STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

All persons residing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between the ages of six and twenty-one years are entitled to a free and full education in the Commonwealth’s public schools. This right extends to migrant, homeless, pregnant, married, or emancipated students.

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and homework, and conformance to school rules and regulations. All students enrolled in school must attend on a daily basis in accordance with the academic calendar. Parents and guardians are required by the compulsory attendance law to ensure their child attends an approved educational institution unless otherwise legally excused. Compulsory school age refers to the period of a child’s life from the time the child enters school as a beginner which may be no later than at the age of 8 years, until the age of 17 or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first. A beginner is a child who enters a school district’s lowest elementary school grade that is above kindergarten.

Pennsylvania state code requires all students to receive educational instruction for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Day Totals per Academic Year</th>
<th>Hour Totals per Academic Day</th>
<th>Hour Totals per Academic Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First through Sixth</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh through Twelfth</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PA Cyber students must attend school Monday – Friday according to our academic calendar. Our school offers a degree of flexibility within the academic model permitting students to have access to the program outside of the traditional Monday through Friday academic week. Students may complete work on Saturday and Sunday; however, weekends do not replace weekday attendance according to our attendance requirements. Additionally, PA Cyber’s academic calendar is independent from all local school districts and does not include snow days. PA Cyber students are required to be in attendance regardless of a local school district in-service day and/or snow day.

Students enrolled at PA Cyber will meet attendance requirements by logging into the MySchool portal each school day where this will take your child into his/her classes and have the opportunity to complete their coursework.

Blended Classroom (BC) - Live Session Attendance

Attendance in the live component of the Blended Classroom is mandatory for all students unless otherwise exempt by the Blended Classroom Teacher. The criteria a student must meet in order to become exempt from mandatory attendance in a live, blended class is as follows:

- **Kindergarten** – Beginning November 1, 2015 if a student has a passing grade for the course, he/she will not be required to attend a live blended session unless otherwise noted by the classroom teacher.

- **Grades First through Twelfth** – Students with an overall grade of C or below and/or are not meeting adequate and consistent progress will be required to attend a live blended session unless otherwise noted by Blended Classroom Teacher. Students will receive an email by the 25th of each month to notify if attendance in the upcoming month is mandatory.

Attendance is strongly recommended for all live, blended sessions. Mandatory blended classroom attendance is typically determined on a monthly basis; however, the Blended Classroom Teacher reserves the right to determine attendance status at any time based on the individual student’s needs for success. Failure to attend a blended class session for any given subject area may result in an unexcused absence for the individual course session unless a valid excuse is provided within three (3) calendar days to the Attendance Department.

Students who miss more than 10 minutes of a class period may be marked as absent for the individual class at the teacher’s discretion.

Virtual Classroom (VC) - Live Session Attendance

Attendance in all assigned live, virtual sessions is mandatory for any student enrolled in a VC course. Failure to attend a virtual class session for any given subject area may result in an unexcused absence for the individual course session unless a valid excuse is provided within three (3) calendar days to the Attendance Department.

Students who miss more than 10 minutes of a class period may be marked as absent for the individual class at the teacher’s discretion.
State Testing Attendance Policy
All students in grades 3-8 and high school are required to participate in PSSA’s, Keystones, and/or other state assessments according to the laws outlined by The Pennsylvania Department of Education. An unexcused absence can be recorded for any student who is absent on a given testing day and does not participate in testing.

During designated state testing days, the State Testing Attendance Policy supersedes PA Cyber’s traditional attendance policy. If a student is absent during an assigned testing day, the absence may be recorded as unexcused unless a valid excuse is provided.

PA Cyber Family Link Events/Field Trips
Students may be excused from any live classroom sessions for participation in a PA Cyber sponsored Family Link event or field trip. Students should notify their teacher prior to the absence; however, notification to the Attendance Department is not necessary. The absence will be marked excused after the Attendance Department confirms with the authorized field trip supervisor that the student attended the event. Students are responsible for watching the playback of the missed live session and meet all assignment deadlines.

No Internet Access, Power Outage, or Technology Failure
Internet access, computer access is essential for all cyber school students. In the event of internet failure, power outage, or computer failure, all students must have an alternative plan to go to a public library or public Wi-Fi enabled location with computer access to complete school work. If an alternate plan is not feasible due to extreme circumstances, notification to the Attendance Department must be made within 24 hours.

Absences
Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the Attendance Department if their child is absent for a valid excusable reason on a scheduled school day during the year. An absence is only classified as excused if the absence meets the identified valid and lawful excuse criteria below (see Excused Absences section). Such valid reasons for missing school must be submitted to the Attendance Department either electronically or telephonically by a parent or guardian. All absences are treated as unexcused until a parent provides the school with a valid excuse.

