



Tredyffrin/Easttown School District

Office of Individualized Student Services

August 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are looking forward to seeing your student in school, and as such, it is important for all members of the educational community to be reminded that daily school attendance is not only vital to a child's learning and educational success, but it is mandated by law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) law. You should be aware that Pennsylvania has made significant changes to truancy procedures, which go into effect beginning with the upcoming 20-17-2018 school year.

We seek to support your child's access of our educational program, while also complying with applicable legal mandates regarding attendance. The District will strive to do everything possible to encourage compliance with compulsory attendance laws before relying on the formal enforcement measures required by law. For this reason, parents/guardians are asked to carefully review the information contained in this letter. You may also view the entire Policy & Regulation 5113 (Procedures for Enforcing School Attendance) online at www.tesd.net for additional information.

The state has redefined truancy. Prior to this school year, a student was not considered truant until the 6th Unexcused Absence. For the 2017-2018 school year, a student will be considered Truant under Pennsylvania law if they have 3 Unexcused Absences, and will be considered Habitually Truant with 6 Unexcused Absences. Due to the new requirements, practices you followed in previous school years regarding absences may no longer be sufficient to avoid a determination of truancy. Please be reminded that all student absences from school are treated as unexcused until the school receives a valid excuse explaining the reason for an absence.

If your child is absent. Please provide the school with a written excuse within 3 school days of the absence. All schools will accept written notes signed by a parent/guardian and emails from parents/guardians sent from their designated email address. If a valid excuse is not received within 3 school days of the absence, the absence will be counted towards the calculation of unexcused absences for the purposes of reporting truancy.

What constitutes an Excused Absence?

Legitimate excuses for school absences include, most frequently, mental, physical, or other urgent reasons such as illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities, educational travel with prior approval from the principal or assistant principal, pre-approved religious instruction (limit of 36 hours per year), or a bona fide religious holiday. Additional categories of less common excused absences are outlined in Policy and Regulation 5113 on the District's website. Absences from school for illness beyond ten cumulative days shall require an excuse from a physician, in addition to the excuse from the parent/guardian.

Our attendance office will notify you. To assist you with reporting excused absences in a timely manner, our schools will be notifying you via phone and email when your child is absent, so that you may readily respond with a valid excuse. The email will indicate that you can reply, and indicate the reason for the absence.

If your child is identified as Truant. You will be notified after the 3rd Unexcused Absence is accrued that your child is now considered Truant. You may be asked to participate in a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) meeting at school to develop a plan to support your child, or other options may be discussed.

If your child is identified as Habitually Truant. You will be notified after the 6th Unexcused Absence is accrued that your child is now considered Habitually Truant. A SAIP meeting will be held at your child's school, unless one was previously held. In addition, the school may be required to file a citation in the office of the magisterial district judge, or make a referral to the Chester County Office of Children and Youth.

Over the years, our T/E Schools have enjoyed a very high rate of daily attendance, and, with your support and cooperation, this trend will continue. If you have questions, please contact your student's principal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Groppe".

Chris Groppe
Director of Individualized Student Services