor will specifically note attendance as they review records of incoming students. The Professional School Counselor, Pupil Personnel Worker, parent engagement assistants, or other appropriate staff members will contact parents/guardians of students whose attendance are unsatisfactory and will hold conferences to develop an individual attendance plan for these students.
- d.
  - 1) All communication to parent(s)/guardian(s) will occur in a language which the family understands. Whenever written documents are available in the native language of the family, they shall be provided. When needed, professional interpreters shall also be provided for oral communication.
  - 2) School staff members should contact the Office of Interpreting and Translation for assistance with translating and interpreting services, per Administrative Procedure 1400.

#### **C. Addressing At-Risk Students**

- 1. By the last day of September, the Pupil Personnel Worker and the Professional School Counselor will meet with returning students who were identified as habitual truant the previous year to:
  - a. Discuss the importance of regular school attendance;
  - b. Meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop strategies for improvement;
  - c. Complete attendance contract with the student; and



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- d. Provide copies for the family, Pupil Personnel Worker, and the student's cumulative folder.

#### **D. Addressing Attendance Matters**

1. The most effective approach to increase attendance and prevent truancy requires the school, family, and community working together. It is strongly recommended that the SIT and the SST meet a minimum of once per month to discuss attendance issues.
2. The SST will consist of:
  - a. Principal or designee
  - b. The specific student's parent/guardian
  - c. Pupil Personnel Worker
  - d. Professional School Counselor
  - e. Special Educator
  - f. Teacher
  - g. Attendance Secretary
  - h. School Psychologist
  - i. Nurse (if needed)
  - j. Other staff members as appropriate

#### **E. Additional Measures to Address Students Over the Compulsory Age of Attendance**

1. All students shall be made aware of the attendance policy located in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook ([http://www.pgcps.org/student\\_rights\\_responsibilities.htm](http://www.pgcps.org/student_rights_responsibilities.htm)). Students over the age of compulsory school attendance are subject to the same attendance procedures as those under the age of compulsory school attendance. If all strategies and interventions for the student's successful completion of school have not eliminated habitual truancy, then the case shall be reviewed.



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- a. The Pupil Personnel Worker shall review the case and provide guidance to school staff members on appropriate actions needed prior to the withdrawal of the student from school. If withdrawal is recommended, the Professional School Counselor will offer in writing, as part of the withdrawal letter, an exit interview with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss again the student's options for continuing his or her education. In addition, the withdrawal letter and withdrawal form PS 105 will be completed and placed in the student's cumulative folder.
- b. If the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) are unavailable to participate in the exit conference, school staff members, and the Pupil Personnel Worker should make reasonable efforts to contact the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) using a certified letter, home visit, email, etc. A copy of the student's options for education must be provided.

#### **F. Appeal for Withdrawal Due to Attendance for Students over the Compulsory Age of Attendance**

If the parent(s)/ guardian(s) protest such a withdrawal, the parent may appeal to the appropriate Area Office. The student shall remain enrolled in the regular school program during the appeal process. Upon the successful appeal of the withdrawal, the school, parent/guardian, and student shall develop an attendance contract. Documented failure by the student to adhere to the conditions of the contract shall result in withdrawal.

#### **G. Continuing Education After Withdrawal for Truancy**

1. Notwithstanding any of the above, withdrawal from the day school program due to truancy shall not preclude the student from participating in:
  - a. Evening Virtual Program (EVP);
  - b. Summer School;
  - c. Online Course;
  - d. If appropriate, non-traditional alternative programs; and
  - e. GED preparation program or other educational/career programs.

#### **H. Withdrawal of Special Education Student**

The withdrawal of a special education student, regardless of age, must be in compliance with special education procedures. Such a withdrawal usually mandates that an IEP team



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meeting be convened to discuss options for continuing the withdrawal. Form (PS 105) must be completed and placed in the student's file.

