

REGULATION Board of Education of Queen Anne's County

Responsible Office:	Student Support Services
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REGULATION for Student Attendance Policy 503

I. REGULATION ELEMENTS

A. General Procedures for all Schools

1. Each child who resides in this state and is five (5) years old or older and under eighteen (18) years of age shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age. (COMAR 13A.08.01.01 1.)
2. Students shall be considered in attendance at school when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal, or their designees.
3. Coding Absence and Tardiness

Students scheduled for a full day: A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance four (4) hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for a 1/2 day if in attendance for at least two (2) hours of the school day, but less than four (4) hours. (Maryland Student Records Manual 2016)

4. Determining Whether an Absence Is Lawful or Unlawful
 - (a) When a child is absent from school, they have one (1) week to notify the school with a written note, email or phone call stating the reason for the absence. After one (1) week, an unlawful absence cannot be changed to a lawful absence without approval from the principal.
 - (b) Requests for late arrivals or early dismissals must be authorized by the principal.
 - (c) Upon reaching his/her age of majority (18 years old), a student may assume the responsibility for absence notes and requests for late arrivals and early dismissals.
 - (d) When a student is not physically in the classroom but remains under the direct supervision of QACPS during the instructional day, students are considered present for state and local reporting purposes; however, students are marked absent by the teacher to

record that they are not in the classroom. The attendance secretary will assign an EDU code for documentation purposes.

5. Criteria for Lawful/Excused Absence

Students presently enrolled in public schools are considered lawfully absent from school, including absence for any portion of the day for the following reasons (COMAR 13a.08.01.03):

- (a) Bereavement Immediate family – The number of days absent for a death in the “immediate family” is not to exceed five per instance. “Immediate family” is defined as parents, brother, sister, grandparents, or anyone who has lived regularly in the household of the student. All other requests for bereavement will be limited to one day for the funeral.
- (b) Illness of the student – A doctor’s certification may be required for chronic illness, which is defined as a physical or mental health disease (condition) of long duration, showing little change or of slow progression, which may be minor or severe in nature. This includes, but is not limited to, medical appointments.
- (c) Court Summons – When a student must report to court by the issuance of a summons, the time absent will be considered a lawful/excused absence.
- (d) Hazardous Weather Conditions – This will be interpreted to mean only those conditions of the weather, as determined by the Superintendent, which would endanger the health or safety of the student when in transit to and from school. Students will be credited for at least a half day attendance if they are present any part of the school day that schools close for weather-related or other emergency conditions.
- (e) Work – Such work must be approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system or the State Department of Education, and accepted by the Superintendent or the principal/designee.
- (f) Observance of a Religious Holiday – Students may be excused when their attendance at school conflicts with participation in traditional and customary religious holidays.
 - (i) On days designated as religious holidays, students may request prior approval to be absent from school for personal and family observance.
 - (ii) School cooperation is requested when scheduling tests or major project due dates.
 - (iii) Student absences for religious purposes should not prohibit students from receiving "perfect attendance" recognition.

- (g) State Emergency – The Governor/designee makes these determinations.
- (h) Suspension – Suspension is the denial of a student's right to attend regular classes or school for a specified period of time as a disciplinary consequence. Note: Suspension is a lawful/excused absence and the days of suspension status cannot be used when determining “habitual truancy.”
- (i) Lack of authorized transportation – A student may be excused when school system authorized transportation is not available for reasons beyond the student’s control. This does not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.
- (j) Other emergency or set of circumstances, which, which, in the judgment of the Superintendent/designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school. The principal, in consultation with Superintendent’s designee, as appropriate, will determine whether absences are excused under this provision.
 - (i) Absences of an Emergency Nature - Such absences will be reviewed by the principal in consultation with the Superintendent/designee when appropriate to determine whether the absences will be lawful/excused or unlawful/unexcused.
 - (ii) Deployment Related Absences - Deployment related absences will be excused for the purpose of visiting with a parent/guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or support posting.
 - (iii) Absences for Non-Emergency Circumstances
 - a. A written request for such absences to be lawful/excused should be submitted two weeks in advance to the principal/designee.
 - b. Such absences may not occur during exam or state-mandated testing periods unless authorized by the principal/designee.
 - c. The principal may determine whether the absences will be lawful/excused or unlawful/unexcused. Such absences may include, but are not limited to, the following events directly involving the student:
 - i. Visits to post-secondary institutions
 - ii. Participation in college orientation programs
 - iii. Scheduled interviews with prospective employers

- iv. Special family events, including vacations/trips. The principal may excuse up to five (5) vacation days. For vacation absences in excess of five days under this provision, the principal in consultation with the Superintendent's designee will determine if the absences will be lawful/excused or unlawful/unexcused.
 - (k) Pregnancy and parenting needs (HB 616) Education-Pregnant and Parenting Students
 - (i) Pregnancy and parenting related conditions are lawful/excused absences for:
 - a. Labor
 - b. Delivery
 - c. Recovery
 - d. Prenatal and postnatal medical appointments
 - (ii) A parenting student must be allowed at least ten 10 days of excused absences after the birth of the student's child. Exceptions can be made for additional lawful/excused absences upon approval of the Superintendent/designee.
 - (iii) Pregnant or parenting students must be allowed excused absences due to the illness or medical appointment of the student's child, including up to four days per year for which the school may not require a note from a physician.
 - (iv) A student's absences due to a legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student that is related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody, and visitation are lawful/excused absences.
 - (l) Health-related exclusion – Students are temporarily excluded from school for the following health-related reasons:
 - (i) Failure of parents or guardians to abide by the health regulations regarding immunization schedules or failure to provide evidence of appropriate immunizations after 20 calendar days: COMAR 10.06.04.03; or
 - (ii) Conditions that present a clear and direct health risk to others: COMAR 10.06.01.06.
6. Attendance Codes:
- ATS=Alternative to Suspension at ARISE

CAL=Call In (Parent or Guardian)
COL=Pre-approved College Visit
COU=Court Summons
DFA=Death in Immediate Family
EME=Family or Personal Emergency
DOC=Documented Absence (parent note or email)
dmt=Medical Tardy
dtd=Documented Tardy
DUL=Documented Unlawful
dut=Documented Unlawful Tardy
DLT=Documented Late
DML=Documented Medical
DUN=Documented Unlawful
EDU=Educational (School based activity)
EDA=Pre-approved Educational Absence
FNL=Funeral
HEA=Documented Health Suite
HEX=Health Exclusion
HHT=Home Hospital Teaching
ISS=In-School Suspension
RAC=Ref to Alt Class Setting
REL=Religious Holiday
SUS=Suspension
ULT=Undocumented Late
UND=Undocumented
utd=Undocumented Tardy
VAC=Pre-approved Vacation

7. Procedures for Make Up Work When Students are Absent.

- (a) Whenever a student is absent, it is important for the student to have access to the information presented in class.
- (b) The teacher will collect the work during the day while the student is absent. It will be given to the student upon their return to school.
- (c) If the student is absent for multiple days, parents/guardians and teachers should be encouraged to communicate regarding make-up work that may be completed while the student is out of school. It is the student's responsibility to turn in the work to the teacher. Teachers can also make arrangements to have make-up work picked up in the front office
- (d) A student shall be allowed a reasonable number of days, at least equivalent to the number of days absent, to make up work. If a student will be absent for ten (10) or more consecutive days, parents are to contact the school counselor and/or administration to discuss make-up work procedures.

8. Unlawful/Unexcused Absence

- (a) An absence for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy (COMAR 13A.08.01.04).
- (b) Enrolled students who do not report to school in August/September are marked absent during the first month of the school year until they report to class. By September 30, all enrolled students who have not reported since the first day of school, will be exited with the date of exit July 1.
- (c) Students with unlawful absences of 10 consecutive school days or more will be withdrawn from school and may be allowed to re-enroll, provided they meet enrollment requirements, upon their return. Upon expiration of the 10-day window, the student will be withdrawn and the date of the exit will be the first day after the last day of attendance.

9. Support and Intervention Procedures for Chronically Absent Students

- (a) The expectation for regular attendance is the same for all students enrolled in the QACPS whether they are under or over the compulsory attendance age
- (b) Under the Annotated Code of Maryland, criminal charges may be filed in relation to unlawful absence from school.
 - (i) Any person who induces or attempts to induce a child to absent himself unlawfully from school or employs or harbors any child who is absent unlawfully from school while school is in session is guilty of a misdemeanor.
 - (ii) Any person who has control over a child between the ages of 5 years old and under 18 who fails to see that the child attends school or receives instruction under this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not to exceed \$50 per day of unlawful absence or imprisonment not to exceed 10 days, or both.
- (c) These support and intervention procedures should be in place for students who have chronic absences (lawful and/or unlawful).
 - (i) Prior to a referral to the Student Services Team, a designated staff person should document attempts to notify the parent/guardian of the chronic absences.
 - (ii) If the absences continue, the student should be referred to the school's Student Services Team.

