

## OVERVIEW OF POLICY 204

Compulsory attendance laws in the State of PA require children to attend school no later than eight years of age, until the age of 17 or graduation from a high school. Regular attendance is expected and an *absence* is defined as missing any time during normal school hours. A maximum of ten (10) cumulative absences may be verified by parental/guardian written notification during a school year to verify lawful absences. All absences beyond ten (10) parental/guardian notifications shall require an excuse from a licensed physician. Parents/guardians should be informed that if they fail to provide a written excuse within three days of the absence, the absence would be permanently counted as unlawful. Parents should receive written notification from the school informing them that a doctor's excuse is necessary for any future absences when they have exceeded 10 written parental/guardian excuses.

It is recommended that Doctor's excuses include the following information: Indication that the student was seen by the doctor's office on a specific date and time (appointment and when student left the office), that the student was unable to attend school due to medical/mental health reasons.

Excuses must be received within 72 hours or they will remain permanently unlawful and should be noted in Eschools. Attendance secretaries should label all absences in Eschools.

At the end of the school year, the Data Manager has to report to habitually truant students to PDE. SCASD is reimbursed for instructional time and *PDE defines instructional time as any time during the day not allocated to recess or lunch*. PA House Bill 1907 defines "habitually truant" as 6 unexcused days or their equivalent, therefore; State College High School must count unexcused blocks (4 blocks equal 1 day).

**DO NOT WAIT** and accumulate 10 parental excuses before moving to TEP, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> offense.

Once a 1st or 2<sup>nd</sup> offense letter is sent to Home and School Visitor for processing the letter cannot be rescinded.

Students who are "habitually truant" should be referred to either school based mental health services or Children and Youth.

When referrals are made to Children and Youth or to the Magistrate District court the school shall provide verification that a TEP was offered and/or a copy of the TEP.

**Attendance Secretary will run weekly attendance reports and complete first or second offense forms within 2 days of unlawful absence then the Home and School Visitor will complete 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> offense and mail/file within 5 days.**

**TEP – The Attendance Secretary will inform (via email ) or Principal’s Designee and the Home and School Visitor that a TEP meeting needs to be scheduled for any student who has four unlawful absences. TEP meeting should be scheduled within 10 days of absence and include school officials (Administrator, Teachers, School Counselor), Parents/Guardians, and Home and School Visitor. A copy of the plan should be given to the Parent/Guardians, School Counselor, and Home and School Visitor. The original should be filed in the Principal or Principal’s Designee’s designated location.**

**Attendance secretary should attend casings weekly and communicate attendance concerns and updates.**

**For 1<sup>st</sup> offenses - Attendance Secretary should complete the form, absences should be noted on the form or attach a copy of students attendance with highlighted absences, and obtain Principal or Principal’s Designee signature and sent to Assistant Superintendent’s office. Assistant Superintendent shall sign and forward to the Home and School Visitor. The Home and School Visitor should write 1<sup>st</sup> offense letter. Home and School Visitor will then make 2 (one for attendance secretary and one to be given to the Data Manager at the end of school year) and mail the original, with legal consequences and attendance printout, to parents/guardians.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> offenses – any absence 3 days after the date of 1<sup>st</sup> offense letter should result in a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense being completed. The attendance secretary within 5 days of absence shall complete the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense form and obtain Principal or Principal’s Designee signature and sent to Assistant Superintendent’s Office for signature. Assistant Superintendent should sign and forward to the Home and School Visitor. Home and School Visitor will then complete the criminal complaint and obtain Principal or Principal Designee’s signature. Home and School Visitor will then make 2 copies (one for school and one for the Data Manager) and file the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense with the appropriate Magistrate District Court.**

**The Principal or Principal’s Designee should inform Home and School Visitor of the court hearing date and time. The Principal or Principal’s Designee and Home and School Visitor should both attend the Magistrate District Court Hearing to represent State College Area School District.**

**Specific directions for each absence is outlined below:**

**(1) First Unlawful Absence – Middle and High School**

**Parent/guardian will receive an email notification of unlawful absence from the school district. The email should include the legal penalties along with the name and telephone number of the school contact person.**

**Elementary School**

**Parent/guardian will receive a phone call from the Principal or Principal's Designee regarding the unlawful absence.**

**(2) Second Unlawful Absence – Middle and High School**

**Parent/guardian will receive a second an email notification notice of unlawful absence from the school district. The email should include the legal penalties along with the name and telephone number of the school contact person.**

**Elementary School**

**Parent/guardian will receive a phone call from the Principal or Principal's Designee regarding the unlawful absence.**

**(3) Third Unlawful Absence – All Levels**

**Parent/guardian receives a 1<sup>st</sup> offense notices of child's unlawful absences, within 10 days of the child's third unlawful absence, including information that three days after giving such notice the student or parent/guardian who again violates the compulsory attendance requirement shall be legal liable without further notice. Violation of attendance should be attached.**

**(4) Fourth Unlawful Absence – All Levels**

**The Principal or Principal's Designee will coordinate a school/family conference to discuss the child's truancy and develop a truancy elimination plan in attempts to resolve truant behavior. *2<sup>nd</sup> offense cannot be filed with the Magistrate's office without a TEP or written verification of attempts to schedule a meeting with the family.***

**(5) Fifth Unlawful Absence – All Levels**

**The fifth unlawful absence will result in the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense being filed, within 10 of the absence.**

**(6) Sixth Unlawful Absence – All Levels**

**The sixth unlawful absence will result in the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense being filed, within 10 of the absence.**

**Home and School Visitor will report to Children and Youth Services any student that has been unlawfully absent six or more days.**

**(7) ANY Additional Unlawful Absence – All Levels**

**Any additional absence will automatically become a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense and should be filed weekly with the District Magistrate Court. Home and School Visitor will have ongoing collaboration with Children and Youth regarding additional unlawful excuses.**