DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This *Attendance and Truancy Policy* rescinds and supersedes all previous policy, memoranda, and/or guidance promulgated by DCPS on this subject matter.

Chancellor Approval: _____

Effective: October 28, 2022

Attendance and Truancy Policy

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

DCPS seeks to become an anti-racist school district that is trauma-responsive and aligned to a whole-child approach that supports educators in meeting each child's individual and holistic needs. This means creating an environment where we eliminate opportunity gaps, interrupt institutional bias, and remove barriers to academic and social success, particularly for students of color. DCPS actively strives to provide access, inclusion, and affirmation and offer the most support where the most significant disparities have persisted.

Attendance is one of the key metrics that schools review as part of our whole child, anti-racist approach. Attendance patterns provide key insight into experiences that may be impacting other domains of development for the child. This policy conveys general requirements on attendance, the protocols school officials will implement if a student is absent or truant, and requirements related to the enforcement of DC Health immunization mandates.

II. AUTHORITY AND APPLICABLE LAW[1]

Source	Citation
District of Columbia Law	- D.C. Official Code § 38-202 – Establishment of school attendance requirements - D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04 – Limitations on exclusion as a disciplinary action - D.C. Official Code § 38-501, *et seq*. – Immunization of school students
District of Columbia Municipal Regulations	DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) - 5-A DCMR § 2100 – General Provisions, as amended by OSSE Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking, 69 DCR (Sept. 16, 2022) - 5-A DCMR § 2101 – Attendance Records and Reporting, as amended by OSSE Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking, 69 DCR (Sept. 16, 2022) - 5-A DCMR § 2102 – Absences, as amended by OSSE Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking, 69 DCR (Sept. 16, 2022) - 5-A DCMR § 2103 – Absentee Intervention and School-Based Student Support Teams, as amended by OSSE Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking, 69 DCR (Sept. 16, 2022) - 5-A DCMR § 2199 – Definitions, as amended by OSSE Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking, 69 DCR (Sept. 16, 2022) DC Public Schools (DCPS) - 5-B DCMR § 2103 - Truancy Original Title 5 - 5-E DCMR § 2101 – Absences - 5-E DCMR § 5300 – Public School Immunization Procedures and Requirements

[1] Nothing in this policy shall supersede federal, state, or local law.

III. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS[2]

Absence means a school day when a student is either fully absent or partially absent.[3] DCPS differentiates between excused and unexcused absences, as explained further in this policy below.

Absenteeism means a pattern of a high frequency of absences.[4]

Asynchronous Distance Instruction means non-simultaneous distance instruction where a student completes work independently without a teacher providing real time instruction.[5]

Attendance Action Plan means a written document that is designed to meet the individual and specialized needs of a student and contains the relevant details of the student's attendance record, expected attendance goals, and the school-based or third-party-provided interventions toward addressing the underlying causes of unexcused absences as determined by the school-based student support team.[6]

Attendance Counselor/Designee means the person(s) designated by the principal to be responsible for improving student attendance, ensuring students are regularly present in school, and coordinating and monitoring the attendance interventions designed to increase student attendance and address truancy.

Attendance Monitor (also known as the attendance point-of-contact (POC)) means the person(s) designated by the principal of an educational institution to be responsible for collecting, maintaining, and reporting attendance records that are required pursuant to District of Columbia compulsory education and school attendance laws, regulations, and OSSE policies for each student enrolled in the educational institution.[7]

Chronically Truant means the condition in which a student of compulsory age, as defined by D.C. Official Code § 38-202(a), has ten (10) or more days of unexcused absences within a single school year.[8]

Full School Day means the entirety of the instructional hours regularly provided on a single school day.[9]

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[2] All citations to Chapter 21 (Compulsory Education and School Attendance), Subtitle A (Office of the State Superintendent of Education) of Title 5 (Education), of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) are citations to 5-A DCMR Chapter 21, as amended by OSSE Notice of Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking, 69 DCR (Sept. 16, 2022).
[3] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[4] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[5] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[6] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[7] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[8] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[9] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.

Fully Absent means the designation for a school day when a student is not in attendance for the entire instructional day. This designation applies to both excused and unexcused full school day absences.[10]

Fully Present means the designation for a school day when a student is present for the entire instructional day.[11]

In-Seat Attendance means the percent of enrolled days that a student is present.

Module means a subdivision of the instructional day such a class period or educational block.[12]

MTSS means a multi-tiered system of supports which provides a guiding framework for educators, school leaders, and district leaders to remove barriers to learning at the systems level, use evidence-based practices to support the whole child along a tiered continuum, and make decisions for targeted and intensive interventions based on data.

MTSS Leadership Team means the group of staff members, which may include the principal, assistant principal, counselor, social worker, psychologist, school nurse, teachers, special education staff, attendance counselor and/or attendance designee that leads the MTSS in a school.

Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) means the State Education Agency (SEA) for the District of Columbia established by the State Education Office Establishment Act of 2000, effective October 21, 2000 (D.C. Official Code §§ 38-2601 et seq.), with all operational authority for State-level functions, except that delegated to the State Board of Education in D.C. Official Code § 38-2652.

Output means an instructional activity completed by a student during a module of distance learning that reflects the instruction delivered in the module.[13]

Parent means a parent, guardian, or other person who resides in the District of Columbia and who has custody or control of a minor.[14]

Partially Absent means the designation for a school day when a student is present for less than 60 percent of the instructional day. This applies to both excused and unexcused absence.[15]

Partially Present means the designation for a school day when a student is present for at least 60 percent of the instructional day regardless of whether the absent period was excused.[16]

[10] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[11] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[12] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[13] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[14] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[15] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[16] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.

Present means a school day when the student is either fully present or partially present.[17]

Quarantine means exclusion from in-person instruction and other activities, by direction of the authorities of the District of Columbia, due to contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons.[18]

Routine Distance Instruction means the use of distance instruction by a school on a regular or other basis for instruction that occurs outside of the student's physical school building for the school that is part of the virtual instructional model.[19]

Situational Distance Learning means a period of time when schools may transition a classroom, grade level, or the entire school to distance learning when circumstances arise that prohibit a school from providing instruction due to some temporary, emergency need. Such a need may be to address an unplanned emergency circumstance (i.e., public health response, operational issue, inclement weather, etc.). If a school determines that such emergency operational circumstances exist, school leaders must: receive approval from their instructional superintendent to make the shift, (except for grade level transitions, which are in the principals' scope of authority) and once approved, immediately notify parents and staff of the shift to situational distance learning, ensure that students have adequate access to learning materials, and mark the day as "Situational Distance Learning" in eSchoolPLUS. A school may use this flexibility for up to five (5) total days per school year, whether consecutive or intermittent, without permission. If a District would like a school to use situational distance instruction for more than five (5) instructional days, the school leaders must request a waiver to go beyond five (5) days.[20]

For a student to be considered present in situational distance learning, a school must:

1. Authenticate the student's presence. This can be done in a number of ways; for example, ensuring the student sign on to a learning management system through any communication means (text, phone, camera, etc.); and
2. Ensure that the student completes at least one or more output per situational distance learning day.

Synchronous Learning means an academic setting where teaching and learning occur simultaneously such that the teacher is able to react and respond to students in the moment and vice versa.[21]

Student Attendance Conference (SAC) means a meeting held with the Attendance Counselor/Designee, parent/guardian, and student (as appropriate) to support the individual student by developing and implementing attendance action plans and intervention strategies that are school- or community-based and are designed to enhance the student's success.[22] SACs can be held in-person, over the telephone, or on a video teleconference.

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[17] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[18] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2102.2(b).
[19] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[20] *See* 5-A DCMR §§ 2101.11—2101.17.
[21] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2199.1.
[22] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2103.4 and D.C. Official Code § 38-201(3B). The SAC fulfills school-based student support team responsibilities.

Unexcused Absence means the designation of a day when a student is either fully absent or partially absent without a valid excuse.[23]

IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. General Attendance Requirements

All children who reach five (5) years of age on or before September 30th of the current school year are considered school-aged and must attend school on time every day until they meet high school graduation requirements or reach their 18th birthday.[24,25] Once pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) children are enrolled as DCPS students they are expected to follow the same attendance policies as school-aged students, including attending school on time every day.

Minors who graduate from high school are no longer required to attend school.[26] Flexible school hours are permitted for students who reach seventeen (17) years of age, are on-track to graduate on time, and provide documentation of regular gainful employment.[27]

B. School Expectations

All schools must implement a specific protocol for monitoring attendance and absenteeism, including a focus on prevention of unexcused absences and the use of academic and behavioral interventions to address the needs of students. School officials are responsible for taking attendance accurately every day in the student information system (SIS) or through alternative methods established by DCPS. Additional requirements for documenting attendance and communicating attendance expectations for approved distance learning models are provided in Appendix A.

Prior to the start of the school year, all school principals must designate an attendance point-of-contact (POC). At the direction of the Central Services Attendance Team, the attendance POC must ensure timely submission of attendance records, submit any corrected attendance records within fifteen (15) business days of submission, and respond in a timely manner to requests for clarification of submitted attendance records.

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[23] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2102.1.

[24] *See* D.C. Official Code § 38-202 requiring regular attendance for students of compulsory age. Regular attendance includes arriving to school on time.

[25] Pursuant to 5-E DCMR § 3002.1(d), a child found by DCPS to be eligible for special education shall remain eligible to receive services through the end of the semester they turn 22.

[26] D.C. Code Official Code § 38-202(b) ("Any minor who has satisfactorily completed the senior high school course of study prescribed by [DCPS] and has been granted a diploma that certifies his or her graduation from high school, or who holds a diploma or certificate of graduation from another course of study determined by [DCPS] to be at least equivalent to that required by [DCPS] for graduation from the public senior high schools, shall be excused from further attendance at school.").

[27] *See* D.C. Official Code § 38-202(b)("Any minor who has reached the age of 17 years may be allowed flexible school hours by the head of the educational institution in which the minor is enrolled provided he or she is actually, lawfully, gainfully, and regularly employed, but in no case shall he or she be excused entirely from regular attendance or excused to the extent that his or her timely graduation would be jeopardized or prevented."). For additional information on half-day schedules for employed students, see 5-B DCMR § 2103.2 and 5-E DCMR § 2101.2.

School principals must also select an attendance designee who is responsible for improving student attendance, ensuring students are regularly present in school, and coordinating and monitoring the attendance interventions required by this policy to increase student attendance and address truancy. If the school has an attendance counselor, they will typically fill this role as the attendance designee (as a result, this role is referred to in this policy as the Attendance Counselor/Designee, or AC/AD), though this is not required. The person identified as the attendance POC may also have these responsibilities as the attendance designee.

Teachers are required to take and enter daily attendance for elementary schools and each period for secondary schools in Aspen. Any student that enters the school building or a class late must be marked in Aspen as tardy and not absent. Attendance must be correctly entered before the close of each day and updated daily as the latest information is known.

C. Excused Absences and Required Documentation

In order for an absence to be excused, a written note must be provided to the school by the student's parent or guardian prior to a partial or full-day absence or within five (5) school days after the student's partial or full-day absence or return to school after an extended period of absence. [28] Written notes may be submitted via email, text messages, and other written electronic communications. Upon receipt of appropriate notification and additional documentation where necessary within the five-school day period, schools must update absences as excused within 48 hours.

All written notes **must**:

1. Be dated;
2. Include the reason for the absence; and
3. Include the specific dates the student was or will be out of school.

Notes that fail to meet the requirements above will not be considered.

Parents or guardians of students supported by a 504 plan and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP) must still submit a detailed excuse note for a student absence(s) within a 5-day period.

A student who misses 40% or more of the school day (partially absent) is considered absent for that day and this absence triggers the need for an excuse note.

Absences for any of the reasons listed in Section C.1 below are excused absences. Absences of five (5) or more consecutive days for any reason require additional documentation as outlined in Section C.2 in order to be excused.

[28] *See* 5-E DCMR § 2101.4 ("A written statement from the student's parent or guardian verifying the reason for the absence shall be provided upon the student's return to school."); 5-A DCMR § 2102.4 ("An educational institution shall require a written statement from the student's parent or guardian verifying the reason for an absence and shall require that the written statement be provided in advance, if practicable, and, if not practicable, upon the student's return to school.").

