

# COUNCIL ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

***Please read this communication carefully as the attendance law has changed.***

Regular school attendance is necessary for a successful school experience. Instructional continuity is interrupted and the valuable interaction that occurs with teachers and among fellow students is lost when a student is frequently absent, tardy or dismissed early from school. Realizing that regular attendance in school is necessary for students to gain maximum benefits from public education, the Board urges all parents/guardians to stress punctuality and regular attendance habits with their children. Policy No. 204 of the Council Rock School District regulates attendance in the schools of Council Rock. In addition, the school laws of Pennsylvania, specifically Act 138 of 2016, requires every parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of a child or children between the ages of eight and seventeen to send them to school. The laws further require that, "Once a parent elects to send his child to school, the child must attend continuously until seventeen years of age, has graduated from a senior high school or has secured legal employment at age sixteen." As we begin the 2018-2019 school year, we want to inform you of our policies regarding attendance.

## **Excused Absence:**

Any child who is absent from school must present a **written excuse** signed by the parent or guardian immediately upon his/her return. The note must clearly indicate the **reason for absence** and must be presented **within three school days** from the child's return to school. Please note that a phone call does not excuse your child's attendance.

The school will classify an absence as "excused" for one of the following reasons only:

- Illness
- Death in the immediate family
- Quarantine
- Exceptionally urgent reasons (will be used only in such unavoidable absences as affect the welfare of the child directly and not for the convenience of the parent)
- Religious observances WITH prior approval
- Tutorial work
- Educational tours or trips WITH prior approval (not to exceed five days per year)
- Health care

Any absence that can be anticipated beforehand should be brought to the attention of the building principal well in advance of the absence.

Secondary students who are absent in excess of twenty days from any year-long course may be denied academic credit for that course. Credit for semester courses may be denied if ten days of absence are exceeded. Special consideration will be given to those students who are seriously ill.

**Religious Observation:** For full or part-time absence of a student to observe a religious holiday, it is necessary that a written request for absence be presented to the school prior to the religious holiday(s). Under these circumstances, the student will not be deprived of eligibility to compete for any award.

**Tutorial work:** Upon written parental request, a student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curriculum. The excused absence shall not interfere with the student's regular program of study and the qualifications of the instructor shall be approved by the school district.

**Educational Tours or Trips:** Requests by parents/guardians for permission to have children absent from school for educational tours or trips must be made to and processed by the principal or his/her designee. The request must be received by the principal at least ten (10) days prior to the anticipated absence. ***The total number of approved days of absence shall not exceed five (5) days in a given school year.*** Days exceeding these guidelines shall be considered unlawful and/or unexcused. The parent/guardian must assume the responsibility for checking with the principal or his/her designee, at least one (1) week or more if possible, in advance of the trip, to ascertain the present scholastic standing of the child in the class. The student shall be held responsible for making up missed assignments.

**Health care:** Upon written parental request, a student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service.

### **Unexcused or Unlawful Absences:**

All absences for reasons other than those cited above will be considered as “unexcused.” All “unexcused” absences for students under the age of seventeen are also recorded as “unlawful.”

The student and parent/guardian will be notified of a first and second unexcused/unlawful absence. When a student accumulates three days of unlawful absence in a school year, the principal shall send an official “first offense notice” to the parent/guardian and a copy to the Director of Special Services. In addition, a “School Attendance Improvement Plan” will be developed to improve student attendance. ***For each incident of unlawful absence after the sixth unlawful absence, the attendance officer shall do one or more of the following; refer the child to an attendance improvement program, refer to Children and Youth or file a truancy citation with the District Magistrate.***

### **Cumulative Absences**

Whenever a student accumulates ten (10) or more absences in a school year (fifteen or more if five of these absences are pre-approved for educational trips/tours), a “School Attendance Improvement Plan” will be developed to improve student attendance.

### **Consecutive Absences**

Whenever a student has ten (10) consecutive absences and there is no evidence that these absences are “excused”, the district shall begin the process to remove the student from its active membership roll.

### **Tardiness and Early Dismissal:**

Whenever students arrive late or depart prior to the end of the school day, parents must present the school with a written note explaining the situation. These incidents are recorded as “excused” or “unexcused” applying the same criteria as those for full-day absences.

Students arriving after the midpoint of the morning or departing before the midpoint of the school day will be recorded as ½ day absent.

Additional school district attendance information is available on the Council Rock website [www.crsd.org](http://www.crsd.org).

Respectfully,



Barry J. Desko  
Director of K – 12 Education