



PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Provident School Schools Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and Policy Objective

The Provident Board of Trustees believes that regular attendance is critical for a student's educational success, as required by the Public School Code. This policy's objective is to ensure students attend school regularly to benefit from instruction, participate in class activities, and prepare for the expectations of the workplace. All references to “**parents**” include guardians and persons in parental relations, and “**Principal**” includes the Principal or any designee.

2. Types of Absences and Required Documentation

A. Excused Absences: The following are considered permissible excused absences:

- Personal illness
- Medical or dental appointments
- School-approved tutorial programs not offered by the school
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family
- Observance of traditionally recognized religious holidays or holy days
- Religious instruction (see Section 3.B)
- Approved school activities and educational travel (see Section 3.A and 3.C)
- Approved 4-H/FFA/FHA participation in authorized Pennsylvania agricultural fairs
- Required court appearances
- Other urgent reasons, as approved by the School

A maximum of **ten days** of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification are allowed per school year. Any absence beyond ten days may require an excuse from a licensed medical or legal practitioner.

B. Unexcused Absences: Absences are considered unexcused for the following reasons:

- Lack of a valid written excuse from the parent/guardian or a licensed health care provider when required by the Principal.
- Unapproved educational travel.
- Oversleeping.
- Other reasons not specifically sanctioned as excused absences.

C. Unlawful Absences: Any unexcused absence for a student of compulsory school age is also considered unlawful. Compulsory school age is from the time a student enters first grade (no later than age 8) until age 17 or high school graduation.

- **Truant:** Three or more school days of unexcused absence in the current school year.
- **Habitually Truant:** Six or more school days of unexcused absences in the current school year.

D. Exceptions for Severe Reasons: In unusual circumstances, a student may be unable to attend school for severe psychological or medical reasons. Parents must notify the Principal, provide supporting documentation from a licensed health care provider, and work with school officials to develop an appropriate education plan. Temporary excuses may not exceed three months; longer-term excusals will be reviewed in consultation with Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines.

3. Procedures for Attendance and Absences

A. Submitting an Excuse for Absence or Tardiness: When a student returns from an absence, an excuse must be given to the front office or emailed to the front office within **five calendar days**. If the excuse is not submitted within this time, the absence will be considered unexcused. The excuse must include the student's full name, date of absence, and reason for absence. An email from the parent/guardian's email address on file with the school is an acceptable form of documentation. This policy also applies to tardiness.

B. Religious Instruction: Students may be excused for a total of no more than **36 hours per year** for religious instruction. Parents must provide *advance written notice* identifying the instruction, dates, and hours. Following each absence, the parent must provide a written statement to the Principal confirming the student's attendance within 5 calendar days of the absence.

C. Pre-Approved Absences (including Educational Travel): Pre-approval is required for students who need to travel with parents for educational or family reasons.

- A **Pre-Approved Absence Request Form** must be completed at least **two weeks in advance**.
- The trip must have educational or family value, as determined by the Principal.
- Pre-approved absences are limited to a maximum of **five school days** per school year.
- Requests may be denied if scheduled during the first or last week of the school year, or during standardized tests or exams.
- Students with ten or more absences in a semester, or those with unsatisfactory academic performance, will not be granted permission.
- If a trip is taken without permission, the absence will be treated as unexcused/unlawful.

D. School-Sanctioned Activities: Students may be released for approved participation in school-sponsored activities like field trips, performances, and extracurricular activities. The Principal, with input from staff, may deny requests if a student's grades or attendance record indicate that missing class is not advisable. Students participating in these activities are considered present.

E. Homebound Instruction: Students receiving homebound instruction for reasons other than disciplinary action are considered present.

F. Early Dismissals: Parents and students are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of school hours. A written request with the reason for dismissal must be submitted in advance. For medical or dental appointments, the school may require an appointment notice from the doctor. In exceptional circumstances, the written notice may be waived, but parents of elementary or middle school students must appear in person to request their child's release.

4. Academic Consequences and Penalties

A. Make-Up Work: It is the student's responsibility to make up all missed work, quizzes, and tests for any absence, including tardiness, early dismissals, pre-approved absences, religious release time, or school-sanctioned activities.

B. Excessive Absences: Students who are absent for **ten or more days** (or miss ten or more classes in a given course) in a semester, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused, may be subject to the following:

- Denial of credit for the course(s).
- Retention at their current grade level for the next school year.
- Disciplinary action, in addition to legal proceedings for unlawful absences.

C. Penalties for Unlawful Absences (for Compulsory School Age Students)

- **First Offense (3 days of unlawful absence):** The Principal will send a **First Offense Notice** to the parent by mail. This notice will detail the dates of absence, describe the consequences for habitual truancy, and may include an offer for a school attendance improvement conference.
- **Subsequent Offenses:** If unlawful absences continue, the school will offer an attendance improvement conference to the student and parent. A written attendance improvement plan will be created. The school will not take legal action until after the scheduled conference has passed. Students will not be expelled or suspended for truancy.
- **Habitually Truant Consequences (6 or more days of unlawful absence):**
 - **Under 15 years old:** The student will be referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or a local children and youth agency. The school may also file a citation against the parent.
 - **15 years old or older:** The student will be referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program. The school may file a citation against the student or the parent. If the student continues to have unexcused absences or refuses to participate in a program, they may be referred to the local children and youth agency.
- **Additional Penalties:** Further penalties may include fines, community service, driver's license suspension, or ineligibility to apply for a license, as set forth in the School Code.