1. Excused Absences

The following absences may be classified as an excused absence[29] upon submission of a parent/guardian note and, if required, supported by the documentation required in Section C.2:

- Illness of the student (a doctor's note is required for a student absent five or more consecutive days);[30]
- Illness of a child for parenting students (a doctor's note is required for a student absent five or more consecutive days);
- Medical or dental appointments for the student;
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Exclusion by direction of the authorities of the District of Columbia, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons;
- Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding or court-ordered activity, as a party to the action or under subpoena;
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Absences to allow students to visit their parent or guardian, who is in the military immediately before, or immediately after deployment;
- An emergency or other circumstance approved by DCPS.

In addition to the reasons required by regulation, DCPS has classified the following additional circumstances as excused absences:

- College visits for students in 9th through 12th grades (up to three cumulative days in a school year);
- School visits for students in K through 8th grades (e.g., a 5th grader visiting a middle school before enrolling) (up to one day);
- Absences of expectant or parenting students for a time period specified by their doctor and any accommodations mandated by law;
- Take Our Children to Work Day; and
- Religious events or celebrations outside of a religious holiday (up to five cumulative days in a school year).

The following absences may also be excused without written documentation from the parents, as verified by the school:[31]

- Lawful out-of-school suspension or exclusion by school authorities;
- Temporary suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other condition(s) or emergency requiring a suspension of classes; and
- Failure of the District of Columbia to provide transportation in cases where the District of Columbia has a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student.

[29] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2102.2.

[30] Students whose illness requires hospitalization or who are home-bound for more than three weeks may be eligible for the Home and Hospital Instruction Program (HHIP). For more information, see relevant DCPS policy at https://dcps.dc.gov/service/home-and-hospital-instruction.

[31] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2102.2.

If a student or parent anticipates an absence not covered by the excused absences listed above or expects to accrue ongoing absences related to a specific condition or circumstance, they may submit a request for an excused absence due to a special circumstance to the school principal. The principal shall consult with his or her instructional superintendent before determining whether to grant the excused absence request. Any absence that does not meet the criteria of an excused absence or fails to satisfy the documentation requirement of an excused absence within the allowable timeframe will be classified as an unexcused absence.

2. Required Documentation

A parent or guardian's written note is sufficient to document any absence of up to **four (4) consecutive days**.[32] Any such absence will be excused if it falls under one of the excused absence reasons noted above.

If a student is absent for **five (5) or more consecutive days**, further documentation is required beyond communication by the parent for the absence to be excused as follows:

- Medical or dental absences: Written explanation of the student's absence must be submitted by a doctor or staff of a relevant agency on official doctor/dentist office letterhead and signed by a relevant official;
- Judicial proceedings: A student's required presence at judicial proceedings must be established by a document from the court stating the need for the student's presence on all the relevant dates; and
- Death in the student's immediate family: Funeral programs may be accepted as appropriate documentation.

a. Isolation and Quarantine Documentation Requirements

For students who are required to isolate because they have tested positive for COVID-19, the parent or guardian must provide written documentation of the isolation. The written note must include the date of COVID-19 exposure and include evidence of a positive COVID-19 test. Additional requirements for documenting attendance related to quarantine and isolation are provided in Appendix B.

D. Immunization and Attendance Requirements

To attend school in the District of Columbia, including public, private, parochial, and independent schools, students must be immunized in compliance with DC Health's requirements.[33,34] DCPS does not establish vaccination requirements but must verify that all students comply with these requirements. DC law permits medical or religious exemptions from student immunization requirements under limited circumstances.[35]

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[32] DCPS divides its academic calendar into four terms, also known as grading periods or advisory periods, each consisting of a nearly equal number of school days. There are two terms in a semester.
[33] Please visit DC Health's site at https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/immunizations for immunization information.
[34] *See* D.C. Official Code § 38-503; 5-E DCMR § 5300.1, *et seq.* For more information, please visit the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) No Shots, No School! District of Columbia Immunization Policy for In-Person Attendance website at http://bit.ly/NoShotsNoSchool.
[35] For more information, please visit http://bit.ly/NoShotsNoSchool.

