

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

## REGULATIONS

According to the Pennsylvania School Code, all children between the ages of 8 and 16 are required to attend school. Therefore, attendance in school is extremely important, and consequences of illegal absences from school will be severe and may include citations, fines and or deduction in grades. With this in mind, the school district requires that "TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE YEAR'S WORK, A STUDENT WOULD HAVE TO BE IN ATTENDANCE 162 DAYS FOR A 2-SEMESTER COURSE AND/OR 81 DAYS FOR A SEMESTER COURSE".

## ABSENCES - DEFINITIONS

Because of the state attendance law, we are required to code each absence in our computer and provide written documentation showing why we coded it that way. There are two groups of codes: 1) Those codes which do not count against the 162-day requirement are considered as "exempt" absences and are listed as legal absences below. 2) Those codes which do count towards the total of 18 days that a student is able to miss and still receive credit. These "non-exempt" absences fall into two categories; excused absences, if a document is received within three days of the absence, and illegal absences, if no document is received within 3 days

- 1.) Legal –absences listed directly below, **when accompanied by the correct documentation**. These absences are not counted when determining whether the student is out of compliance with the state attendance laws, **as long as the verification is provided within the three (3) day limit**. These absences are also called exempt absences, because they are exempt from the state attendance policy.

### LEGAL (EXEMPT) ABSENCES

The absences listed below will be considered EXEMPT from the 162-day policy, when accompanied by correct documentation within three (3) days:

- Approved medical or dental appointments – form from doctor
- School authorized field trips or activities – signed permission slip
- School related athletic events – team roster & schedule
- Approved educational travel – signed form
- Suspension from school – administrator assigned
- Personal bereavement – copy of funeral notice
- Religious holidays - calendar
- Approved emergency – administrator approval

### NON-EXEMPT ABSENCES (excused and illegal)

- 2.) Excused - absences which are accompanied with an excuse blank or note from a parent or guardian **within three (3) school days of the return to school**. These are excused absences, but are counted towards the state attendance laws (18 days).
- 3.) Illegal - An absence which is not accompanied by any kind of an explanation **within three (3) school days of the return to school**. For each illegal absence, 2.2% of a student's quarter grade will be deducted by each teacher. In addition, a fine of up to \$300 a day may be levied by a district justice for excessive illegal days (3 or more). **See Act 29 Of 1995, Habitual Truancy, State of PA.**

## NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

**It is the student's responsibility to know and account for his/her absence or tardiness record.** The following is the sequential procedure for dealing with student absences.

1. On Thursday of each week a report will be run to determine which students had illegal absences or tardiness recorded for the previous week. Parents of students whose names appear on the report will be sent a letter informing them of the illegal absences or tardiness and giving them 5 days to challenge the record (NOTE: not having sent in a document within the specified time period is not a valid reason for a challenge SEE #1-4, above.) This procedure will also apply to illegal tardiness accumulated on a class by class basis due to arriving late to school.
2. After 5 days of excused or illegal absence, a notice will be issued informing the parent, by mail, of the up-to-date number of excused or illegal absences.

3. After 10 days of excused or illegal absence, a student conference will be held. This conference is necessary to inform the student of the up-to-date number of excused or illegal days of absence. A letter will inform the parent of the conference.
4. After 15 days of excused or illegal absence, another student conference will be held. This conference is necessary to inform the student of the up-to-date number of excused or illegal days of absence. A letter, sent registered mail, will inform the parent of the conference.
5. After 18 days of excused or illegal absence, a notice will be issued informing the parent, by registered mail, of their child's impending loss of credit for a course and/or courses. A parent conference will be necessary to inform the parent as to the number of excused or illegal days of student absence and also the consequence of additional absences.
6. After the student has accumulated excused or illegal absences beyond the 18 days, the principal will send a notice informing the parent, by registered mail, of their child's loss of credit for a course and/or courses.

In addition to the above procedure, for students 16 years of age and under, a truancy citation may be issued in accordance with Pennsylvania School Code. Excessive absences (three or more) recorded as illegal will be handled through the District Justice's Office as offenses of truancy.

If it is necessary for a pupil to remain out of school for one or more days because of illness or any other excusable reason, an excuse note for the absence should be turned in to the office on the day he/she returns to school. In the event a student forgets an excuse note on the first day back to school he/she will be given two (2) additional days to bring the excuse note to the office. **If the student fails to return an excuse note within three (3) days of attendance from the date of absence, the absence will become illegal.**

### **STUDENT PROCEDURES FOLLOWING AN ABSENCE:**

1. Have your parent or guardian write a note or fill in an excuse blank, which can be acquired in the main office or on the web site @www.bhasd.org, Include the current date, the date(s) of your absence(s), the reason for the absence, and a parent signature.
2. Turn in your excuse blank or note to the main office within three (3) school days of your return to school (for a late, it must arrive on the day you are late).. It will be dated and signed. After three (3) days, the note will be accepted by not credited. **This applies to any and all excuses, including exempt absences and educational travel!!**

NOTE: Attendance is checked with the BCTC daily. On early dismissal days at Brandywine, BCTC students who wish to go home must have a signed permission from on file in the office or they will be disciplined for skipping BCTC and given an illegal absence.

### **LATE ARRIVAL POLICY (TARDINESS)**

Students who arrive at or after 7:34 am and are in the building by 7:45 must sign in the high school office and get a pass from the secretary for admission to first period class. Students who arrive after 7:45 am must sign in and will be assigned to a study hall until first period is over. Students who sign in later in the day will be assigned to a study hall for the remainder of the period they arrive in, subject to administrative discretion. Students arriving after 10:39 a.m. will be responsible for a full day excuse blank. **Students who arrive after 7:34 are subject to discipline as indicated on page 28, Level II, #3. In addition, if they do not bring a note from a parent explaining the tardiness within three(3) they will have 2.2% credit deducted from every class missed on that day.**

#### **CODES FOR TARDINESS**

Like absences, tardiness is coded into the district attendance using the same categories:

**Exempt – If a student arrives late to school and has a document indicating they were involved in an activity which the district identifies as “exempt” (see page 14), the tardy is coded as TL – tardy, exempt, and no discipline is involved.**

**Excused – If a student arrives late and brings a note from a parent/guardian indicating that the parent know of the late, the tardy is coded as TE – tardy, excused, and the student is subject to discipline as described on page 28, #3.**

**Illegal – If a student arrives late with no written explanation, they are coded as TU – tardy, illegal, and are subject to the same discipline described on page 28, #3. In addition, for each period missed due to the lateness, 2.2% of the student’s grade will be deducted if no written notification is received within three (3) days.**

**EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE OR TARDINESS**

\_\_\_\_\_ was ~~\*tardy~~  
~~\*absent~~  
(Cross Out One)  
From School on \_\_\_\_\_

An explanation from the parent, or guardian, in each case of absence, or tardiness, is required for admission to school. Kindly state the reason below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher

The reason for ~~\*absence~~ - ~~\*tardiness~~ was \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian