



**STUDENT ATTENDANCE  
PPSD POLICY**

<b>General Belief</b>	<p>The Providence Public School Board (hereinafter referred to as “the Board”) expects that all Providence Public School District (hereinafter referred to as “PPSD” or “the District”) students will receive equitable access to a free and appropriate public education that prepares them for college, career, and life. It is the belief of the Board that attending school every day, on time, is a critical factor in academic and social success. It is the Board’s goal to promote a culture of attendance and raise awareness among all stakeholders about the importance of attendance. This policy sets clear expectations for attendance behavior while offering guidance to schools and the District on supporting students and families. The Board understands that there are valid reasons why students may miss school on occasion. To the extent these reasons are identified, the school may ultimately be able to help reduce the frequency of unexcused absences through supports and interventions.</p>
<b>Purpose and Scope</b>	<p>In alignment with the District’s strategic goal of maximizing learning time, the District seeks to ensure that every student attends school on time every day. It is the purpose of this policy to set guidelines and expectations regarding student attendance. Further, the Board seeks to ensure support and intervention for students who are exhibiting patterns of chronic or excessive absences as well as tardiness. Parents/guardians are urged to assist the school by supporting the attendance policy.</p> <p>Research indicates that chronic absence negatively impacts literacy development and that students who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to dropout. Research also indicates that the negative impact of absences starts early in the school year;<sup>1</sup> if a student is absent several days in September they are more likely to be chronically absent for the year.<sup>2</sup> The negative impact also starts in the early years of schooling. Findings show that as early as first grade, students’ attendance is an indicator of their likelihood to graduate.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Across the District, the implementation of programs and transformation of practices can reduce student absences and therefore reduce lost instructional time. For example, there is research indicating that children who have a “mentor-like” relationship with someone other than a family member are more likely to be engaged in their learning and in their school community, have better school attendance, have stronger social-emotional regulation skills and are less likely to have behavior problems.<sup>4,5,6</sup></p> <p>The Board expects each school to promote attendance and to implement a strategically organized attendance team. Attendance teams will monitor student attendance to identify students who are demonstrating a pattern of absenteeism</p>

	<p>and provide appropriate support and/or intervention. The Board also expects administrators, teachers, counselors and paraprofessionals to use every opportunity throughout the school year when meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the benefits of good attendance in addition to the standard notifications outlined in this policy.</p>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p>The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations of the District.</p> <p><b>A-8 Form:</b> A form that is completed in the student information system by schools to track student attendance. The form is specifically used when a student who is listed as enrolled at a school at the beginning of the school year does not show for school in the first ten (10) days of the school year. It is also used when a student has accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences.</p> <p><b>Approved Alternative Instructional Setting:</b> A waiver to the compulsory attendance requirement may be granted by the Superintendent only upon proof that the pupil is sixteen (16) years of age or older and has an alternative learning plan for obtaining either a high school diploma or its equivalent. Alternative learning plans shall include age-appropriate academic rigor and the flexibility to incorporate the pupil's interests and manner of learning. These plans may include, but are not limited to, such components or combination of components of extended learning opportunities as independent study, private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships, and online courses that are currently funded and available to the school department and/or the community. All students seeking an Alternative instructional setting are referred to the Office of Multiple Pathways to identify the program that would best fit their needs.</p> <p><b>At-Risk:</b> A student whose pattern and number of absences would indicate an increased likelihood of being identified as truant or chronically absent at a future date.</p> <p><b>Attendance:</b> A student is considered absent regardless of whether it is for an excused reason or designated as unexcused. Attendance is marked in the student information system (i.e., Skyward) for each student and then used to determine the student's attendance status for that day. The attendance status marked in the student information system is then reported in two different ways: a local Skyward reported attendance code and a state reported configuration code.</p> <p><b>Attendance Officer:</b> A PPSD Student Affairs Office (SAO) employee who is responsible for monitoring, reporting and investigating unexcused absences and truant students.</p> <p><b>Attendance Team:</b> A school-based team consisting of a number school personnel who meet regularly to monitor student attendance and identify students who are demonstrating a pattern of absenteeism so they may be provided appropriate support and/or intervention.</p> <p><b>Average Daily Attendance:</b> A measure used to determine the average percentage of students in attendance at school on a daily basis.</p> <p><b>Chronically Absent:</b> A student who is absent 10% or more of their days enrolled during the school year, including excused and unexcused absences. A student must have attended for at least one day.</p>

**Compulsory Attendance Law:** The Rhode Island Compulsory Attendance law, RIGL § 16-19-1, states that every child who has completed or will have completed six years of life on or before September 1 of any school year and has not completed 18 years of life shall regularly attend some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town in which the child resides. Pursuant to RIGL § 16-2-27, the compulsory attendance law is also applicable to students who have attained five years of age on or before September 1 of any school year and who are enrolled in Kindergarten. There is no compulsory attendance or truancy for students in pre-Kindergarten.

**Early Dismissal:** A student will be considered to have departed early from school when she/he is in attendance by period/block 2 of a particular school day and then leaves the building or class prior to the designated dismissal time.

**Excused Absences:** Excused absences do not count towards truancy but are still considered an absence. The following absence reasons are considered excused with appropriate documentation such as, for example, a note from a parent/guardian; a note from a medical, healthcare or service provider; court appearance summons or other dated court document; or confirmation in writing from a college/university regarding a college visit:

- Illnesses (students with a chronic illness should have a 504 plan; students out sick for five or more consecutive days must bring a note from a healthcare provider or the absences will be considered unexcused)
- Death in family (the school reserves the right to request proof of death [e.g. obituary, death certificate] in order to confirm the excused absence)
- Medical or counseling appointments (that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours)
- Pregnancy and related conditions for the length of time the student's health care provider deems medically necessary (including for illness or medical appointments for themselves or their child, or those due to childbirth)
- Family emergency
- Religious holidays
- School-sponsored events
- Court appointment
- Special absences (in-school and out-of-school suspension)
- Housing hardship (see McKinney Vento students)
- College interview or visit (juniors and seniors)

**Excused Tardy:** A student will be considered to have an Excused Tardy when s/he enters the school building after the designated arrival time or when the student enters a class after the designated start time due to any reason listed under the definition of Excused Absence. Similarly, appropriate documentation such as, for example, a note from a parent/guardian; a note from a medical, healthcare or service provider; court appearance summons or other dated court document; or confirmation in writing from a college/university regarding a college visit is needed. These times may vary from school to school.

**McKinney-Vento:** Students facing homelessness experience great challenges including attendance. The school will mark students with excused

	<p>absences if the school has been notified by the parent or an authorized representative who can justify the student’s absences were due to hardship [see McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)].</p> <p><b>Truant:</b> Any student required to attend school who has accumulated ten (10) or more unexcused absences for their days enrolled in a school year.</p> <p><b>Tutoring/Home Instruction:</b> Students who are unable to attend school due to temporary confinement to home or hospital due to injury, illness or other extenuating circumstances shall be eligible for tutoring.</p> <p><b>Unexcused Absences:</b> Unexcused absences include all other absences not covered in the definition of Excused Absences. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class cuts</li> <li>• Family vacations</li> <li>• Working (unless student has an alternative learning plan)</li> <li>• Participating in off campus activities not sponsored by the school</li> <li>• Unexcused early dismissal</li> </ul> <p><b>Unexcused Tardy:</b> Unexcused tardies include all other tardies not covered in the definition of Excused Tardies. This also pertains to students entering class after the designated start time.</p>
<p><b>Guidelines and Implementation Strategies</b></p>	<p>The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the Student Attendance policy. Implementing an attendance policy aligns with the District’s ongoing focus of maximizing learning time. The regulations should address the following guidelines and implementation strategies in more detail. District central office and each school will adhere to the guiding principles detailed below.</p> <p><b><u>Attendance Requirement</u></b></p> <p>A student is expected and required to attend school and all their classes on time every day that school is in session unless s/he has a reason that qualifies for an excused absence or tardy. This also applies to a student in a Superintendent-approved alternative PPSD education program or alternative instructional setting.</p> <p>Based on patterns of unexcused absences, tardies, and class cutting, the school may hold the student accountable through loss of privilege to school-sponsored events and extracurricular activities including but not limited to: plays, music rehearsals and productions, dances, prom, and athletic practices and competitions. Schools may also administer appropriate consequences or recommend additional interventions at their discretion; however it is against the law and the Student Code of Conduct to suspend students for being absent, tardy or cutting class. Schools may reference the Student Code of Conduct for additional information. It is also against District policy to withhold physical education, physical activity or recess as a punishment. Schools may reference the Wellness Policy for additional information as well as Rhode Island General Law §16-22-4.2 regarding recess.</p>

**Establishing a School Environment that Engages Students**

The Board expects all school leadership to create a culture and climate of expectation for daily, on-time attendance and for student engagement in the school process and their instruction. The school culture and climate should foster the development of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation/reward/recognition systems to encourage attendance.

**Building Strong Relationships Between Students and Faculty**

The Board believes that students who have at least one adult at the school with whom they can build a caring relationship will be more likely to feel engaged, connected to their school community, and more likely to attend school.

**Communicating Attendance Expectations and Requirements**

The Board expects all school leadership and staff to communicate expectations for students to attend school and all their classes every day, on time, to students and their parents/guardians at least annually. Schools must also notify parents/guardians when students are at-risk of becoming truant or chronically absent.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board expects that all stakeholders (student, parent/guardian, teacher, school administration, attendance team, community partners, District central office, attendance officer) adhere to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the regulations.

**Establishing School-Based Systems and Structures**

**Convene a School-Based Attendance Team:** The Board expects all schools to establish a high-functioning attendance team that will be representative of the school community and work to reduce absences. The team should report out regularly to the Instructional Leadership Team (“ILT”) or equivalent leadership team at the school.

**Use Data and Best Practices:** The attendance team will meet regularly to review data to identify students who are not attending school on a regular basis or who are at-risk for becoming or have already become chronically or excessively absent. The team will identify patterns in student attendance/absence/tardiness/dismissal, and individual student needs; monitor intervention efforts; and coordinate opportunities to promote and celebrate progress.

**Support Students Through Interventions:** The attendance team will seek to understand the reasons why each identified student is not regularly attending and make every reasonable attempt to address the underlying issue(s). Schools should leverage community partners in these efforts when possible.

In order to fulfill the guiding principles detailed above, the District and its schools will employ the following strategies:

**Accurate Contact Information**

Schools are responsible for maintaining accurate contact information in the

student information system. At the beginning of every school year and upon any enrollment during the school year, the school administration shall obtain accurate contact information from the parent or guardian including telephone number and any other means of contacting the parent/guardian during the school day.

### **Attendance Recording**

Classroom teachers and long-term substitutes are required to take attendance in the student information system for each class period/block. Any classrooms with per diem substitute teachers or teacher coverage are also required to take attendance for each class period/block. Students who are late to school must check-in at the designated office to receive a late slip. School leaders will ensure that attendance is being recorded, including for students who arrive late.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Each school shall implement a system for monitoring student attendance and identifying students who are not attending school on a regular basis or who are at-risk for becoming or have already become chronically or excessively absent. The system must include the establishment of a high-functioning team that is representative of the school community and works to identify root causes of absences and ensure that necessary supports are provided. This team will meet regularly to identify patterns in student attendance/absence/tardiness/dismissal/cuts, identify individual student needs, and monitor intervention efforts. The team will create implementation plans that include best practices and oversee the execution of those plans.

### **Missed Assignments**

Students are responsible for completing missed assignments in accordance with the District Grading Policy and in consultation with their teachers. At the school's discretion, students may receive work in advance for known excused absences and due to family vacation. In situations where the assignments are not provided in advance, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the teacher within five days of returning to school to discuss make-up work.

### **Notifications**

It is the responsibility of the school to communicate with parents/guardians about attendance expectations and needed supports. There are a variety of such notifications to parents/guardians through letter, text, or call, including:

1. **Annual Notification:** At the beginning of every school year and within 30 calendar days upon any enrollment during the school year, parents or guardians shall be notified of the attendance policy expectations and requirements and their obligations for ensuring their child attends school.
2. **Attendance Daily Notification:** Daily attendance will be taken by teachers and messaging will go out on a daily basis to every family whose child was marked absent.
3. **At-Risk Notification:** Parents/guardians of students identified as at-risk for becoming chronically absent will receive regular and timely notifications of this status from the District.

4. **Needed Supports Notification:** Reasonable efforts must be made by the school to notify the parent/guardian when their child is identified in need of supports and these outreach efforts must be documented.

**Supports and Interventions**

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that students and parents/guardians are connected with internal and/or external supports that are aligned to meet their specific needs and promote a student’s continuous enrollment and attendance. Providing appropriate supports and/or interventions may be for attendance and tardiness concerns.

The District is responsible for providing schools with sufficient supports in order to meet the needs of the student. This includes providing an attendance toolkit of best practices and resources; support from specialists, community partners, and truancy officers; continuous access to attendance data; and support for school-based attendance teams.

**Tutoring/Home Instruction**

Students who are unable to attend school due to temporary confinement to home or hospital due to injury, illness or other extenuating circumstances shall be eligible for instruction services. A parent or guardian who requests instruction services for their child for medical reasons must submit documentation from a licensed medical doctor that includes a diagnosis of chronic illness or condition that requires absence from school for a period in excess of 14 consecutive school days. This documentation must clearly identify the student’s incapacity to attend school. Failure to provide said documentation if requested may result in a delay or denial of instruction services.

**Setting:** Tutorial/home instruction services may be provided in a neutral setting, such as a library, school (if appropriate), or at the home of the student as long as the parent/guardian is present. Approved learning centers may also be appropriate for tutorial services. The District strongly discourages services provided to students in the home of the service provider or in a private setting.

**Pregnant, Parenting and Married Students:** Pregnant, parenting and married students of compulsory school age are required to attend school. These students have the right to remain in their home school and to receive programs and services to continue their education and participate fully in school during their pregnancy and/or as a student parent. Pregnant and parenting students who are unable to attend school are entitled to receive home or hospital instruction as outlined in this policy and the Home and Hospital Instruction Policy.

**Truancy and Withdrawing Students**

There are two scenarios that require the completion of an A-8 form when a threshold of unexcused absences is met: no-show at the beginning of the school year and truancy during the school year.

1. **No Show:** Students who are enrolled but do not attend the first five consecutive school days of the year will be considered a no-show. Schools shall leave students enrolled on the roster while they begin the A-8

	<p>documentation process, including calling parent/guardians and mailing an absence letter. Upon reaching the first 10 consecutive days of school without attending, the A-8 shall be given to the truancy officer to begin the student withdrawal process. Should a student arrive to school during the first 10 days of school, the student must remain enrolled at that school.</p> <p>2. <b>Truancy:</b> When a student has accumulated five unexcused absences the school must make every effort to notify parents/guardians in writing and by phone of the absences, possible supports and potential consequences, including a truancy investigation if the student reaches 10 unexcused absences. Schools shall begin an A-8 form and document all school-home contact.</p> <p>Any student accumulating 10 unexcused absences during the school year will trigger a truancy investigation. Schools submit the A-8 form and any other associated documents to the truancy officer who shall attempt to make contact with the parent/guardian. The school may send an absence letter to the home via certified mail in an effort to understand the reason(s) for the absences and to develop a plan to have the student attend school.</p> <p>a) If a truancy investigation is successful in reaching the parent/guardian and the student’s residency is still within District limits, the truancy officer will take one to two days to file a court petition. A student in this scenario may not have their enrollment withdrawn.</p> <p>b) If a truancy investigation is unsuccessful in reaching the parent/guardian the school shall send a certified/U.S. registered letter to the last known address as notification of the student’s withdrawal from the school’s enrollment.</p> <p><b>Family Vacation:</b> Student absence due to family travel or vacation represents a loss of valuable instructional time and is strongly discouraged. These absences are considered an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy.</p> <p><b>Outplacement:</b> Students with disabilities who receive instruction at a site outside the District (where the District pays for tuition) will be withdrawn from the school’s roster. The outplacement site is responsible for taking attendance and sending the attendance record on at least a monthly basis to the District who will record attendance in the appropriate student information system.</p> <p><b><u>District-Level Record Keeping and Reporting</u></b> The District will comply with state education agency guidelines for the collection, recording, and transmittal of attendance data. Data shall be made accessible to central office and school administration and faculty through a variety of methods.</p>
<p><b>Training, Oversight, and Communication</b></p>	<p>The Superintendent shall ensure that all schools establish a process and designate staff to identify and track excessive absenteeism, early dismissals and tardiness; make contact with the students and families of students with attendance problems; create appropriate intervention strategies to address excessive absences; and set annual attendance goals through the school</p>

