

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

**PPSD POLICY**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

<p><b>General Belief</b></p>	<p>The Providence Public School District 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 PPSD that attending school every day, on time, is a critical factor in academic and social success. It is PPSD’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 while offering guidance to schools and the District on supporting students and families.</p>
<p><b>Purpose and Scope</b></p>	<p>The Providence Public School 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 District seeks to provide universal guidance so schools can provide a climate and culture which encourages students to attend school on time every day. This includes restorative support for students who are exhibiting patterns of chronic or excessive absences as well as tardiness. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with them to provide the tiered support and restorative support needed to reduce chronic or excessive absences.</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 drop out. 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 experience behavioral health difficulties.<sup>4,5,6</sup></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><u>Absent</u></b> A student is considered absent if they have missed more than 50 percent of the school day based upon the hours of school at the elementary level and the number of periods at the secondary level</p> <p><b><u>Approved Alternative Instructional Setting</u></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 are completed by the student's school counselor and shall include age-appropriate academic rigor and the flexibility to incorporate the pupil's interests and manner of learning.</p>

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 Student Support to identify the program that would best fit their needs.

**Attendance**

The behavioral act of being present at school and enrolled in all classes. 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 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 information system reported attendance code and a state reported configuration code.

**Attendance Intervention**

A evidenced based, researched based, tiered response to student absences based on the number of days a student has been absent

**Attendance Outreach Form**

A form that is completed in the student information system by the school personnel doing the outreach to track student attendance. The form is specifically used when any outreach for attendance has been attempted and or made to a parent/guardian. This form is also used to document when a student who is listed as enrolled at a school at the beginning of the school year does not show up for school in the first three (3) days of the school year. It is also used for documentation when a student is placed in a no show homeroom. Additionally, It is used when a student has accumulated 10 or more absences.

**Average Daily Attendance**

A measure used to determine the average percentage of students in attendance at school on a daily basis.

**Chronically Absent**

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.

**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 (6) 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. Pursuant to RIGL § 16-2-27, the compulsory attendance law is also applicable to students who have attained five (5) 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.

**District Attendance Team**

The District Attendance Team will consist of stakeholders that review, revise, and support schools in the implementation and oversight of the PPSD Attendance Policy. The DAT will meet regularly and consist of district-level staff that oversees and analyzes the effectiveness of school's attendance strategies and interventions while applying data-driven, evidence-based decision making to assist schools in providing the appropriate supports to respond to the behavior.

**Early Dismissal**

A student will be considered to have departed early from school when they are 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 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 (the school reserves the right to request proof of said emergency in order to confirm the excused absence)
- religious holidays
- school sponsored events
- court appointment
- 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 they enter 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. PPSD Schools have varied arrival, dismissal and bell times, therefore, times may vary from school to school.

**Individually Tailored Attendance Plan**

A plan to support families and students with attending school every day based upon research and best practice

**McKinney-Vento Students**

Students facing homelessness experience great challenges including attendance. The school will mark students with excused 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 page 11 (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)].

**No Show**

Is an enrolled student who does not attend school at the beginning of the new school year. No show students must be marked absent until they are inactivated with the appropriate code.

**Present**

A student must be in attendance at school for more than 50 percent of the day defined by the number of hours in the school day at the elementary level and the number of periods at the Secondary Level

**Student Support Team**

Multidisciplinary school teams that meet weekly to coordinate proactive and responsive practices that support social-emotional and behavioral wellness—including consistent and healthy engagement with school. Teams regularly monitor student behavior patterns like attendance so as to identify students who would benefit from additional supportive interventions, including those that mitigate chronic absenteeism. As data deems necessary, schools may also choose to establish an Attendance Subcommittee that focuses exclusively on cultivating a culture of attendance and applying targeted attendance interventions.

**Tardy**

Any student who arrives to school after the designated start time for a particular school

**Tiered Support**

Attendance supports should be structured within a tiered model (MTSS) that includes preventive measures that are universal for all students (Tier 1), interventions that are individualized (Tier 2), and supports for students who are not responding to Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports.

**Truant**

Any student required to attend school who has accumulated ten (10) or more unexcused days absences during the school year.

	<p><b><u>Tutoring/Home Instruction</u></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><u>Unexcused Absences</u></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><u>Unexcused Tardy</u></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>
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<p><b>Guidelines and Implementation Strategies</b></p>	<p>The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the 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>  A student is expected and required to attend school and all their classes on time every day that school is in session unless they have 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 will support the student through a multi-tiered system of support which may include, but not limited to, an individualized tailored attendance plan, possible safety plan, providing in school/out of school resources and recommended additional interventions as appropriate at the schools’ discretion. These additional interventions may include a 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. However, it is against the law and the Providence School Department Code of Conduct Policy to suspend students for being absent, tardy or cutting class. Schools may reference the Code of Conduct for more information. It is</p>
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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.

**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 legal guardian including telephone number and any other means of contacting the parent/legal guardian during the school day.

**Attendance Recording**

Classroom teachers and long-term substitutes are required to take attendance in the student information system for the day and/or 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 and/or area 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, individual student needs, and monitor intervention efforts. The team will create individual attendance plans for chronically absent students and students on pace to be chronically absent which will be monitored on a weekly basis and shared with the district. The district will monitor each school progress toward recovering chronically absent students on a bi-weekly basis.

