



# School District of Hatboro-Horsham

## Family Attendance Manual

This document serves to inform you of our basic policies and procedures regarding student attendance.

### ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

Consistent school attendance is vital to academic success. Teachers, families, and the wider community also benefit when students are attending school regularly and achieving. These gains include greater student safety, community well-being, and a sense of connectedness for all. The Hatboro-Horsham School District requires that pupils enrolled in its schools attend school consistently in accordance with the laws of Pennsylvania. The state law states that from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter first grade, which shall not be later than the age of eight, the child must attend school continuously until seventeen years of age or graduation from a regularly accredited senior high school.

To maximize success in school, families are encouraged to monitor their children's attendance and academic progress. Please utilize the district and school calendar to assist in scheduling family travel and daytime appointments. We ask that you contact your child's teacher, guidance counselor, or principal should you need advice in determining how personal activities scheduled during the school day will impact your child's instructional programming.

### REPORTING EXCUSED ABSENCES

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to report a student's illness by calling the absence line no later than the following times on the day of the absence, or on the first day of a multiple, consecutive day absence depending on the nature of the occurrence:

Blair Mill Elementary School	(215) 420-5245 no later than 9:00 AM
Crooked Billet Elementary School	(215) 420-5345 no later than 9:00 AM
Hallowell Elementary School	(215) 420-5947 no later than 9:00 AM
Simmons Elementary School	(215) 420-5881 no later than 9:00 AM
Keith Valley Middle School	(215) 420-5196 no later than 8:30 AM
Hatboro-Horsham High School	(215) 420-5857 no later than 8:00 AM

To excuse an absence, families must furnish a written explanation for the absence of a child within three (3) school days of the student's return to school. This written excuse card must be submitted and signed by the parent/guardian. **A phone call to the absence line does not excuse an absence.**

Excuse notes may be sent to school with the student, faxed to the school office, or emailed to:

Blair Mill Elementary School	<a href="mailto:BMAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org">BMAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org</a>
Crooked Billet Elementary School	<a href="mailto:CBAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org">CBAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org</a>
Hallowell Elementary School	<a href="mailto:HALAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org">HALAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org</a>
Simmons Elementary School	<a href="mailto:SIMAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org">SIMAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org</a>
Keith Valley Middle School	<a href="mailto:KVAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org">KVAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org</a>
Hatboro-Horsham High School	<a href="mailto:HSAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org">HSAttendance@hatboro-horsham.org</a>

For your convenience, the attendance form may be downloaded from the website and submitted to the attendance/school office.

**If no note is presented within three school days of the student's return to school, the absence shall be recorded as unlawful.**

Consistent with Chapter 11 of the Pennsylvania School Code, the Hatboro-Horsham School District will not condone nor permit absences or lateness from school for any unlawful reason. Therefore, every student enrolled in the district, regardless of age, shall be in daily attendance except for the following reasons:

- Personal illness (§ 11.25)
- Death in the immediate family
- Quarantine of the individual home
- Extreme and unusual weather conditions
- Educational trip not to exceed six (6) school days with his/her parent/guardian. Prior school approval **MUST** be obtained from the principal. Forms may be obtained online or from the main office.
- Exceptional urgent reasons -- must pertain to the student
- Religious holiday -- proper notice must be given to the attendance office (§ 11.21)
- Suspension from school
- Required court appearance
- In the case of the exceptional student where the absence is caused by or directly related to the student's exceptionality

### **TARDINESS**

Tardiness is absence of a student at the time when the school day begins. The time reflected on the school clock will be used to document the time a student arrived at school. A student arriving late to school will be excused for the same reasons listed under the "Reporting Excused Absences" section. An excuse note must be presented to the attendance/school secretary when a student arrives late to school. If a parent/guardian is unable to sign a student excuse card on the day of the tardiness, then the parent is asked to contact the attendance/main office by phone. However, a note must still be submitted for the lateness in question.

