

2017-2018 Truancy Laws and Procedures

Dear Parents,

As you may or may not be aware, the Pennsylvania truancy laws have been updated. The changes will be enforced this school year. This letter is to inform you of the new changes made to the compulsory attendance provision of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (24 P.S. 13-1327) and how Luzerne County will implement them.

- Students who are registered in a Pennsylvania public school district, under the age of 17 years old, are subject to these laws.
- A student is considered truant after **3 unexcused/unlawful** absences during the current school year
- A student is considered habitually truant after **6 unexcused/unlawful** absences during the current school year.
- The parent/guardian will be notified, in writing, after the student's **third unexcused/unlawful** absence. i.e. "Notice of Truancy"
- The parent/legal guardian will be invited to attend a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) after the **sixth unexcused/unlawful absence**. Please note, this plan will be made with or without the parent's attendance. Failure to follow through with the plan will result in a truancy citation filed with the local magistrate's office, where the SAIP will become part of a court order.
- A review hearing with the magistrate will be scheduled approximately 30 days after the original hearing. If the plan is being followed, the citation will be withdrawn. If the plan is not being followed, the student and family will be referred to Truancy Court, overseen by Judge Rodgers.

When a student is absent, a written excuse from a parent/guardian, Doctor, or service provider is required upon the student's return to school. The excuse must include the dates the student was absent and the reason for the absences. Below is a list of excused/legal absences:

- (1) Illness/medical
- (2) death in the student's immediate family
- (3) legal reasons that may affect the child including unsafe road conditions, quarantine of the home, death in family other than an immediate relative, suspension from school
- (4) student was summoned to appear in court
- (5) pre-approved educational trip

The Wilkes-Barre Area School District is committed to following these set-forth changes. Please feel free to contact the district at any time if you have any questions regarding these changes.