

West Chester Area School District
MARY C. HOWSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Office of the Principal
641 W. Boot Road
West Chester, PA 19380
484-266-1300

Children cannot be dropped off at school before the "official" District drop off time of
8:30 am.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Especially when planning family vacations

WCASD ATTENDANCE POLICY

PLEASE REFER TO WCASD WEBSITE FOR THE COMPLETE
POLICY

A SUMMARY OF POLICIES JB-ATTENDANCE, JB-E MAJOR
RELIGIOUS

HOLIDAYS, JBD-R ABSENCES AND EXCUSES FOLLOWS:

**STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT
FROM SCHOOL**

1. Call the Safe Arrival Line **484-266-1310** by 9:00 a.m. on the days your child is absent from school. This number is the Safe Arrival Line and has voice mail available before and after school hours. **Please note:** The phone call **is not** in place of sending a note.
2. Please send a signed **WCASD EXCUSE FORM** (required by state law) when your child returns to school after an absence. If this note is not returned within 3 school days, the absence will be considered unexcused at the kindergarten level and **illegal** for grades one through five. (For filing purposes **please** use the WCASD Excuse Form, which can be obtained from the school office or online at the MCH website and **not** notepaper or personal stationery).

State law established conditions under which children may be excused from attendance from school. In keeping with these statutes and recommendations of the State Department of Education, pupils in the WCASD may be **EXCUSED** from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Sickness
2. Quarantine

3. Death in immediate family
4. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child or make roads impassable
5. Observance of a major religious holiday. See Policy JBD-E for a list of Board approved Religious Holidays
6. For the full or part time excusal to observe a religious holiday it is necessary for the parent or guardian to present a written request to the principal **PRIOR** to the religious holiday
7. For other exceptional reasons with **PRIOR** approval of the administration/principal (This includes vacations and trips)
(Please note family vacation will be limited to 5 days excused)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDELINES

1. The parents of all students who miss 10 days shall be notified in writing of student's absence record
2. A parent/guardian conference shall be requested by the administration when a student has missed a total of 15 days or more.
3. After 20 or more days of absence, an informal review of the student's record including days of absence, discipline and academic shall be made by the administration and recommendations, if any, shall be made in writing the respective director retention in grade.
4. A combination of 8 absences for a portion of the school day will be considered on a cumulative basis and may be deemed an unlawful absence.
5. Please verify student absences/tardies with a doctor's note when possible.

Cumulative Absences

Excused absences: Those absences where any licensed practitioner of the healing arts or upon any other satisfactory evidence furnished, shows that a student is unable to attend school and/or classes, or is prevented from study because of illness or other urgent reasons including but not limited to the following:

1. A maximum of seven (7) days absence for students verified by a parent note. All absences beyond the seven day of absence will require a physician's note.
2. **Family vacation**, pre-approved by the principal while school in session, up to a **maximum of five (5) days per school year**. The following will be taken into consideration by the principal in granting permission for the trip.
 - a. The student's academic standing.
 - b. The student's attendance record.
 - c. The effect the absence will have on the student's education welfare.
 - d. The exceptionality of the request.

The term urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and is not intended to permit irregular attendance.

Unexcused/Unlawful absences

Any absence which does not meet the definition of an excused absence including but not limited to the following:

1. Any day for which a written excuse is not submitted within (3) school days of a student's return from an absence, including notes from physicians.

2. Any absence not excused by a physician's note after seven (7) absences verified by receipt of parent excuses.
3. Truancy—Frequent or prolonged absence without satisfactory reason, or willful violation of the compulsory attendance laws, which are subject to the penalties provided for in the school laws of Pennsylvania.
4. Class cut
5. Unexcused lateness to school that results in an absence from fifty (50%) or more of a class period.

6. Any absence due to a family vacation while school is in session after the fifth (5th) of the five (5) day maximum per school year.

Noncumulative absences

1. Suspensions from school
2. Illness verified by a physician's note submitted within three (3) days of a student's return
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays.

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include medical or dental appointments, court appearance, or family emergency.

REVISED 6/07