Excused Absences
Excused or legal absences must be reported to the Attendance Department within three (3) school days of the return to school. If a valid excuse is not provided within this time frame, the absence may remain unexcused.

The following reasons are considered lawful and excused in accordance with the Pennsylvania State Attendance Laws:

- **College Visit:** An excused absence may be approved for any student in 11th and 12th grade for college visitations. No more than three (3) absences will be excused for college visitations per school year. Written notification should be provided no later than 48 hours prior to the visit and approved by the Director of Attendance [Title 22 PA CODE §11.26].

- **Court Ordered Hearing:** An absence may be excused if resulting from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or administrative hearing, if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.

- **Death of a Family Member:** An absence may be excused for the death of a member of the student’s immediate family. The immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters.

- **Family Educational Trip:** An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity (non-PA Cyber related). Written notification should be provided at least fourteen (14) days prior to the trip and must be approved by the Director of Attendance. No more than five (5) total absences will be excused for family educational trips per school year [Title 22 PA CODE §11.26].

- **Family Emergency:** An absence resulting from an urgent reason may be excused. PA Cyber shall strictly construe the term “urgent reason” as it applies to such absences and such excuse does not permit irregular attendance [Title 22 PA CODE §11.25].

- **Illness or Injury:** An absence may be excused in which either illness or injury prevents the student from being physically or mentally able to participate in school. A note from a Commonwealth licensed practitioner will be required for any student missing more than three (3) consecutive school days due to illness or injury [Title 22 PA CODE §11.25].

- **Maternity Leave:** Pregnancy itself does not exempt a student or parents from compulsory attendance laws. Documentation from a Commonwealth licensed practitioner is required to excuse a student who is prevented from attending school due to pregnancy related illness or complications. In cases of normal pregnancy, only a Commonwealth licensed practitioner’s statement will be accepted for excusal to discontinue attendance prior to the birth of a child and resuming attendance after the birth.

07/2015
• **Medical or Dental Appointment:** An absence resulting from a medical (health care or therapy) or dental appointment for the student may be excused. Students and parents should make every effort possible to schedule appointments outside of scheduled live classroom sessions. Notice should be given to the attendance department prior to the absence, except in the case of an emergency [Title 22 PA CODE § 11.23].

• **Out-Of-School Program:** Students are encouraged to participate in opportunities which provide real world exposure such as cooperative education, community service, job shadowing, and/or internships/apprenticeships; however, these opportunities should not interfere with any scheduled live sessions. Such absences shall be treated as education trips; therefore, no more than five (5) excused absences from a live classroom session will be approved for out-of-school opportunities. Approval from the Director of Attendance must be obtained seven (7) days prior to the activity. Non-virtual students attending an out-of-school program must still log attendance for the school day in the MySchool portal.

• **Observance of a Religious Holiday:** An absence may be considered excused if the tenets of a bona fide religion, to which the student or parent/guardian adheres, require observance of a religious event. Written notification should be provided at least fourteen (14) days prior to the holiday and must be approved by the Director of Attendance [Title 22 PA CODE § 11.21].

### Reporting an Excused Absence

- **Electronic Form:** Submit the Excusal Request Form found in the Parent Portal and/or BrainHoney. *Preferred*
  Complete all required fields on electronic form.

- **E-mail:** Email attendance@pacyber.org
  Provide the following information: Student’s full name, student ID, grade level, date of absence, reason for absence, if the student missed a full school day or specific live classes, and your (parent) name.

- **Telephone:** Contact the Attendance Department at 1-888-722-9237, ext. 7718.
  Provide the following information: Student’s full name, student ID, grade level, date of absence, reason for absence, if the student missed a full school day or specific live classes, and your (parent) name.

Any supporting documentation such as, but not limited, to a physician note must be submitted to the school through an email attachment to attendance@pacyber.org or faxed to 717-558-0131. The student’s name and student ID should be clearly communicated.

### Classification of Absences

- **Exempt:** An absence listed as medical or illness/injury when accompanied by the correct documentation is classified as exempt. Such absences are not counted when determining whether the student is out of compliance with state attendance laws, as long as verification is provided within the three (3) day limit.

- **Non-exempt:** An absence accompanied with a lawful excuse from a parent/guardian within three (3) school days of the return to school is classified as non-exempt. (See Excused Absences section for listing of lawful excuses.) Absences classified as non-exempt count toward the state attendance law (10 days maximum permitted in a school year).

- **Unexcused (unlawful):** An absence which no explanation is given within three (3) school days of the return to school and/or an absence which does not meet lawful criteria. (See Unexcused Absences section for listing of unlawful absence reasons.) Penalties through the magisterial district justice may be levied for excessive illegal absences (an accumulation of 3 or more, consecutive or non-consecutive).