If a student's medical record does not demonstrate compliance, or documented medical or religious exemptions, the school must immediately notify the parent/guardian or adult student in writing of the missing immunization(s). If the student does not come into compliance within a 20-school day period, the school must remove the student from school until the parent/guardian provides the necessary documentation. Such removal will be considered an unexcused absence and may require interventions outlined in the Attendance Protocol listed in Sections F.5 and F.6 of this Policy.

E. Absences Due to School-Sponsored Activities

1. Athletics

Students participating in DCPS-sponsored athletic events during regular school class hours are considered present. Students must adhere to all attendance requirements as dictated by state regulations and DCPS policy. In order to participate in any athletic tryout, practice, game, or match, a student must be present in school on the day of that event, unless the student has an excused absence.[36] Medically eligible students participating in virtual instruction will not be eligible for in-person activities and athletics. Similarly, students absent due to quarantine will not be eligible for in-person activities and athletics.

2. Other Activities

Students participating in DCPS-sponsored events, field trips, or study abroad travel during the regular school day are considered present.

3. Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan Service Delivery

Students who miss class to receive related services documented on their IEPs or 504 plans are considered present.

4. Suspensions

Students shall be marked present while serving in-school suspensions. Student absences due to out-of-school suspensions shall be classified as excused.

F. School-Based Attendance Interventions Related to Absences

1. Students in Grades K-12

The following school-based attendance interventions apply to all students in grades K-12, including students accessing virtual instruction:

Timeline	School Responsibilities
Each unexcused absence (full or partial absences)	**Robo-call** (sent from Blackboard) sent to family on each night a student has the equivalent of one day of unexcused absence.

[36] 5-F DCMR § 104.8.

3 cumulative partial or full - day unexcused absences	AC/AD sends **3-Day Universal Absence Letter** to parent from Aspen. For virtual students only, AC/AD calls the student's home to complete a **wellness check**. The wellness check must include a discussion of the student's attendance, including the identification of technology or other barriers and any other challenges and potential resources needed to support student success.
4 cumulative partial or full-day absences (excused or unexcused)	**Teacher calls the student's home** to discuss the student's attendance.
5 cumulative partial or full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD sends **5-Day Universal Absence Letter** from Aspen to the student's home notifying the parent/guardian that a Student Attendance Conference (SAC) will be held.[37]
5 cumulative full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD holds an **SAC with the parent** and the student, if appropriate, to determine and document root causes of absences and provide related interventions and develop an Attendance Action Plan within 5 days of the referral. The AC/AD documents this meeting in Aspen. If the student has an IEP, the AC/AD must alert the local education agency representative designee (LEARD) and Case Manager. On a weekly basis, AC/AD will provide the MTSS Leadership Team with a list of all students who have reached the 5-day unexcused absence threshold, along with a report that summarizes the barriers identified during SAC meetings. **Students who have reached the 5-day unexcused absence threshold are reviewed by the MTSS Leadership Team to consider whether more targeted supports are needed**. If a Tier ll or lll referral is needed for any student, this referral will be made in the MTSS system and school-based MTSS intervention POC will reach out to the AC/AD for existing SAC documents.[38]
7 cumulative full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD sends **Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Warning Letter** to parent using Aspen.
10 cumulative partial or full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD sends **10-Day Universal Absence Letter** to parent from Aspen. **MTSS Leadership Team reviews lists of all students (ages 5-17) who have reached the 10-day unexcused absence threshold** to consider whether more targeted support is needed. If a Tier ll or lll referral is needed for any student, this referral will be made in the MTSS system and school-based MTSS intervention POC will reach out to the AC/AD for existing SAC documents.
10 cumulative full-day excused absences	*Note that for students aged 5 – 13 only*: If all attendance interventions have been executed and documented in Aspen, AC/AD **refers student to CFSA** for educational neglect.