A student who has a scheduled doctor or dentist appointment before coming to school must bring a note from the doctor, which is an acceptable excuse note. **Missing the bus, oversleeping, the alarm not sounding, etc... are NOT legal excuses for being late.**

### **EARLY DISMISSAL / LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

No student is permitted to leave the building or its premises during the school day unless their parent physically signs them out in the attendance log located in the main office. Parents requesting an early dismissal for a doctor/dentist appointment should provide the attendance/school secretary with a medical note upon returning to school. It is understood that students who have an early dismissal from school due to illness are not to return to the school building or school property to participate in any extra/co-curricular activities for the rest of the day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he/she should report to the school nurse. The nurse will determine whether the student should be sent home. No student will be sent home without the presence of the parent or the person designated on the emergency card. It is important that emergency card information is current and updated as needed.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

<b>Regular Schedule</b>	Homeroom Begins	8:50 AM
- Arrival	Tardy	8:51 AM to 10:36 AM
	½ Day Absent	10:37 AM to 12:13 PM
	Full Day Absent	12:14 PM to 3:30 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 10:36 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave between 10:37 AM and 2:00 PM
	Early Dismissal	Leave 2:01 PM or after
	School Ends	3:30 PM

<b>Early Dismissal Schedule</b>	Homeroom Begins	8:50 AM
- Arrival	Tardy	8:51 AM to 9:53 AM
	½ Day Absent	9:54 AM to 12:07 PM
	Full Day Absent	12:08 PM to 1:00 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 9:53 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave between 9:54 AM and 12:07 PM
	Early Dismissal	Leave 12:08 PM or after
	School Ends	1:00 PM

<b>Two Hour Delay Schedule</b>	Homeroom Begins	10:50 AM
- Arrival	Tardy	10:51 AM to 11:48 AM
	½ Day Absent	11:49 AM to 12:13 PM
	Full Day Absent	12:14 PM to 3:15 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 11:48 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave between 11:49 AM and 2:00 PM
	Early Dismissal	Leave 2:01 PM or after
	School Ends	3:30 PM

**KEITH VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

<b>Regular Schedule</b>	Homeroom Begins	8:00 AM
- Arrival	Tardy	8:01 AM to 9:39 AM
	½ Day Absent	9:40 AM to 11:35 AM
	Full Day Absent	11:36 AM to 3:00 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 11:05 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave between 11:06 AM and 1:30 PM
	Early Dismissal	Leave 1:31 PM or after
	School Ends	3:00 PM

<b>Early Dismissal Schedule</b>	Homeroom Begins	8:00 AM
- Arrival	Tardy	8:01 AM to 9:02 AM
	½ Day Absent	9:03 AM to 10:26 AM
	Full Day Absent	10:27 AM to 12:30 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 9:56 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave between 9:57 AM and 11:29 AM
	Early Dismissal	Leave 11:30 AM or after
	School Ends	12:30 PM

<b>Two Hour Delay Schedule</b>	Homeroom Begins	10:00 AM
- Arrival	Tardy	10:01 AM to 11:03 AM
	½ Day Absent	11:04 AM to 12:05 PM
	Full Day Absent	12:06 PM to 3:00 PM

- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 11:03 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave between 11:04 AM and 1:15 PM
	Early Dismissal	Leave 1:16 PM or after
	School Ends	3:00 PM

### **HATBORO-HORSHAM HIGH SCHOOL**

<b>Regular Schedule</b>		
- Arrival	Tardy	7:31 AM to 8:55 AM
	½ Day Absent	After 11:08 AM
	Full Day Absent	After 12:00 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 8:55 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave prior to 11:08 AM
	Early Dismissal	Leave after 1:15 PM
	School Ends	2:30 PM

<b>Early Dismissal Schedule</b>		
- Arrival	Tardy	7:31 AM to 8:35 AM
	½ Day Absent	After 9:45 AM
	Full Day Absent	After 10:45 AM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 9:00 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave prior to 9:45 AM
	Early Dismissal	Leave after 10:50 AM
	School Ends	11:50 AM

<b>Two Hour Delay Schedule</b>		
- Arrival	Tardy	9:31 AM to 10:20 AM
	½ Day Absent	After 11:30 AM
	Full Day Absent	After 1:00 PM
- Departure	Full Day Absent	Leave prior to 10:25 AM
	½ Day Absent	Leave prior to 12:00 PM
	Early Dismissal	Leave after 1:45 PM
	School Ends	2:30 PM

### **PREARRANGED ABSENCE GUIDELINES**

Educational trips should coincide with regularly scheduled holidays, breaks, and in-service days. However, the school district administration has established a process by which parents may make prearrangements to have their child released from school for one educational trip during any school year. Parents/guardians who choose to have their son/daughter absent from school for an extended period of time must realize that their child's grades may suffer due to missing class activities that cannot be reproduced, i.e. discussion, labs, cooperative groups. Teachers are not required to provide assignments prior to the students' vacation.

