

2016-2017 BHS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is essential for success in high school. Students are expected to attend school for the entire day, and all classes every day in order to receive the full benefits of class instruction. Each time a child misses school he/she is missing valuable instructional time. Excessive absenteeism generally results in poor learning and unsatisfactory grades. Regular school attendance also is directly related to the development of good habits, which are important in the world of work and in higher education.

Student attendance will be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. **When we believe that a student's school attendance is jeopardizing his/her progress in class, the parent/guardian will receive written notification from the school. Any excessive check-ins, check-outs, or patterns of absences may result in administrative intervention including the development of an attendance improvement plan and/or disciplinary action. Should your child's attendance not improve, he/she may also lose school privileges, be referred to our SAP Team, and may be referred to Court Services (Division Policy 7-2.3)**

<http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/mcps/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=9YPLTY4FB865>

Student absences without parental awareness and support will be addressed in accordance with MCPS Truancy policies and procedures (7-2.3). Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the division superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory attendance law. It is expected that parents will cooperate with school officials to remedy the student's attendance problem. When direct contact with the parent cannot be made despite reasonable efforts, or when parents otherwise fail to cooperate in remedying the student's attendance problem, the division superintendent or his/her designee may seek immediate compliance with compulsory school attendance laws. The division superintendent's designee, with the knowledge and approval of the division superintendent, shall institute proceedings against any parent who fails to comply with the requirements of the compulsory attendance laws. When the complaint arises out of the parent's failure to comply with the requirements of the law relating to compulsory attendance, the division superintendent's designee shall document the school division's compliance with procedures for enforcing compulsory attendance.

Student Absences

A student is counted present only when he/she is present in the classroom or other approved designated area at the time of the tardy bell or is attending or participating in an approved school-sponsored field trip or event. A student shall be considered absent when he/she does not report to class during the assigned class period. Student absences will be recorded on a daily basis for each class period. This "period attendance" will be reported electronically to the office each period and is automatically included in individual student records. When a student is absent from school, an automated system will notify parents/guardians of their child's absence from school. The system will begin calling home telephone numbers each morning. The system is designed to leave a message on an answering machine. If there is another telephone number other than the home number that parents wish to be called with this message, they should contact the administrative assistant in the main office at 382-5706 to make these arrangements. The notification will be based on the student's attendance as reported by his/her 1st period teacher. A reasonable effort will be made to contact a parent/guardian of each absent student every day and to obtain an explanation for the student's absence, where there is no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence. If for any reason a student will need to be out of school for an extended period of time, parents/guardians should notify the administrative assistant in the main office of the dates and circumstances of the anticipated absence. Absences for each grading period will be reported to the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the report card.

Per division policy 7-2.3, absences for any of the reasons listed below SHALL NOT contribute to a student's total number of absences:

- State-mandated testing or other school/division testing programs
- School-sponsored field trips or activities
- All VHSL activities
- Late bus or buses which fail to run
- Conference with guidance counselor, administrator, or other related staff members
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Involuntary court appearance (copy of court order or subpoena required)
- Death in the family or household (verification may be required)
- Religious holidays (verification may be required)
- College visit (verification required) up to 3 school days

Absences for reasons other than those listed above shall contribute to a student's total absences.

Absences for Observance of a Religious Holiday

A student may be excused from school for the observance of a religious holiday. The parent/guardian of such student shall provide a letter to the student's school in advance of the planned absence notifying the school of the planned absence, the dates of the planned absence and the religious holiday being observed. A student who is absent in accordance with this policy shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, for any which he or she missed by reason of such absence. Make-up work shall be completed as described in "Make-Up Work" below.

Returning to School

On the day of their return to school from an absence, students must report to the main office before going on to classes. **A note of explanation will be required to officially document any absence.** The note must include the date(s) and cause(s)/circumstance(s) of the absence(s), and the parent's or guardian's signature. Per division policy 7-2.3, absences are not considered as excused or unexcused. Instead, all absences will be identified as documented (note received) or undocumented (no note received). The administrative assistant in the main office will record each student's visit to the office and document whether or not a note was received. **Students who return to school without a note or other verification that a parent/guardian is aware of and supports the absence will be considered as skipping school and will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action.**

All notes from parents/guardians, or any other correspondence concerning student absences, will be kept on file for documentation.

CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

It is important for parents/guardians to provide documentation for all student absences (See "Returning to School" section above). When a student has accumulated **15 or more absences** in a course, the assistant principal will review the student's documentation on file for all absences and determine whether or not the student should lose his/her "Good Standing" status.

- Absences identified in division policy (7-2.3) as those that "shall not contribute to a student's total number of absences" will not be counted.
- Reasons for absences which are generally considered reasonable for missing school (i.e. documented student illness/injury, personal/family emergencies, and other extenuating circumstances) will be considered by the assistant principal as to whether or not they will be counted for purposes of determining a student's "Good Standing" status.

Students who lose their "Good Standing" status due to excessive absences from school will have the following restrictions imposed until their "Good Standing" status is reinstated:

- Loss of any "Late Arrival" or "Early Release" on their daily schedule
- Prohibited from participating in school athletics or other extra-curricular activities
- Prohibited from attending any school extra-curricular events

- Prohibited from attending/participating in school dances/prom
- Prohibited from driving/parking on BHS campus
- Prohibited from participating in BHS Graduation Ceremony

Students may have their “Good Standing” status reinstated by fulfilling all stipulations in an “Attendance Improvement Plan” developed by the assistant principal. Students and their parents/guardians may appeal a loss of “Good Standing” status to the principal. However, loss of privileges will not be delayed while an appeal is pending.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be provided for all absences, including absences caused by OSS. Per Division Policy 7-2.3, it is the responsibility of the students and/or parent/guardian to request make-up work for all absences and for the student to complete all assigned make-up work within one school day for every day missed (Example: If a student misses 3 days of class/school, he/she has 3 school days to make up the work).

Parents/guardians can request that their child’s teachers compile work that has been missed by calling the guidance office. A day of advance notice is preferred; however, same day collection will be attempted if the request is received by 9:00 AM. This work can be picked up in the guidance office after 2:50 PM on the day of the request, or any time the next day. Otherwise, it is the student’s responsibility to request any missed assignments, schedule make-up tests, quizzes, labs, etc. the day of their return to school.

Typically, assignments due on the date of an absence are due the first day of the student’s return to school unless they did not receive advanced notice due to other legitimate absences. Likewise, students who are absent on the day of a test or quiz should be prepared to take the test or quiz on the first day of their return to school unless they did not receive advanced notice due to other legitimate absences.

The time limit on make-up work may be extended by the teacher or administrator due to extenuating circumstances.

CHECKING IN/OUT OF SCHOOL & TARDIES TO CLASS

Student check-ins, check-outs, and tardies to each class will be recorded on a daily basis. Students must present to the main office a written note which includes the date(s), cause(s), and the parent’s/guardian’s signature for all student check-ins (late arrivals) and check-outs (leave early). If a student is being transported by a county bus or vehicle that arrives late to school, the student will not be counted as tardy. **Any excessive check-ins, check-outs, and tardies to class will result in administrative intervention including the development of an improvement plan and/or disciplinary action.**

Check-ins, and check-outs will be considered as EXCUSED only for the following reasons (documentation required):

- Appointments with doctor, dentist, or other health professional
- Court appearances
- Death in the family or household

Tardies to class will be considered as EXCUSED for students who are late to class because of being detained by a staff member (student must obtain a note/pass from that staff member).

All UNEXCUSED check-ins, check-outs (documented or undocumented), and tardies to class will contribute to the total number accumulated for the purpose of disciplinary action.

Any exceptions for extenuating circumstances must have principal approval.

Arriving Late to School (Check-Ins) – Students who arrive to school late must report directly to the main office upon their arrival to school before going to class. A student who reports to school late, with or without documentation, will be marked as a check-in. Any students who arrive to school late must sign the Check-In Sheet in the main office and obtain a pass to class. Students accompanied by a parent/guardian, or who bring a note of explanation for their late arrival, will have their tardiness documented by office staff.