[37] *See* 5-A DCMR § 2103.4

[38] MTSS cannot be used to delay the initial evaluation of a student who may have a suspected disability. DCPS must always initiate the special education referral and initial evaluation process for a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

15 cumulative partial or full-day unexcused absences **15 cumulative full-day unexcused absences**	AC/AD sends **15-day Universal Absence Letter** to parent from Aspen. *Note that for students aged 14 – 17 only*: If all interventions have been executed and documented in Aspen, AC/AD, in conjunction with their Attendance Specialist, will **refer student/family to the Court Social Services** Division and the Office of the Attorney General.
20 *consecutive* full-day unexcused absences[39]	AC/AD sends **initial withdrawal letter** to parent and makes **phone call to student's home** to notify parent/guardian that the student is eligible to be withdrawn from school. AC/AD must also send a **final withdrawal letter** to parent after all outreach has been completed notifying parent of intent to withdraw. Schools *must* have executed all required interventions before withdrawing a student, and schools must record all documentation in Aspen and have received approval by the principal and Instructional Superintendent. Students receiving special education services through an IEP cannot be withdrawn without the school demonstrating additional reasonable efforts to contact the parent and receiving approval from the DCPS Division of Specialized Instruction.

2. Students in Pre-K

Pre-K students are subject to the same requirements regarding excused and unexcused absences as K-12th grade students. Although attendance-based referrals to CFSA are not required for students below the age of five (5), schools are required to implement school-based attendance interventions as described below.[40]

The following school-based attendance interventions related to absences apply for Pre-K students in all learning models:

Timeline	School Responsibilities
Each unexcused partial or full-day of absences	**Robo-call** (sent from Blackboard) sent to family at night on each day a student has the equivalent of one day of unexcused absence.
3 cumulative days of partial or full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD sends **3-Day Universal Absence Letter** to parent from Aspen.
4 cumulative partial or full-day absences (excused or unexcused)	**Teachers call the student's home** to discuss the student's attendance.
5 cumulative partial or full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD sends **5-Day Universal Absence Letter** from Aspen to the student's home notifying the parent/guardian that a Student Attendance Conference (SAC) will be held.

[39] *See* D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04(c).

[40] Because Pre-K students are not of compulsory school age, schools are not required to contact CFSA to report the accumulation of full-day unexcused absences.

5 cumulative full-day unexcused absences	AC/AD holds a **SAC with the parent** to determine and document root causes of absences and provide related interventions and develop an Attendance Action Plan. The AC/AD documents this meeting in Aspen. For the schools who receive Early Childhood Education (ECE) Family Service Team support (Title 1 schools), a referral should be made to the ECE Family Services Team. If the AC/AD and SAC are unable to reach the family through telephone calls, texts, and emails, they should contact emergency contacts and other known contacts. If no contact can be made or the welfare of the student cannot be determined, the team should consult with the ECE Team to determine whether a CFSA referral should be made.
10 cumulative days of day absences **10 cumulative full-day absences**	AC/AD sends **10-Day Universal Absence Letter** from Aspen to the student's home *Note that for students aged 5 – 13 only*: If all attendance interventions have been executed and documented in Aspen, AC/AD **refers student to CFSA** for educational neglect.
20 consecutive full-day unexcused absences[41]	AC/AD contacts the student's family to complete a **wellness check** through telephone calls, texts, and emails. The wellness check includes a discussion of the student's attendance, including the identification of technology or other barriers, and any other challenges and potential resources needed to support student success. AC/AD contacts emergency contacts and other known contacts and consults with their Central Services Attendance Specialist and the Early Childhood Education Division prior to making a **withdrawal determination**. Pre-K students may, but are not required to be, unenrolled due to unexcused absences unless the student has reached 20 full-school-day consecutive unexcused absences and the school has: • documented all instances of family outreach and offers of support services; • complied with all special education notice requirements; and • received approval from the Central Services Early Childhood Education Division. No Pre-K student may be unenrolled due to late arrival to school.

G. Prohibited Actions Related to Absenteeism

DC law prohibits specific actions related to student truancy and absenteeism as follows:

- No student, except a student over 18 years of age at a school where more than half of the students are over 18 years of age, may be expelled or subject to an out-of-school suspension or disciplinary unenrollment for an unexcused absence or late arrival to school.[42]

[41] *See* D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04(c).

