

The following series of Attendance Tips was sent out in separate eSchoolNewsletter emails during the Fall of 2007. You can find the complete HCPSS Attendance Policy at http://www.hcpss.org/board/policies/9010_revised.pdf .

ATTENDANCE TIP #1

What do I do when my child is absent?

STUDENT ABSENCES: When a student is absent, the parent/guardian must call the school and report their absence--410-313-7073. When they return to school after an absence, they must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian citing the date of the absence and an explanation why the student could not attend school. The student must take the note to their first period class where a pass will be issued in exchange for the note. A student has **two** days from the date of the absence to bring in a note and get a pass. If the note is received after the two-day grace period, the student will be given an unexcused pass for the absence. If a note is not received, the absence will remain documented as Truant. Please see the Secondary Student Handbook for more information.

ATTENDANCE TIP #2

What is the Difference Between Excused and Unexcused Absences?

Lawful Absence-An excused absence for any portion of the day under the following conditions:

- Illness of the student
- Death in the immediate family
- Court summons
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Hazardous weather conditions (as determined by the Superintendent)
- State emergency (as determined by the Governor)
- Suspension
- Lack of authorized transportation (school system transportation)

Unlawful Absence (Truant)-An unexcused absence for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy. Students unlawfully absent are considered truant:

- Missed bus
- Car trouble
- Traffic
- No parking

REMEMBER~Upon return to school, the student must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian citing the date of the absence and an explanation why the student could not attend school. A student has **two** days from the date of the absence to bring in a note and get a pass. If the note is received after the two-day grace period, the student will be given an unexcused pass for the absence and will remain truant.

ATTENDANCE TIP #3

How does my child get the make-up work?

Lawful Absence-A student may make up work and receive a recorded grade when an excused absence is documented.

Unlawful Absence (Truant)-A student may make up work but will not receive a recorded grade for an unexcused absence. Upon returning to school after an absence, it is the **student's responsibility** to get their note to their first period teacher, get their pass, and then get the work they missed from each teacher.

ATTENDANCE TIP #4

Present, Half Day, or Absent?

- Students who are in school **less than 2 hours** will be considered absent.
- Students who are in school **2-4 hours** will be recorded a half-day absence.
- Students must be in school **at least 4 hours** to be considered present.
- Half-days add up!
- Students missing **20 minutes** of a class will be recorded absent.
- Students must be in school for a half-day (a minimum of three periods) to participate in extra-curricular activities, including sports events.

ATTENDANCE TIP #5

What is the procedure for pre-arranged/discretionary absences?

Students may be granted **three (3)** excused absences per year when the absence is pre-arranged with the principal and the teachers. Reasons for such absences include college visits or family commitments that cannot be scheduled on a non-school day. The student should bring a note to the attendance secretary in the front office stating where and when they will be gone. She will fill out a form for the principal to sign and then the student should take this form, with the note attached, to each teacher to sign. These forms should be returned to the attendance secretary two weeks prior to the day(s) your child will miss school. **Such days may not occur during exam periods.** This procedure allows the student to get their work ahead of time.

ATTENDANCE TIP #6

When can credit be denied because of attendance?

*The Howard County Public School System attendance policy states that any student having 5% absences or more in a class can have his/her name submitted to the principal via the teacher for consideration of denial of credit. The **5% absence rate** in a year long course is **9 absences**, whether excused or unexcused. At the end of each quarter, each student's attendance is calculated, based on the 5%. If your student has a 5% absence rate, you will receive a letter notifying you that continued absences can lead to loss of credit. Students with unlawful absences of 15 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.*

If you have any questions about your student's attendance or the HCPSS attendance policy, please contact attendance secretary, Deborah Sayers, at 410-313-7065.