

WHY MAKE THE CHANGES?

- The Pennsylvania Department of Education has mandated that local school districts enforce attendance policies and procedures.
- Lower Moreland Township School District believes that for students to realize the opportunities and benefits from school, they not only have to be in attendance, but also must be meaningfully connected to the school and be experiencing success.
- The District makes every effort to keep students in school and reduce referrals to the courts, child welfare, or juvenile justice systems in order to effectively intervene and eliminate truant behavior.
- Our new procedures will involve an intensive and early response to students who have unlawful absences. Our intent is to provide early interventions to keep students from a pattern of habitual truancy which can lead to academic failure.

CAUSES & EFFECTS OF TRUANCY

Truancy is often a symptom of more serious problems. Enforcing truancy rules starts the intervention process that can assist families in crisis.

Children may be dealing with:

- Peer Pressure
- Separation or divorce in family
- Abuse or neglect
- Mental and/or physical health issues
- Family drug and alcohol abuse
- Frequent family moves
- Low self-esteem
- Family financial problems
- Lack of friends
- Negative social interactions
- Difficulty acquiring academic skills
- Boredom

The effects of truancy may include:

- Decreased learning ability
- Struggling to catch up with school work which may lead to failure
- Involvement in daytime crime, such as breaking and entering, vandalism, and shoplifting
- Increased risk of dropping out of school
- Increased chance of being unemployed

Lower Moreland Township School District

DISTRICT ATTENDANCE POLICY



2010-2011

Lower Moreland Township School District

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2010-2011 POLICY CHANGES

Effective for the 2010-2011 school year, the Lower Moreland Township School District will be using new attendance procedures.

They are as follows:

- Attendance at school is mandatory in the state of Pennsylvania beginning in grade one (1).
- Parents must submit a blue card, to excuse an absence. Electronic submission of this excuse may also take place in the form of an email or fax to the building attendance secretary.
- The blue card must be submitted to the building attendance secretary within five (5) school days following the absence.
- If the blue card is not received within five (5) school days, the absence (s) will be PERMANENTLY counted as an unlawful absence.
- Continue to require students who are absent from school for a period of five (5) or more continuous school days to present a written verification of the absence by a licensed medical authority.

WHAT IS AN UNLAWFUL ABSENCE?

Any absence that is not excused by a parent/guardian within five (5) school days will be considered unlawful.

- The District will notify the parent/guardian in writing of the first, second, and third unlawful absence(s).
- Following the third unlawful absence, the District will coordinate a school-family conference to discuss truancy and develop a Truancy Elimination Plan (See “What Happens at a Truancy Elimination Plan?”).
- The fourth unlawful absence, and every one that follows, will result in referral to the magisterial district judge or the local Children and Youth agency.
- The Lower Moreland Township School District will work with the family to provide support and referral information for assistance from community social service agencies.



WHAT HAPPENS AT A TRUANCY ELIMINATION PLAN (TEP) MEETING?

During the TEP meeting, everyone has the opportunity to explore possible solutions to increase the student's school attendance. Participation by the student AND family is an integral component of this meeting.

We will discuss:

- The strengths of the student;
- Any school factors that affect the student's attendance;
- Social, emotional, physical, mental, or behavioral health issues;
- Issues concerning family and home environment;
- Other issues affecting the student's attendance.

A plan will be developed by the team that will strive to improve student attendance. The plan will include positive outcomes for compliance and consequences for non-compliance.