[42] *Id.* The Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, D.C. Law 22-157, defines a "disciplinary unenrollment" as the expulsion or involuntary transfer of a student from school. (D.C. Official Code § 38-236.01(3))

- No student may be unenrolled for absenteeism unless the student has accumulated 20 or more *consecutive* full-school-day unexcused absences and the school has taken and documented all required actions and contacted the student's family.[43]
- No student may be transferred from their school for absenteeism, including students who are attending an out of boundary school.[44] A student may only be unenrolled if the student has accumulated 20 or more *consecutive* full-school-day unexcused absences.[45]
- No student may be withdrawn at the beginning of the school year unless they fail to attend at least one (1) day of school in the first three (3) weeks of school without notification for such absence, or transfer to another educational institution. Schools are required to meet the "no show" protocol prior to withdrawing any student. The "no show protocol" is a process through which students are withdrawn from school when they are enrolled but fail to register.

H. Attendance, Grading, and Promotion

Student grading and promotion can be impacted by an accrual of unexcused absences as follows:

- Secondary students with ten (10) unexcused absences in any class shall receive an initial written notice that they are at risk of receiving a grade of "FA" (failure due to absences) in that subject upon accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences unless an exception applies.[46]
- Secondary students with fifteen (15) unexcused absences in any class shall receive an additional written warning that they are at risk of receiving a grade of "FA" (failure due to absences) in that subject upon accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences.[47]
- Secondary students accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences in a course within a full school year shall receive a failing final grade in that course with a resulting loss of course credit.[48]
- Students accumulating more than thirty (30) unexcused absences within a school year shall only be promoted if a written justification is submitted by the principal to the Chancellor,[49] or the student attends summer school and is reevaluated for promotion.[50]

I. Late Arrival for Secondary Students

Students will be marked tardy if they arrive in class five (5) minutes or more after the official start of the period.

- On in-person instructional days, teachers must review attendance at the conclusion of each class to ensure that late students are marked tardy rather than absent.
- Students who enter class late should be given clear guidance regarding how to get caught up with the class lesson.

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[43] *Id.* The Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, D.C. Law 22-157, defines a "disciplinary unenrollment" as the expulsion or involuntary transfer of a student from school. (D.C. Official Code § 38-236.01(3))
[44] *Id.* The Student Fair Access to School Amendment Act of 2018, D.C. Law 22-157, defines a "disciplinary unenrollment" as the expulsion or involuntary transfer of a student from school. (D.C. Official Code § 38-236.01(3))
[45] *See* D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04(c).
[46] 5-B DCMR § 2103.4.
[47] 5-B DCMR § 2103.5.
[48] 5-B DCMR § 2103.6.
[49] D.C. Official Code § 38-781.02(c)(2).
[50] D.C. Official Code § 38-781.05.

- Students will be allowed to enter their scheduled course regardless of what time they arrive.
- There is no point in a class period that a tardy will convert to an absence. If a student attends a portion of the class, he or she will be considered present and tardy.
- Students must always have access to make-up work.
- Multiple instances of a student being tardy may not be accumulated to count as an absence.
- Responses to student tardiness should be appropriate and logical. A student cannot be suspended due to being tardy.

J. Early Dismissal for All Students

DCPS will not recognize early dismissal of students unless that dismissal is related to an excused absence. Parents must notify the school when requesting an early dismissal.

V. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

All DCPS employees are required to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. In order to support its implementation, principals are expected to make all staff aware of required activities and timelines on an annual basis. Implementation of this policy will be reinforced through a central oversight process that includes regular data reviews, record sampling, reviews of underlying documentation, and site visits as needed. This framework will ensure that together we build a system of continuous improvement and prevent noncompliance. For key guidance and support with questions, training, or implementation, please visit dcps.dc.gov.

DCPS is committed to serving every student with equity, excellence, transparency, and accountability. For any concerns or violations about this directive, contact the Chief Integrity Officer either by completing the Online Referral Form available at https://dcps.dc.gov/page/office-integrity or sending an email to dcps.cio@dc.gov.