Educational trips are limited to six (6) days per year, days beyond six may be considered unexcused. In order to have these absences considered "excused" parents must complete and present to the building principal a "Request for Prearranged Absence" form (attached below).

Telephone requests will not be considered. Parents who present the request for prearranged absence less than six (6) full school days prior to the requested absence may be denied the privilege of having the absence considered excused.

Principals shall determine if an absence is excused or unexcused by applying the following guidelines:

- 1) If prior permission is not sought by the parent, the absence is unexcused unless emergency causes are given and verified.
- 2) If a student's frequency of absences from school prior to the request jeopardizes his/her educational progress, the absences may be denied.
- 3) If a student has a medical letter, the absence may be denied.
- 4) If a student takes a pre-arranged trip within the first ten (10) or the last ten (10) days of the academic year, the absence may be denied.
- 5) Requests for absences during the standardized test, mid-term examination, and final examination may be denied by building administration. You should refer to the school calendar for applicable dates
- 6) The student should possess an acceptable school attendance record.
- 7) The request may be denied if the student is failing 2 or more subjects.

## **CHARTER SCHOOL ABSENCES**

### **Brick and Mortar Charter Schools**

Upon notice by the charter school, designated staff in the school district of residence will send notice by certified mail to a parent/guardian of a charter school student who has accumulated three (3) unlawful absences. The notice will state that any subsequent unlawful absence will result in a citation being filed with the magisterial district judge. Future unlawful absences will be filed by designated district staff with the magisterial district judge. District staff may file truancy documents with the magisterial district judge in whose jurisdiction the charter school is located and where the cause of action arose, or where the charter school student resides and the parent/guardian can be served.

The charter school must cooperate with the school district by providing necessary documentation for the truancy filings and by attending the hearings to provide testimony, if necessary.

### **Cyber Charter Schools**

Upon notice by the cyber charter school, designated staff in the school district of residence will send notice by certified mail to a parent/guardian of a cyber charter school student who has accumulated three (3) unlawful absences. The notice will state that any subsequent unlawful absence will result in a citation being filed with the magisterial district judge. Future unlawful absences will be filed by designated district staff with the magisterial district judge. District staff may file truancy documents with the magisterial district judge in whose jurisdiction the cyber charter school student resides, which is where the cause of action arose and where the parent/guardian can be served.

The cyber charter school must cooperate with the school district by providing necessary documentation for the truancy filings and by attending the hearings to provide testimony, if necessary.

## **MAKE-UP WORK GUIDELINES – HIGH SCHOOL ONLY**

It is the responsibility of the student to make up all work after an absence from class. Absence from school does have an impact on the overall classroom experience for students. There are certain aspects of the core curriculum that are only experienced by being part of classroom discussions and interactive activities.

Pennsylvania State code mandates that a maximum of a three (3) day grace period be permitted to submit a legal excuse note. If no note is presented within the three-day window, the absence shall be recorded as unexcused/unlawful. Unless a written excuse note is presented within three (3) school days after the student returns to the building, the student will NOT be given an opportunity to earn credit for work missed on that day. However, if after an investigation the administrator discovers that a documentation processing error occurred, the absence may indeed be excused.

Absences deemed truant, illegal or unexcused will be handled based on the school and district discipline code of conduct.

### **RESPONSE TO EXCESSIVE AND/OR UNLAWFUL ABSENCES**

Educators in the Hatboro-Horsham School District are committed to working collaboratively with our families to address attendance issues that adversely impact student participation and school success. Families will be notified, in writing, if violations of compulsory attendance requirements have occurred. This includes notification when students have missed five (5) days of school and/or occasions when written excuse notes have not been submitted within three (3) days of the absence. Every effort will be made to seek solutions to attendance problems in partnership with families, district staff, and community-based organizations. In addition, a referral will be made to our Student Assistance Program (SAP) building teams. The SAP teams will help provide ongoing encouragement and support for the academic, social/emotional well-being of the students in our buildings. SAP provides support for students experiencing challenges with academic, attendance, behavioral and/or social and emotional well-being that may pose a barrier for school success. These services include help connecting students and families to community resources or school-based supports.