(iii) Members of the team will develop, implement and regularly monitor an attendance improvement plan that may include the following

- a. Meeting with the student
- b. Meeting with the student's teachers and administrative staff
- c. Meeting with the student's parent/guardian
- d. Assigning the student to a counseling group
- e. Referring the student to an alternative placement
- f. Scheduling a hearing with the Pupil Personnel Worker
- g. Making a referral to an outside agency for support
- h. Making a referral to the State's Attorney's office for possible court action (for students under the compulsory attendance age)

B. Procedures for Out of Attendance Zone Requests

1. A student attending a public school in Queen Anne's County is expected to attend the home school that serves the attendance area in which the student's parents/guardians are domiciled.
2. Special permission may be requested for students in Grades K – 12 to attend a school within the district that is out of the student's attendance area.
3. Out of Attendance Zone Requests may be approved when one of the following conditions exists:

(a) Change of Residence

(i) A student has moved from one school attendance area to a different school attendance area in the Queen Anne's County school district during the regular school year, but wishes to continue attending his or her school in his or her previous attendance area until completion of the school year. The family must provide the Office of Student Support Services with proof of the new address.

(ii) A student plans to move from one school attendance area to a different attendance area on or before November 1 of the current school year.

a. A student must demonstrate definite plans to move to a different attendance area, as follows:

- i. Proof of purchase or rental must be provided with the application for student transfer.

- ii. The new residence must be the primary permanent residence for the student and the student's family and must be located within the receiving school's attendance area.
 - iii. Additional documentation may be requested to establish that the new residence is a bona fide domicile for the student.
 - (b) **Child of an Employee**
QACPS full-time employees may make an Out of Attendance Zone Request.
 - (c) **Child Care**
 - (i) Parents/guardians of elementary/middle school students who demonstrate hardship in obtaining appropriate full-time before- and/or after-school supervision of their child/children within the boundaries of the school where the child is domiciled may make an Out of Attendance Zone request to the Office of Student Support Services.
 - (ii) They shall provide documentation concerning the child care provider, including the provider's name, address and telephone number.
 - (d) **Medical/Student Adjustment**
An Out of Attendance Zone Requests may be approved for medical/student adjustment under the following conditions:
 - (i) The student demonstrates exceptional hardship for reasons of medical, emotional or social adjustment.
 - a. Independent, detailed documentation substantiating the circumstances (e.g., from physicians, psychologists, social workers or counselors) is required.
 - b. All Out of Attendance Zone requests for medical/student adjustment shall be submitted to the Supervisor of Student Support Services.
- 4. **Application Procedure**
The following procedures shall be used when a student is requesting special permission to attend a school outside his or her home school.
 - (a) The parent/guardian must complete the Application for Out of Attendance Zone Requests, K-12, and submit the completed

application form with requisite supporting documentation to the Office of Student Support Services

- (b) Applications for the succeeding school year must be submitted between April 1 and June 1 of the current school year.
- (c) All students who receive permission to attend a school out of their attendance zone may have their privileges revoked if they fail to meet the following conditions:
 - (i) Absences resulting in an attendance rate that exceeds 10% for any given marking period, unless the absence is a verified, lawful absence.
 - (ii) Accumulated tardiness in excess of 10%, unless the tardiness is a verified, lawful absence.
 - (iii) Any out of school suspension or the accumulation of disciplinary referrals may result in the loss of an Out of Attendance Zone privilege.
- (d) Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation to and from the receiving school unless the student can be accommodated by the existing bus routes and existing bus stops of that school. In such instances, the parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation to and from the existing bus stop.

C. General Procedures for Fraudulent Enrollments


- 1. If non-residency or non-custody of an enrolled student is suspected, the matter will be referred to the Office of Student Support Services for investigation.
- 2. If a student is found to be fraudulently enrolled in a Queen Anne's County public school, the school will issue a letter notifying the parent/guardian that the student will be withdrawn in ten (10) business days; the letter will advise the parent/guardian of his/her right to appeal the finding.
- 3. Parents/guardians of students who are found to have fraudulently enrolled their children may be liable for tuition for each child determined to be fraudulently enrolled.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent directs QACPS staff to implement this regulation.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

Date: June 7, 2023



Patricia W. Saelens, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Queen Anne's County Public Schools

HISTORY:

Initial Adoption	08/08/2018	Revised	02/12/2023	Reviewed	06/07/2023	Next Review	06/07/2027
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