VI. CENTRAL SERVICES RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

A. Attendance and Truancy Questions

For key guidance and support with questions, training, or implementation, please contact the Central Services attendance point of contact assigned to your cluster. If you need additional assistance or assistance identifying your cluster point of contact, please contact Andrea Allen, the Director of Attendance and Support Services, at Andrea.Allen@k12.dc.gov.

B. Attendance Data Entry

Attendance POCs are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of school-level attendance information in Aspen. School principals are responsible for certifying the accuracy of school level attendance. For assistance with the entry and maintenance of student attendance data, please contact your school's assigned attendance specialist. For key guidance and support with Aspen, please contact the Helpdesk at 202-442-5717.

Appendix A: Virtual Instruction for Secondary Students

For school year 2022-23, DCPS is offering virtual instruction for a limited number of high school students. The virtual learning program is offered only at DCPS's Opportunity Academies (Luke C. Moore, Ballou STAY, and Roosevelt STAY) and is available to any interested DC student in grades 9-12 on a first come, first served basis (up to 200 students). Virtual students in the program are enrolled in one of the three OA programs (which will be their school of record). Additionally, they will also be cross enrolled in the virtual program.[51] Additional information about this limited virtual option, including eligibility requirements, can be found at https://dcps.dc.gov/page/opportunityacademy.

Virtual students accessing virtual instruction will be required to attend daily (synchronous or asynchronous) instruction with their assigned teachers according to their course schedules.

A. Recording Student Attendance

As per OSSE 5-A DCMR § 2101.12 emergency and proposed rulemaking, and pending final rule adoption, students will be asked to turn on their cameras to confirm their "presence" during roll call.[52]

If a student has a technology or internet connectivity issue that prevents them from accessing synchronous instruction for all or part of a school day, the student or their parent or guardian must immediately call their school to report the issue and indicate what the student will be working on that day. The AC/AD will enter the "Emergency/Other Approved" code for any classes the student will miss as a result. School should immediately work with the family to address any technology issues preventing students from accessing virtual instruction.

B. Absences

Absences for virtual students will be reviewed by the Attendance POC and coded as "excused" or "unexcused" according to section C.2 of this policy. However, if a family is unable to submit documentation electronically due to challenges with technology, the family should contact the school attendance POC to describe the documents and maintain a copy of the documentation to provide to the school in hard copy if requested to do so when health conditions allow.

C. Attendance Interventions

In addition to the standard attendance interventions described above in Section F, the AC/AD will also be required to conduct a wellness check phone call when a student reaches three (3) unexcused absences to identify any technical barriers or other challenges and document the outcome of the phone call in the Aspen communication journal.

[51] DCPS' opportunity academies (e.g., Roosevelt STAY, Luke C. Moore) must offer in-person activities to those students who request it, but students may also elect virtual learning and are not required to use the medical certification process to do so.

[52] To support equity and privacy issues, students should be provided clear instructions on how to blur their background or use an alternate background.

Appendix B: Quarantine and Isolation

With evolving health guidance and changing health conditions, there may be times when students may need to quarantine or isolate.

When students are required to quarantine or isolate based on current health guidance, parents are required to submit an excuse note, as per the requirements outlined in Section C.1 of this policy. All quarantine and isolation absences for which there is a valid excuse note will be **excused** as Illness.

The chart below outlines how attendance will be coded when students are required to quarantine or isolate.

If student:	They should immediately:	On or after day 5 they should:
Tested positive for COVID-19 and has mild or no symptoms.	Begin to isolate for at least 5 days.	Students can return to school beginning on day 6 IF they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication and symptoms are improving. Students MUST wear a mask while at school until day 10 from their positive test result or when symptoms began, whichever is earlier.
Tested positive for COVID-19 and either (1) has severe or critical symptoms or (2) is immunocompromised.	Begin to isolate for at least 10 days.	Students may return to school after day 10 IF they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication and symptoms are improving. If a student will be out for longer than ten days, families will need to provide a doctor's note to their school for the absence to be excused.
Was identified as a close contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19.	No quarantine is required.	Students are encouraged to wear a mask at school until day 10 from their exposure. No quarantine is required.