**Building Strong Relationships Between Students and Faculty**

The Providence Public School Department 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 Providence Public School Department 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/legal guardians at least weekly.

**District-level Record Keeping and Reporting**

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. In order to ensure district accurate data, schools are responsible for validating daily/period level attendance.

**Establishing a School Environment that Engages Students**

The Providence Public School Department 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. Schools must foster welcoming, affirming, and culturally-sustaining climates and cultures that develop intrinsic motivation to attend school. Schools must also establish systems of recognition that encourage and celebrate positive attendance patterns.

**Establishing School-based Systems and Structures**

***Convene a School-based Student Support Team (SST)***

The Providence School Department expects all schools to leverage high-functioning student support teams to coordinate proactive and responsive interventions that support social-emotional and behavioral wellbeing including and especially those that encourage consistent school attendance. The team should report attendance data regularly to the Instructional Leadership Team (“ILT”) or equivalent leadership team at the school along with the district.

***Use Data and Best Practices***

The School Based Student Support Team will meet weekly 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, individual student needs, monitor intervention efforts, and coordinate opportunities to promote and celebrate progress.

***Support Students through Tiered Interventions within an MTSS Framework***

The School Based Student Support Teams will utilize universal screening, family engagement, among other available data sources 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 whenever possible.

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

**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. 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/legal guardians about

attendance expectations and needed support. There are a variety of such notifications to parents/legal 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 legal guardians shall be notified of the attendance policy expectations.
2. **At-risk Notification:** Parents/legal guardians of students identified as at-risk for becoming chronically absent will receive regular and timely notifications of this status from the District.
3. **Needed Supports Notification:** All reasonable efforts must be made by the school to notify the parent/legal guardian when their child is identified in need of support and these outreach efforts must be documented.

#### **Outplacement**

Students 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.

#### **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.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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

#### **Supports and Interventions**

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that students and parents/legal 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 support and/or interventions may be for attendance and tardiness concerns.

The District is responsible for providing schools with sufficient support 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 attendance liaisons; continuous access to attendance data; and support for school-based student support teams.



**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/legal 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.

**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 legal 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 fourteen (14) consecutive school days. This documentation must clearly identify the student’s incapacity to attend school. Failure to provide said Release if requested may result in a delay or denial of instruction services.

**Withdrawing Students**

There are two scenarios that require a student being removed from a school roster, when a threshold of unexcused absences is met: no-show at the beginning of the school year and truancy/chronic absenteeism during the school year.

**No Show**

Students who are enrolled but do not attend the first three (3) consecutive school days of the year will be considered a no-show. Schools shall leave students enrolled on the roster while they begin the no show documentation process including calling parent/legal guardians and mailing an absence letter, sending a certified letter and doing a home visit. Between days 3 - 5 if a minimum of 2 of these steps have been followed within the first 3 days, the students are put into a no show homeroom and their schedule copied and removed while the no show withdrawal process begins. This will ensure if the student shows up between days 6 - 10 the student is guaranteed a spot in the school. Upon reaching the first ten (10) consecutive days of school without attending or having contact and there is no response from the home visit or certified letter, the school counselor may withdraw the student dating back to the day before school begins. Should a student arrive after the withdrawal has taken place, they are to go back to the student registration center for re-enrollment. If the school still has space, the student can attend the school they were originally scheduled to attend, otherwise they must attend a school that has the capacity for students.

Any student accumulating ten (10) unexcused absences during the school year or (5) consecutive absences may trigger a possible district attendance intervention in addition to school

	<p>interventions. If a student has been absent for 5 consecutive days at any point during the year, a school led truancy investigation is launched which may include a home visit, certified letter, phone calls and any other outreach deemed appropriate. If the consecutive absences reach 7 consecutive days absent and outreach was unsuccessful with the family, begin the withdrawal process. If no contact is made, 10 consecutive days of absence have been reached and the steps for withdrawal have been followed, you may withdraw a student. If the child does return after the withdrawal has occurred, the student and the family must go to the Student Registration Office to re-enroll in Providence Public Schools. High Schools should be cognisant of the effect of the withdrawal on the dropout/graduation rate</p> <p><b><u>Family Vacation</u></b></p> <p>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 being chronically absent and an attendance investigation could result in a withdrawal from the current school.</p>
<p><b>Training, Oversight, and Communication</b></p>	<p>The Superintendent shall ensure that all Providence Public 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 improvement planning process (CSIP/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 Providence School Board shall receive quarterly reports or as requested on attendance data which includes demographics by school upon request.</li> <li>2. Training, support, and professional development opportunities will be provided to school student support teams.</li> <li>3. Consistent messaging must be established by the district about the importance of Attendance and the support 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 by school personnel may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.</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 (5) 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</p>

	<p>completed or will have completed six (6) 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 Student Programming, 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.</p> <p>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 they are unable to attend school or arrive on time. Schools should encourage daily attendance and provide the necessary support 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 an 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  Code of Conduct Policy  Home and Hospital Instruction Policy</p>

	<p>MTSS 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:  Amended:  Regulations Issued:</p>