Should serious violations of the compulsory attendance requirements occur, families will be informed of potential legal responses and penalties related to such offenses. Incidences of truancy and unlawful absences may be sent to a magisterial district judge. As per the Pennsylvania School Code (24PS 13-1333), failure to comply with compulsory attendance requirements may result in fines and court costs up to \$300 for each offense and/or mandated completion of a parenting education program. In cases where the convicted party fails to pay the fine or complete the parent education program, the district judge may issue a county jail sentence or order community service within the school district for a period of no more than six (6) months. Families of habitually truant students may also be referred to the county Children and Youth Agency.

### **ASSIGNMENT REQUESTS DUE TO ILLNESS OR EXTENDED ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL**

**School work should only be requested when a student is ill or absent from school.** Assignments may be easily completed on the student's return to school after a day's absence. For a one-day absence, the student may email a teacher or contact the guidance counselor for relevant assignments, materials, and/or books.

**NOTE:** If a student will be absent two or more school days, please contact the Main Office at the Elementary schools or the Guidance Office at the Secondary Schools to arrange for student work to be compiled. We will do our best to compile the work by 4:00 PM on the day it is requested.

## GLOSSARY

### ABSENCE

Absence is defined as the nonattendance of a student on a day in which school is in session. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to report a student's illness by calling the school's absence line on the day of the absence, unless the absence is pre-arranged. Educational trips **must** be approved by the building principal in advance. Forms may be obtained from the main office, attendance or school office.

### COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

The term "compulsory school age" shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter first grade, which shall not be later than the age of six (6), until the age of eighteen (18) years or graduation from a regularly accredited high school, whichever comes first.

### COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

It is the duty of the Hatboro-Horsham School District to require every child within its jurisdiction to be afforded an appropriate elementary and secondary school education. If the family will not insist that the child take advantage of the free educational opportunities offered, it becomes the duty of the state and district to require that the student attends school.

### EXCUSED ABSENCE

Excused absence refers to an absence for legal reasons. Legal absences may be classified into two groups: nonattendance due to unpreventable causes and nonattendance due to other legal reasons. It is important that school officials have on file the original explanations submitted by parents when the student returns to school after a period of nonattendance due to lawful absence. Excuse notes must be handed to the attendance/school office within three (3) school days of the absence or you can send e-mail to your child's school. For your convenience, the attendance form may be downloaded from the website and submitted to the attendance/school office.

### FAMILY VACATIONS/EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

Educational trips should coincide with regularly scheduled holidays, breaks, and in-service days. Educational trips are limited to six (6) days per year, days beyond six (6) may be considered unexcused. Parents/guardians who choose to have their son/daughter absent from school for an extended period of time must realize that their child's grades may suffer due to missing class activities that cannot be reproduced; i.e. discussion, labs, cooperative groups. While some may, **teachers are not required to provide assignments prior to the student's vacation.**

Principals shall determine if an absence is excused or unexcused by applying the following guidelines:

- 1) If prior permission is not sought by the parent, the absence is unexcused unless emergency causes are given and verified.
- 2) If a student's frequency of absences from school prior to the request jeopardizes his/her educational progress, the absences may be denied.
- 3) If a student has a medical letter, the absence may be denied.
- 4) If a student takes a pre-arranged trip within the first ten (10) or the last ten (10) days of the academic year, the absence may be denied.
- 5) Requests for absences during standardized testing, mid-term examinations, and final examinations may be denied. You should refer to the school calendar for applicable dates.
- 6) The student should possess an acceptable school attendance record.
- 7) The request may be denied if the student is failing 2 or more subjects.

### LETTERS OF CONCERN

These letters will be issued for all students absent for five (5) days within a semester. **EXCEPTION:** Extenuating circumstances identified for that student by a school administrator.

### **MEDICAL EXCUSE REQUIREMENT LETTERS**

These letters will be issued for students absent for ten (10) school days unless extenuating circumstances are identified for the student by a member of the attendance team listed in the preceding section. For any student with a past history of attendance issues, previous magistrate hearings, and/or absences of a “suspicious nature”, the attendance team may issue a medical excuse requirement at their discretion. The doctor’s excuse should include the following information: 1) the date(s) on which the student was examined by a physician, 2) the nature of the student’s illness, 3) the date on which the student may return to school, and 4) the doctor’s signature. If such an excuse is not presented upon the student’s return to school, then the absence will be recorded as unlawful. Unlawful absences may result in a fine.

