

★ **POSSIBLE PENALTIES FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES:**

Habitual truancy due to unexcused absences is a **summary offense** addressed under the Pennsylvania Public School Code Compulsory Attendance Law amended by Act 138 of 2016. As such, penalties (i.e. a fine up to \$750, a jail sentence up to three days, attendance at parenting classes, community services in the school district of up to six months) may be imposed against parents, guardians and others responsible for truant children age 17 and under.

In cases where the student is determined to be in violation of the compulsory attendance law, he/she will be subject to penalties (i.e. a fine up to \$300, assignment to an adjudication alternative program, driver's license suspension for 90 days, disposition as dependent child).

Referrals to Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency can be made for habitually truant students.

★ **TARDIES AND EARLY DISMISSALS**

A tardy is arrival at school after the start of school but less than two hours late. Arrival after two hours will be counted as a half-day absence. Tardies are excused using the same criteria for general absences. Tardies due to health care appointments are excused when proper documentation is provided.

Students will be permitted a maximum of three unexcused tardies per year without penalty. For each additional two unexcused tardies, the student will be charged with a half day unexcused absence. Please note that habitual tardies are subject to the compulsory attendance laws.

Students may not leave school prior to dismissal without written permission from the parent. Students leaving early for two hours or more will be charged a half-day absence.

★ **PIAA ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Per PIAA policy, if a student athlete is absent from school during a semester for a total of **20 or more school days**, the student will lose his/her eligibility until the student athlete attends school for a total of 45 school days following the 20th day of absence.

★ **STUDENT ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SAIP)**

A school and family conference will be completed upon the fifth unexcused absence to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop a mutually agreed upon plan to resolve truant behavior. Issues to be reviewed at the conference include the appropriateness of the child's educational environment, current academic difficulties, physical or behavioral health issues, and family/environment concerns.

At the end of the conference, all parties should sign a comprehensive SAIP that is agreed to by the school representative, the child, and the parent/guardian. The plan could include accessing academic and social/health supports from the school and community organizations, an outline of family/parent and student responsibilities, and levels of performance monitoring that include rewards and consequences.



Conestoga Valley
SCHOOL DISTRICT

2110 Horseshoe Road, Lancaster, Pa. 17601

BrownstownElementary-717.656.6021
Fritz Elementary - 717.397.5246
Leola Elementary - 717.656.2068
SmoketownElementary-717.394.0555
Middle School - 717.397.1294
High School - 717.397.5231



Conestoga Valley
SCHOOL DISTRICT

COMMITMENT

to educating students



**Attendance
Policies**

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

CV UNDERSTANDING ATTENDANCE POLICIES

We want to make sure every student misses no more than nine days of school, or one day a month. We need your help.

Attending school has a huge impact on student success. We realize some absences are for health or other reasons. But, when students are absent two or more days a month (or 18 days over the school year) they can fall far behind in what they learn. Excused and unexcused absences both mean missing classroom learning time.

Absences add up. Missing just two days every month puts students at risk of falling behind.

★ ATTENDANCE TIPS:

- Make sure your students keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Turn off all electronics including TVs, phones and tablets at bedtime.
- Pack backpacks and make sure clothes are ready the night before.
- Check with the school's nurse or office staff if you are not sure about when to keep your child at home due to illness.
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctors' appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers and counselors if your student feels anxious about going to school.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your student to school.

★ EXCUSED ABSENCES

A maximum of 10 days of cumulative excused absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. Parents must provide a signed, written explanation of the reason for the absence and the date of absence. If excuse cards are not received within three school days after the student returns to school, the absences will be considered unexcused. All absences beyond 10 cumulative days — excluding absences that were excused by a doctor — shall require a note from a licensed physician in order to be recorded as excused.



The **CV School Board**, in accordance with Pennsylvania School Code, considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school and, therefore, will be considered excused if proper documentation is presented:

- **Illness:** Administration may require a physician's excuse when absence appears excessive.
- **College Visits:** Maximum three days per year. Requires a written parent request and approval.
- **Educational Trips/Family Emergency:** Trips require a written parent request and prior approval. Under this absence, a maximum of five days per year will be classified as excused. Days in excess of five days will be classified as unexcused. If a student has accrued three or more unexcused days prior to applying for an educational trip or notifying the school of a family emergency, the student forfeits the right to excused educational trip days and excused family emergency days. Any missed days for travel or family emergency will be recorded as unexcused.
- **Observation of Bona Fide Religious Holiday:** Requires a written parent request and prior approval.
- **Death in the Family**
- **Homebound Instruction:** Upon receiving certification by a physician or psychiatrist, and on the approval of the Secretary of Education, children who are unable to attend school for emotional, physical, or other urgent reasons may be excused from regular attendance. Each such excuse shall be re-evaluated every three months.

★ UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any absence which is not covered under the definition of excused absence is classified as unexcused. Absences shall be treated as unexcused until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence to be submitted within three days of the absence.

★ NOTIFICATION OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

- **Official First Notice:** When a student has accumulated three unexcused absences in a school year, this letter is sent as the state views this student as truant. If the student continues to accrue unexcused days, a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) conference will be held with the student and parent to develop a plan to stop habitually truant behavior.

- **Habitually Truant Status:** Under Pennsylvania law, if a student accumulates six unexcused days, despite the plan put in place through the SAIP, the school must deem the student "habitually truant" and the school must take further action immediately based on the age of the student:

- *For students under age 15:* Attendance improvement program, a referral to Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency, and may include truancy citations.

- *For students under age 17:* Attendance improvement program, truancy citations, and may include a referral to Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency.

- **7-Day Letter:** Notification that a student has had seven (7) cumulative absences during a school year. This letter is for information only.

- **10-Day Letter:** Notification that a student has had 10 absences that were not excused by a doctor and now requires a physician's excuse for all subsequent absences.