### I. Police Cooperation with Truants

1. The Prince George's County Police have agreed to stop and question children at large in the community who appear to be under the compulsory age of school attendance and unlawfully absent during regular school hours.
2. If such children do not have verification, such as an early departure slip, a release time card, or other authorization showing they are legitimately out of school, the police may document such children, take them to school, and release them to the appropriate school administrator. Students are responsible for securing departure documentation from the school officials.
3. When the police escort a student to school, the principal and/or the designated school official will admit the student to school, notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the circumstances, and take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with this Administrative Procedure 5113 and Administrative Procedure 10101, Code of Student Conduct found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.
4. Principals should encourage store managers who call regarding loitering of school-aged children to contact the police. A conference that includes the police, principal/designee, and store manager to discuss the details of the situation may be appropriate should a particular shopping center or store have significant problems with truants.

VI. **MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:** In an effort to ensure that the student attendance, absence and truancy process is implemented, the following monitoring tools and processes will be utilized annually.

#### A. Annual Training:

1. All designated staff members (*i.e.*, Attendance Managers, Professional School Counselor, Principal, and Instructional Directors) will participate in an annual training of the attendance management and monitoring process. Principals will be required to identify their school-based designees no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> annually. Each school must identify two (2) attendance managers. An attendance turnkey presentation will be provided to principals for training school based staff.
2. The principal/designee will facilitate training for all school staff with attendance responsibilities to review this attendance administrative procedure by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each school year. A record containing staff signatures to signify completion of this



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task will be kept on file in the principal's office for four (4) years and provided as a part of the monitoring process upon request.

#### **B. Annual Notification:**

The principal/designee, Professional School Counselor, and Pupil Personnel Worker at each school will collaborate to take the necessary steps to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and staff members are aware of the procedures contained herein. Such measures may utilize student handbooks, PTA discussions, faculty meetings, etc. Students should be warned particularly of possible penalties when identified as truant. Documentation to signify completion of this task will be kept on file in the Principal's office for four (4) years.

#### **C. Missing Attendance Report:**

The principal/designee must run the Missing Attendance Report weekly to ensure all teachers are recording student attendance daily. Written notification must be provided to teachers that are not adhering to the daily attendance entry requirement.

#### **D. Parental Contact:**

1. A file must be kept in the attendance or main office that contains the teacher of record documentation that communication has been made with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who were absent 10% or more days in a quarter. The documentation must be kept on file for four (4) years.
2. Pupil Personnel Workers, teachers and Professional School Counselors are expected to reach out to families to encourage their participation with distance learning.

#### **E. Monthly List to Principals:**

The Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Workers must maintain documentation to show that all principals received their list of habitually truant and chronically absent students monthly.

#### **F. Referrals to SIT/SST: [Student Intervention Team \(SIT\)/Student Support Team \(SST\) Manual](#)**

The principal/designee must ensure that students who are identified as habitually truant and chronically absent are referred to the SIT and/or SST.

#### **G. Incoming Student Articulation and Orientation:**



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Area Office, Pupil Personnel Workers and Professional School Counselors must ensure that the incoming student articulation and orientation process has been utilized for students with 20 or more excessive absences before the end of the first quarter.

#### H. Students Taking a Mental Health Day:

### VII. RELATED PROCEDURES:

- Policy 5211 – Student Demonstrations
- Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students;
- Administrative Procedure 5119.3, Educational Programs/Services for Pregnant Girls;
- Administrative Procedure 5121.1, Grading and Reporting for Elementary Schools, Early Childhood Through Grade Five;
- Administrative Procedure 5121.2, Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools, Grade Six Through Grade Eight;
- Administrative Procedure 5121.3, Grading and Reporting for High Schools, Grade Nine Through Grade Twelve;
- Administrative Procedure 5124, Student Intervention Team (SIT), Student Support Team (SST); and
- Administrative Procedure 10101, [Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#).

### VIII. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, § 4-139; § 7-101; § 7-301; §7-301.1 and § 7-302;
- Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.02.06.02; 13A.08.01-05.; and
- Maryland Student Records Manual

IX. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** The Department of Student Services will have the responsibility for maintaining, evaluating, and updating these procedures.

X. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** This administrative procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5113, dated September 2, 2021.

XI. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 12, 2022.

Additional Resource: [Student Intervention Team \(SIT\)/Student Support Team \(SST\) Manual](#)

Attachment: [Attendance Codes](#)