A maximum of ten (10) non-exempt absences may be approved per school year through communicated documentation by the parent. Absences accumulating beyond ten (10) cumulative non-exempt school days or the equivalent will require documentation from a Commonwealth licensed practitioner. The Director of Attendance holds the right to approve atypical excuses if deemed appropriate and necessary.

### Unexcused Absences

If a student has not met the attendance requirements and the school day is not determined to be excused, the absence will be considered an unexcused/unlawful. The following reasons are considered to be unexcused in accordance with the Pennsylvania State Attendance Laws:

- **Chores**
- **Babysitting / Caretaking**
- Gainful employment
- Hunting, fishing, or other unapproved sporting events
- Oversleeping
- Truancy
- Unapproved educational travel
- Any other reason not recognized as excused

Students who at any time accumulate ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences in the school term may be removed from the active membership roll [Title 22 PA CODE § 11.24].

**Notification of Unexcused Absences**

Any and all unexcused absences will be reported to parents by means of an automated e-mail sent to the student and parent school issued email account. Such absences will be reported to parents/guardians and students the next scheduled school day via e-mail because of the ability for students to log in and submit coursework over a period of 24 hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Unexcused Absence</th>
<th>• Parents/Students sent automated e-mail notifying of absence. Sent to student and parent school e-mail account and personal e-mail address on school record.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Unexcused Absence</td>
<td>• Parents/Students sent automated e-mail notifying of absence. Sent to student and parent school e-mail account and personal e-mail address on school record.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Third Unexcused Absence  | • Parents/Students sent automated e-mail notifying of absence. Sent to student and parent school e-mail account and personal e-mail address on school record.  
• Parents sent **Concern Letter of Unexcused Absences** by US Postal mail to primary mailing address on school record.  
• Parents will be required to contact the school to set up a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP).  
• The school district of residence will be notified of the student’s unexcused absences. |
| Subsequent Absences/ Violation of the Truancy Elimination Plan | • Parents/Students sent automated e-mail notifying of absence. Sent to student and parent school e-mail account and personal e-mail address on school record.  
• Student may be referred to local county Children and Youth Services for intervention of the habitually truant child and/or may be required to appear in court for sanctions from a Magisterial District Judge. |

**TRUANCY OVERVIEW**

Pennsylvania defines truancy as when a student of compulsory school age does not attend school for three or more days without a valid excuse for the absences. Every parent, guardian, or person in a parental relationship who is responsible for a student age eight up through seventeen is responsible for making sure the student of compulsory age attends school on a regular basis. PA Cyber will notify the school district of residence of any student who is truant.

Students enrolled in PA Cyber who are outside of compulsory age are still required to be in attendance according to the academic calendar. Truant students outside of compulsory age may be subject to PA Cyber’s Code of Conduct requiring progressive disciplinary measures to be taken. Students outside of compulsory age may be dropped from the active membership roll after 10 consecutive unexcused absences have accrued.

**Preventing Truancy**

Consistent attendance and progress are key factors in reaching academic success within our school. Every day a student is absent, he/she is missing critical instructional time, which may result in decreased academic performance. Once enrolled with PA Cyber, students and their parents will be held accountable for completing work in a manner consistent with the attendance policy and the specific requirements of their chosen academic curriculum.
PA Cyber is committed to developing creative approaches to ensure our students and parents are active participants in the child’s education. Attendance will be closely tracked by teachers, Principals, Academic Deans, and the Attendance Department. PA Cyber understands children are truant for many reasons. We are dedicated to understanding and addressing such issues. Every effort will be made to keep youth in school and reduce referrals to county courts, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems in order to effectively intervene and eliminate truant behavior.

**Truancy Elimination Plan**
A Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP) is a school-family conference used to address chronic absences and/or academic difficulties. Students can be recommended for a TEP by the Supervisor of Attendance, teacher or other school staff.

Issues addressed will include, but are not limited to:
1. Appropriateness of the student’s educational environment
2. Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success
3. Student’s current academic level and needs
4. Social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health issues
5. Issues concerning family and home environment
6. Any other issues affecting the student’s success

TEP meetings are an important step for the student’s continued success; therefore, cooperation and participation by student and parent/guardian is mandatory.

**Resulting Penalties of Truant Youth**
The laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provide for a $300 per day fine and allow the court to impose educational parenting classes and community service sentences upon parents of a truant student who do not show they took reasonable steps to ensure the student’s school attendance. It provides that the parent and student must appear at a hearing before the Magisterial District Judge. This law also provides that truant students can lose their driver’s license for 90 days for a first offense and six months for a second offense. Additionally, students under the age of 13 shall be referred to a county children and youth agency for possible disposition as a dependent child. The Magisterial District Judge has the ability to suspend all or portions of a sentence if the child is no longer habitually truant.