

## Notifying your child's school

Several options are available for excusing absences:

- **PREFERRED METHOD:** Utilizing the Form in the PowerSchool parent portal. Directions [HERE](#). This links automatically to student's attendance record in the student information system.
- **Other Methods:**
- An email emailed to the school attendance email address.
- A handwritten note turned into the attendance secretary at your child's school from a parent/guardian or doctor.

SHHS: [shhs-attendance@wssd.org](mailto:shhs-attendance@wssd.org)

SHMS: [shms-attendance@wssd.org](mailto:shms-attendance@wssd.org)  
Attendance line: (610) 892-3466

NPE: [npe-attendance@wssd.org](mailto:npe-attendance@wssd.org)  
Attendance line: (610) 874-5236

SRS: [srs-attendance@wssd.org](mailto:srs-attendance@wssd.org)  
Attendance line: (610) 544-5702

WES: [wes-attendance@wssd.org](mailto:wes-attendance@wssd.org)  
Attendance line: (610) 565-7847

## What can happen if I have to go to court for truancy?

- Placed under a court order under the supervision of Child Guidance Service.
- Fined up to \$300 per citation
- Community service hours
- Counseling
- Suspension of driver's license or permit
- Curfew conditions

- Restrictions on associating with certain people or traveling certain places

## Advice for Parents

- Encourage your child to attend school.
- Let your child know that you think school is important.
- Set a regular bed time and monitor electronics usage.
- Provide plenty of time for your student to get ready in the morning.
- Plan appointments and vacations around the school calendar as much as possible.
- Bring doctor's notes with dates and times your child was seen if they must miss school.
- View tardiness as an unacceptable behavior.
- Refuse to provide an excuse for your student unless it is a legitimate absence.
- Notify the school in cases of prolonged absences due to hospitalizations, family trips, religious observances, etc.

### Parent's Guide to Truancy:

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/grants/26229.pdf>

This pocket guide is designed to reduce incidences of truancy by providing parents and guardians with prevention and intervention strategies to assist with improving attendance for a truant child. Published by the National Criminal Justice Reference Service.



WALLINGFORD-SWARTHMORE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Attendance and Truancy Information Guide



Office of Student Services

## Why regular attendance is important

Regular school attendance is an essential factor for academic achievement and overall success of students, beginning as early as kindergarten. As such, the state of Pennsylvania mandates strict adherence to attendance and truancy laws and policies by students, families, and public school entities.

\*In 2008, a study conducted by the Rodel Community Scholars from Arizona State University tracked students from kindergarten through high school and found that “dropout patterns were linked with poor attendance beginning as early as in kindergarten.” The director of the program, Gregory Hickman, who was also the former director of the Arizona Dropout Initiative, noted that as early as kindergarten, “behavioral differences are apparent between those who go on to graduate and those who drop out, with dropouts missing an average of 124 days by eighth grade.”



\*Why Attendance Matters, GreatSchools Staff, October 18, 2018. <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/school-attendance-issues/>

## Excused Absences/Tardiness

Some absences or lateness to school are excused when accompanied by a note from a parent, guardian, or doctor that sufficiently documents the occurrence with the necessary details (student name, dates for all absences/lateness, an acceptable reason). Some examples are:

- Doctor/dental appointments
- Religious service or observance
- Social service appointments
- Sickness/illness

## Unexcused Absences/Tardiness

A student is unexcused if they are absent without an acceptable excuse for all or part of any day during which school is held. This includes being tardy for school or class. The state of Pennsylvania declares that when 3 unexcused absences accrue, a student is considered *truant*. After 6 unexcused absences, a student is considered *habitually truant*.

## Truancy

Once a student is found to be *habitually truant* the school is required to conduct a Student Attendance Improvement Conference, creating a plan for individual attendance improvement. If unexcused absences continue to accrue after this plan, the student or parents can be issued a citation to municipal court, be referred to the county (Child Youth Services) or to social service organizations such as Child Guidance Resource Center.

## WSSD School Attendance Policy

- For an absence to be designated as *Excused*, required documentation is to be provided to the school *within three (3) school days*, as per PA State law. Notes turned in after 3 days cannot lawfully excuse an absence.
- If a student is out for 3 or more consecutive days, a *doctor's note is required* to excuse these absences.
- If a student exceeds 3 unexcused absences in a given school year, the student is considered **truant**, and a written notification will be sent to families. (Official Notice of Truancy)
- After 6 unexcused absences, the student is considered **habitually truant**. A second written notification will be sent home and a conference with parents will be scheduled by the school social worker. This meeting convenes to complete a **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SAIP)**; a plan developed to improve a student's attendance.
- If a student accumulates 10 or more unexcused absences, a truancy court summons can be sent to the student/family by the local district court for a hearing.
- If a student is absent for more than 10 consecutive days, the student will be withdrawn from the district.
- Approved Family Trips - Students may be allowed up to 10 excused absences per school year for an approved family trip dependent on having a solid academic, behavioral, and attendance record. The approved family trip form is available online and must be turned in to the building principal at your student's school at least one week prior to the trip.