

Introduction

The laws of Pennsylvania have recently changed regarding student attendance (24 P.S. 13-1327), and local school districts are required to enforce attendance requirements as detailed in the PA School Code.

The Colonial School District (CSD) supports the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) commitment to improving school attendance rates. In order for students to realize the opportunities and benefits from school, students have to not only be in attendance, but they must also be meaningfully connected to the school and experiencing success. To achieve this, the CSD works in collaboration with students, families and community resources to address the issues that result in truant behavior.

CSD is working with local organizations and agencies to provide creative and innovative approaches to ensure that children are active participants in their education. Every effort is made to keep youth in school and reduce the school district's referrals to the courts, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems. In order to effectively eliminate truant behavior, we call on parents to ensure that students attend school each day. To eliminate truancy, families, schools and communities must work together.

Compulsory Attendance Requirement

Compulsory school age refers to the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school as a beginner until the age of seventeen or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first. It is MANDATORY for all children of compulsory school age, who have a legal residence in Pennsylvania, to attend school every day.

Lawful Absence from School

CSD will consider a lawful absence any of the following: student illness, family emergency, religious holidays, medical or dental appointments, and educational travel with prior approval from the principal. A written excuse from the parent is required explaining the reason for the absence.

Unlawful Absence from School

The school district is responsible for monitoring and maintaining records of attendance of students. All absences are unlawful until the school receives a written note from the parent explaining the reason(s) for an absence. Parents/guardians should submit the written explanation within three (3) calendar days of the absence. Failure to provide a written excuse for a absence after three days will result in the absence being permanently counted as unlawful.

Cumulative Lawful Absences

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences, verified by written parental notification, may be permitted during a school year. Included in the 10 days are any family educational trips receiving approval.

All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days require a written excuse from a physician.

Responsibilities of the School District

- Schools will notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of the first and second unlawful absence(s).
- Schools will notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of the third unlawful absence.
- Following the third unlawful absence, the district will coordinate a school/family conference to discuss truancy and develop a mutually agreed upon Truancy Elimination Plan.
- A fourth unlawful absence will result in referral to the District Magistrate.
- CSD will refer all future incidents of truancy, after the fourth unlawful absence, to either the District Magistrate, Office of Children and Youth or Montgomery County Juvenile Probation.
- CSD will work with the family to provide support and referral information for assistance from community social service agencies.

Mission Statement

To educate all students about the importance of school attendance and to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity for educational growth and development.

Free Education & Attendance

All students legally residing in the Colonial School District are entitled to a free and full education in the school district. Parents of all children between the ages of 8 and 17 are required by the compulsory attendance law to ensure their children attend school, unless legally excused. Students who have not graduated may not be asked to leave school merely because they have reached 17 years of age if they are fulfilling their responsibilities as students. A student may not be excluded from the public schools or from extracurricular activities because: 1) The student is married; 2) The student is pregnant; 3) The student has a disability as identified by Chapter 15 (relating to protected handicapped students); 4) The student is an eligible student identified under Chapter 14 (relating to special education services and programs).

For More Information Contact:

Ms. Ellen K. Reilly
Home and School Visitor
610-834-1670, ext 2108

Truancy Elimination Plan

The Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP) is written at the school/family conference which is held after the third unlawful absence. During the conference, possible solutions to increase the student's school attendance will be explored. Participation by the student and family is an integral component of this conference.

Issues to be addressed at the school/family conference may include but are not limited to:

- Reason for absences
- Appropriateness of student's educational setting
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success
- Student's current academic level and needs
- Social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health issues
- Issues concerning family and home environment
- Any other issues affecting the student's attendance

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS
KEY TO SUCCESS!**



Serving the students of Conshohocken,
Plymouth and Whitemarsh



Compulsory Attendance
And
Truancy Elimination Plan

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