

Attendance/Absences

The Montgomery Township Board of Education requires students enrolled in Montgomery Township schools to attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. The consistent contact of students in the classroom with one another and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the direction of our faculty is vital to our students' success. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with their children and school to minimize excessive or unnecessary absenteeism.

Attendance Policy - #5200 located on the District Website

The Montgomery Township Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide a thorough and efficient education for every student within the district in keeping with the prevailing laws of the State of New Jersey. In order for administrators and teachers to successfully fulfill their responsibilities to students, it is essential that all students accept their responsibility to attend school as scheduled, and that parents/guardians support and reinforces their child's regular attendance. To conform to state regulations school districts define "**excused**" and "**unexcused**" absences as:

An "**excused absence**" as defined by Montgomery Township School District is a student's absence from school for a full day or portion of a day for the reasons listed below:

- A. The student's illness supported by a written letter from the parent upon student's return to school at the principal's discretion,
- B. Personal illness (health care provider documentation)*On office script pad or stationary - Must include the diagnosis, duration of absences to be excused, and date of appointment.*
- C. Court appearance (court notice to appear),
- D. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plan under 29 U.S.C. 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans,
- E. Suspension from school,
- F. Family illness or death supported by a written letter from the parent upon the student's return to school up to five days,
- G. Professional appointments that cannot be scheduled during non-school hours (health care provider documentation),
- H. School sponsored curricular/co-curricular activities held during the school day or requiring early dismissal,
- I. New Jersey state approved religious holidays pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36:14.

An "**unexcused absence**" is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed above. Though a student may be absent with parental approval for reasons other than those listed above, the absence will be defined as verified but "**unexcused.**" *It is also recognized that the parents/guardians may not always take their child to the doctor every time he/she is sick. The district assumes that the "**unexcused**" absences will be used when it is necessary to miss school and documentation cannot be provided.*

Notice to School of Student Absence

Parents should report all absences through Genesis or call the attendance line at (609) 466-7610, (select #4, then 1) as early as possible. **This does not “excuse” an absence but informs the school that your child is absent with your knowledge.** The student’s absence will be deemed either “excused” or “unexcused” based upon the documentation explaining the reason for the absence (s) that is presented to the Main Office by the student following their return to school. The school will make every effort to contact parents/guardians of any student who is absent for whom a phone call from home was not received.

School Response to Unexcused Absences

N.J.A.C.6A:16-7.6, school staff responses for unexcused absences are as follows:

For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall: make a reasonable attempt to notify the student’s parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day; make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student’s parents; identify in consultation with the student’s parents needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance; proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall: make a reasonable attempt to notify the student’s parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day; make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student’s parents; evaluate the appropriateness of prior action taken; develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student’s patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student’s return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following: refer or consult with the building’s intervention and referral services team (I&RS), pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8; conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student’s academic, behavioral, and health needs; consider an alternate educational placement; make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource; refer to a court or a court program; proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A.9:6-1 et. Seq. and N.J.A.C.6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected: and engage the student’s family. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, a student, between the ages of six and 16, is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the school district shall: make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy; continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student’s return to school and regular attendance; cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required; and a court referral may be made as follows: when unexcused absences are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25**, and the district board of education’s policies, the parent may be referred to municipal court; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student’s attendance shall be forwarded to the municipal court; or when there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g**, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student’s attendance shall be forwarded to the juvenile-family crisis intervention unit.

For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and its punitive and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's individualized education program, pursuant to 20 U.S.C 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in **N.J.A.C. 6A:14**; accommodation plan under 29 U.S.C. 794 and 705(20); and individualized healthcare plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan, pursuant to **N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5xii**.

Arriving to School and Class

Students arriving to school **after the second bell (8:25)** are to report to the Main Office before reporting to class. This will prevent the student from being marked absent. Parents will be notified by a teacher, school counselor, or school administrator when students are excessively late to class or school.

Students arriving prior to 8:15AM should report to the school Main Office.

After-School Activities END at 4:10pm. No Late Busses.

Students who remain after-school must be under the direct supervision of a teacher, activity sponsor, coach, or other staff member at all times when they are in the building students will not be permitted to roam around the building or go into unsupervised areas inside of or around the building. At 4pm students are expected to be picked up by a parent/guardian. Students not picked up by 4:20pm more than 3 times will not be permitted to stay.

Early Dismissal/Release Requests

Parents may provide a written request to sign a student out before the end of the school day. The note must include: student name and teacher, date/time of departure, reason for leaving, name of person picking student up, parent/guardian signature, daytime telephone number. It is the student's responsibility to get permission and to take the note to the Main Office during the Homeroom Period. Parents will need to report to the office to sign students out of school, and back into school if the student will return before the end of the school day. **Parents must provide a picture ID when signing students out. Do know that excessive early releases will affect student's learning.**

Emergency Closing

In the event that the school must close early, students will take their usual routes home. Students should make sure they talk with their parents about what they should do in the event that no one is home when they arrive. **There should always be a back-up plan that students can follow – parents should discuss this with students periodically throughout the school year. Any closings due to inclement weather will be posted on the District Web-Site.**

Field Trips

A field trip is an optional activity that is planned to enhance or expand the educational programs at LMS by providing an experience not available in the regular classroom. Parental permission must be obtained prior to the date of the event for the student to participate. The school reserves the right to exclude a student from a field trip if attendance and/or behavior are of concern.