Leaving Early (Check-Outs) – If it is necessary for a student to leave school early, he/she must report to the main office to obtain permission to check-out from office staff and sign the Check-Out Sheet in the main office before leaving school grounds. Students who wish to check-out must bring a note from a parent/guardian to the main office when it is time for them to leave school. **Parents/guardians may be called to verify written notes.** In extenuating circumstances, parents/ guardians may also request permission for their child to leave school early by talking with office staff by phone. Such arrangements will require the approval of an administrator. Parents/guardians may also check-out their child from school in person. Parents/guardians must do so through the main office and sign the Check-Out Sheet. Only those adults who have legal custody or the written authorization of a parent/guardian may check a student out of school. Any student who leaves school early following this procedure will be marked as a checkout. **Students leaving without following this procedure are considered to be skipping school.**

- **Students are not permitted to leave school for the purpose of eating lunch.** If it is necessary for a student to check-out during the lunch period, a parent/guardian must speak with an administrator before the student is given permission to check-out. Written documentation may be required to verify the reason for the check-out.
- Any student who has checked-out must leave campus promptly and may not return to the grounds without officially checking back in to school. Those students returning to school to provide transportation for their peers must remain in the parking lot and may not re-enter the building.
- Students who use their vehicles to leave campus without permission, or provide transportation to another student who leaves campus without permission, will lose their parking privilege for a minimum of 10 school days.

The Check-In/Check-Out Sheet and any notes from parents/guardians will be kept on file for documentation.

Tardies to Class

A student is counted present and on time to class only when he/she is present in the classroom, or other approved designated area, at the time of the tardy bell. A student reporting to class after the tardy bell, or after the designated starting time for the class period, will be recorded as present and tardy. Arriving late to class disrupts instruction and learning. Students are provided with sufficient time to make class changes and are expected to be in class on time. In an effort to assist students in this area a “warning tone” will sound when only one minute of transition time between classes remains. **Students who arrive more than 5 minutes late to class without a note from a staff member will be considered skipping class and will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action.**

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR CHECK-INS/OUTS & TARDIES TO CLASS

Students who accumulate an excessive number of UNEXCUSED check-ins, check-outs, and tardies to class will be referred to an administrator for the following disciplinary action:

- **For each 9-week Grading Period, students who accumulate any combination of UNEXCUSED check-ins to school (late arrival), check-outs from school (leave early), and tardies to class will be assigned the following disciplinary action:**

4th Check-in/Check-out/Tardy = 1 Lunch Detention
5th Check-in/Check-out/Tardy = 1 Lunch Detention

6 th Check-in/Check-out/Tardy	=	1 Lunch Detention
7 th Check-in/Check-out/Tardy	=	1 Lunch Detention
8 th Check-in/Check-out/Tardy	=	1 Lunch Detention
9 th and Subsequent Check-in/Check-out/Tardy	=	ISS or Saturday School
10 th Check-in/Check-out/Tardy	=	Lose Good Standing Status

- **In addition to the above, any student who accumulates 6 TARDIES TO SCHOOL (CHECK-INS) in a semester will lose his/her campus driving/parking privileges for 10 school days.** "Tardies to School" includes being late to 1st period and checking-in to school any time after 1st period.
- After 10 days of restriction, driving/parking privileges will be reinstated. Upon reinstatement of his/her driving privilege, the student will lose his/her campus driving privilege for another 10 school days after accumulating 3 additional tardies within the same semester. **The third time that a student loses his/her campus driving/parking privileges in a school year, the restriction will be for the remainder of the school year.**
- **Any student found driving or parked on school grounds (during school hours) while privileges are restricted, will lose all campus driving/parking privileges for the remainder of the school year.**

PARTICIPATION IN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students who are absent from school, arrive late (check-in more than 15 minutes after the school day begins), or check out early during the school day are not allowed to participate in any after-school activities that day.

Students will not be able to practice or play on days they are assigned to **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**. Students may resume practice or play following the completion of the last day of their OSS. Once a student returns from OSS, the level of participation in practice, games, or performances remains at the discretion of their coach/advisor.

Students will not be able to practice or play until completion of an **In-School Supervision (ISS)** assignment. Students may resume practice or play after missing all days of practice or play due to an ISS assignment. Once a student returns to practice/play, the level of participation in practice, games, or performances remains at the discretion of their coach/advisor.

Students who plan to attend **athletic practices or any extra-curricular practices that do not begin immediately after school**, must leave the building and grounds and return closer to the practice's start time unless they have pre-arranged plans to be supervised by a coach or other staff member. Parents/guardians should pre-arrange transportation for their child to/from practices. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by an administrator.