### **TARDINESS**

Tardiness is absence of a student at the time when the school day begins. The time reflected on the school clock in the attendance/ main office will be used to document the time a student arrived at school.

### **TARDINESS LETTERS**

These letters will be issued by the Hatboro-Horsham School District to families of students who are excessively late (10 or more occurrences) to school, unless extenuating circumstances are identified.

### **TRUANCY**

Truancy is any unexcused absence from compulsory attendance (18 years of age or older).

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

An unexcused absence is defined by school policy and occurs when no written excuse note from a parent/guardian has been provided to the school.

### **UNLAWFUL ABSENCE**

Unlawful absence is an unexcused absence for all students of compulsory school age – absences where a written excuse note has not been received within three (3) days of the absence.

### **WRITTEN EXPLANATION FOR RETURNING FROM AN ABSENCE**

To excuse an absence a parent MUST furnish a written explanation for the absence of a child regardless of his/her age. A written excuse note stating the reason for his/her absence must be submitted and signed by the parent/guardian upon return of the child to school. Excuse cards can be obtained on the HHSD website (see Online Attendance Form under “news” on the front page of each building) or from the attendance/school office. This excuse must be aligned with one of the aforementioned permissible reasons listed on page 2 for the absence to be excused.

The fact that a parent has sent a written excuse does not necessarily mean the absence is excused. Excuses of a doubtful nature shall be investigated. **An absence only becomes excused when the responsible school official classifies it as such.**

An excuse from a licensed medical authority is required for any absence due to illness or injury that exceeds five (5) consecutive days in duration. A student who is frequently absent from school (10 or more cumulative days), a note from a medical authority may be needed in order for each successive absence, or for the absence not to be declared unexcused and withdrawn from the school district rolls.





**PRE-ARRANGED TRIPS SCHEDULED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**

**Requirements:**

1. The trip/event must be educationally sound for students (or academically beneficial).
2. The student is responsible for obtaining from teachers, **prior** to the scheduled trip/event, any assignments that will be missed. The student is responsible for completing **all** assignments within five (5) school days after the student has returned.
3. Requests for absences during the Standardized Test periods may be denied by building administration. You should refer to the school calendar for applicable dates.
4. The student should possess an acceptable school attendance record.
5. If recommended by the PA Department of Health or the Federal Department of State families returning from certain states/destinations domestic or international with high numbers of COVID-19 cases will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon return to Pennsylvania. The District will enforce a 14-day quarantine for travel to locations identified at level 3 and 4. Students impacted would be expected to participate in 100% remote instruction during that time. Please see our COVID-19 page on the District Website for more information and links to these sites.
6. Families must agree to comply with all disease control measures authorized by the Disease Prevention and Control Law, as applicable during their travel timeframe. These orders apply to those persons who are travelling or have traveled.
7. **Forms must be returned to the Building Secretary or Attendance Secretary.**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN 5 DAYS PRIOR TO ABSENCE**

I request that my child \_\_\_\_\_, a student in  
 (grade/homeroom) \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ be excused from school on  
 (inclusive dates) \_\_\_\_\_ to accompany his/her family on an educational trip or  
 to attend an educational event.

Trip/event destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational/Academic benefit of the trip/event: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the requirements listed above and will work with my child and the school to meet these obligations and expectations. I completely understand that, if this request is approved, the absences will be recorded as excused and my child is responsible for making up his/her schoolwork upon return. I also understand that, if this request is denied and my child is absent on the dates listed above, the absences will be recorded as unexcused, disciplinary consequences may follow, and work will still need to be completed. Additionally, regardless of the trip's approval status, my family will comply with the District's requirement to adhere to all mandated and recommended action authorized for disease prevention and control. This agreement applies to expressed mitigation measures required before, during, and/or after our trip.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE INITIALED BY TEACHERS (grades 6-12 only):**

Period	Red Day Teacher	Black Day Teacher
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

**ACTION OF BUILDING/GRADE LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR**

Request Approved

Request Denied