

ATTENDANCE

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)

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 reinforce their child's regular attendance.

To conform to state regulations requiring school districts to define "**excused**" and "**unexcused**" absences:

a. "An **unexcused absence** that counts toward truancy" is a student's absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not an "excused absence" as defined below.

b. "An **excused absence**" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for any absence for the reasons listed below. Although an absence may be excused, it may count against a student's 90% attendance requirement and thus cause diminished success and/or academic loss of credit (ALC) for a course:

1. The student's required attendance in court;
2. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
3. The student's suspension from school;
4. College visits, up to three days per school year, for students in grades 11 and 12;
5. Interviews with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;
6. Examination for a driver's license;
7. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day with documentation from the doctor's office;
8. Take Our Children to Work Day;
9. Religious observance, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16;
10. Participation in observance of Veterans Day, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13.2;
11. Participation in district board of election membership activities, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33;
12. Closure of a busing school district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school;
13. An absence considered excused by the Commissioner of Education and/or a New Jersey Department of Education rule.

14. An absence for a reason not listed above, not to exceed two days, but deemed excused by the principal upon a written request by the student's parent stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.

“Unexcused tardiness” may constitute an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy in accordance with Policy 5240.

For families planning extended travel, if a student is out of school for more than ten consecutive days without medical reason, that student must be unenrolled and re-registered with our Registrar upon return to the district.

For necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day, documentation from the doctor's office must be **on official office script pad or stationery-Must include duration of absences to be excused and date of appointment. * All doctor's notes will be subject to the school's validation of the appointment date.**

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**.

Notice to School of Student Absence

Parents should report student absences in the Genesis Parent Resources application or call the attendance line at 609-466-7610, (select #4, then #1) as early as possible to report an absence. **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 counting toward truancy**” “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 Counting Toward Truancy N.J.A.C.6A:16-7.6, school staff responses for unexcused absences are as follows:

For up to four cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy, 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 counting towards truancy, 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 students' 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 counting towards truancy of 10 or more, a student between the ages of 6 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 school officials determine unexcused absences 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 disciplinary 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**.