

EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM: NEW HB 410 REQUIREMENTS

It is important for every student in Ohio to attend school every day. Missing too much school has long-term, negative effects on students, such as lower achievement and graduation rates. To that end, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 410, which supports a preventative approach to excessive absences and truancy. Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, several important changes have taken effect.

NEW LAW:

- Absences are now recorded by hour, including tardy occurrences.
- All instructional time missed counts as an absence. The only time during the school day that does not count as instructional time is a student's lunch period.
- A letter will be sent to parent/guardian(s) when a student misses 38 hours in a month or 65 hours in a year, with or without a legitimate excuse*.
- A student who misses 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in a month, or 72 hours in a school year without a legitimate excuse* is considered habitually truant and is referred to an Absence Intervention Team.

**Legitimate excuse = excused absence*

DISTRICT TERMINOLOGY:

Excused Absence: An excused absence is one that falls into one of the following categories, as found in Highland Local School District Board of Education Policy 5200, Attendance, and is communicated by the parent/guardian to school officials:

1. personal illness (a written physician's statement verifying the illness may be required);
 2. illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child;
 3. quarantine of the home;
 4. death in the family;
 5. necessary work at home due to absence or incapacity of parent/guardian(s);
 6. observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday;
 7. out-of-state travel (up to a maximum of 24 hours per school year that the student's school is open for instruction) to participate in a district-approved enrichment or extracurricular activity;
 8. such good cause as may be acceptable to the superintendent;
 9. medically necessary leave for a pregnant student in accordance with Policy 5751.
- Please note: Vacations fall under No. 8, provided the process identified in the student handbook for the student's school was followed.
 - Unexcused Absence: An unexcused absence occurs when a parent/guardian notifies the school of an absence but it does not fall into one of the categories listed under Excused Absence.
 - Truant: A student is marked truant when a parent/guardian does not contact the school and does not respond when a call is placed, notifying the parent/guardian that a student is not in school.
 - Tardy: The mark of tardy, if applicable, is defined in the student handbook for each building. Time tardy counts toward the hour totals.

To review the requirements of House Bill 410, please visit the ODE website at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Data/Proving-Ground/House-Bill-410-FAQ.pdf.aspx>