	<p>improvement planning process (SIP) as mandated by Rhode Island Department of Education’s state plan to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Board shall receive quarterly reports of attendance by school.</li> <li>2. Training opportunities will be provided on the development of an Attendance Team and once established, additional training on data gathering and analysis will be provided.</li> <li>3. Consistent messaging must be established in school about the importance of attendance and the supports available to make sure students are in school every day, all day.</li> <li>4. Violation of any part of this policy or the fraudulent misrepresentation of student attendance data may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.</li> <li>5. Violation of any aspect of this policy that results in truancy may lead to family court action for students and families.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements</b></p>	<p>Rhode Island General Law §16-2-27 on kindergarten eligibility states that every child who has attained or will have attained five years of age on or before September 1 of any school year shall be eligible to attend kindergarten during all the days that kindergarten is in session during the school year. If a child is enrolled in kindergarten, the attendance requirements of §16-19-1 shall apply.</p> <p>Rhode Island General Law §16-19-1 on compulsory attendance states that every child who has completed or will have completed six years of life on or before September 1 of any school year and has not completed eighteen (18) years of life shall regularly attend some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town in which the child resides.</p> <p>Rhode Island General Law §16-19-1 on compulsory attendance also articulates the expectations of students and local education agencies to comply with students remaining enrolled and in attendance through the age of 18. Students may withdraw their enrollment before the age of 18 if they have completed their graduation requirements, or have documented financial hardship, illness or a court order to withdraw. Students may legally consent to withdraw themselves from school upon reaching age 18. In these instances, the school principal or his/her designee are still expected to review each student’s withdrawal request and offer alternative options to exiting.</p> <p>The law also includes a waiver to the compulsory attendance law and set of requirements for students over the age of 16 to prevent dropout by implementing a Superintendent-approved alternative learning plan for obtaining either a high school diploma or its equivalent. Handled by the Office of Multiple Pathways, students are no longer allowed under the law to dropout before age 18, and therefore must seek alternative opportunities to complete their diploma or its equivalent. No student identified as homeless (McKinney Vento) or unaccompanied will be punished for not attending school on a regular basis or for arriving late. This population of students often face an array of reasons for why</p>

	<p>they are unable to attend school or arrive on time. Schools should encourage daily attendance and provide the necessary supports as appropriate and applicable.</p> <p>The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board policies. In the event any part of any policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this policy.</p>
<b>Appeals Process</b>	<p>Parents/guardians who feel aggrieved because of action taken as a result of the attendance policy or regulations may appeal said action to the school administration at which the action was taken. Further appeals may be taken to the Superintendent and finally to the School Board. Further appeals after the School Board decision may be taken through the process as defined in Title 16 of the General Laws of Rhode Island.</p>
<b>Legal Reference</b>	<p>RI General Law §16-2-27  RI General Law §16-19-1  RI General Law §16-22-4.2</p>
<b>Cross Reference</b>	<p>Grading Policy  Student Code of Conduct  Home and Hospital Instruction Policy  Pregnant, Parenting, Married Students' Educational Rights Policy  Wellness Policy</p>
<b>Research Reference</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hernandez, D. A. (2012). Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation.</li> <li>2. Olson, L. S. (2014). Why September Matters: Improving Student Attendance. Baltimore Education Research Consortium Policy Brief.</li> <li>3. Schoeneberger, J. A. (2011). Longitudinal Attendance Patterns: Developing High School Dropouts. The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 85(1), 7-14.</li> <li>4. Jekielek, S.M. et al (2002). Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development. Child Trends.</li> <li>5. Gordon, J. et al. (2013). Effects of a School-Based Mentoring Program on School Behavior and Measures of Adolescent Connectedness. School Community Journal; Lincoln Vol. 23, Issue 2, 227-249.</li> <li>6. Murphey, D. et al (2013). Caring Adults: Important for Positive Child Well-Being. Child Trends and Annie E. Casey Foundation.</li> </ol>
<b>History</b>	<p>Policy Adopted: June 12, 2003  Amended Policy Committee Review: June 6, 2018  (Amended) Approved by Board: August 8, 2018  Regulations Issued:</p>