

BACS Absence Policy

Absence from school gets in the way of student learning, so the state of Pennsylvania has clearly defined expectations about how much time a student is expected to be at school. The Bryn Athyn Church School abides by those expectations, and has the following plan for supporting families in getting their children to school regularly. The policy below outlines attendance expectations and the plan for what will happen in the case of student absence.

- **A maximum of ten days of cumulative excused absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten cumulative days will require an excuse from a physician.**
- **Unexcused absences are considered unlawful. After each unexcused absence the school will communicate with the family, and all unexcused absences beyond three will be reported to the school district in which the student resides.**

An absence is considered excused if it is the result of illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, and authorized school activities. In order for the absence to be considered excused, a parent or guardian of the student must provide a note, email or phone call to the school that explains the reason for the absence, and the reason must fit within the guidelines listed above. If not given on the day of absence, parent notification must be produced within three days of the student's return to school following the absence. If no notification is ever produced it will be considered an unexcused absence (more will be detailed about that later in this document).

*Note: Students who are absent on a given day are not permitted to attend school-sponsored events during that day or evening. This applies to students who have a half day absence for the latter half of the school day if the absence is not due to medical or dental appointments.

If a student must miss more than 10 days of school, he/she will be required to bring in a doctor's note on the date of return to school following his/her absence for each future health-related absence.

*Note: Students who are excluded from BACS because of health department regulations in cases of health epidemics will not accrue absences that apply to the upper limit of 10 excused. The absences from exclusion will be recorded, but will be treated differently and will not lead to further action.

Absence for Travel or Vacation

We request that parents plan around the school calendar when scheduling vacations. Children should not be taken out of school for leisure vacation when school is in session. Absences for these vacations will be considered unexcused. BACS recognizes that a rare opportunity may arise for a family to take a trip with educational value for which an exception may be made.

For an exception to be made, a parent or guardian must submit a Pre-Approved Educational Travel Form at least **five days** prior to the trip. If the form is not submitted, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. A form may be printed from the Bryn Athyn Church School Website or obtained from the school office.

Unexcused Absence

An absence will be considered unexcused if:

- It does not fall into the approved categories above
- The student misses more than 10 days of school and does not bring in a doctor's note to explain his/her absence
- A note/email/phone call with a reason for an absence is not provided by the parent
- A student is absent for unauthorized reasons (e.g., trips for which the parent or guardian has failed to submit a Pre-Approved Educational Travel Form.)

Three unexcused absences will result in a report going to the school board in whichever district the student resides. The elementary school director will contact the parent by phone and/or email each time an unexcused absence is earned in order to support the family in getting the student to school and also to let them know that a report will be made after three unexcused absences. Ongoing truancy will continue to be reported to the student's school district and can result in a visit from a social worker, a fine for the parent and/or (older) student, and further action.

If all efforts to engage the parents, and student where appropriate, fail – e.g. parents don't respond to phone calls or emails, fail to come to the school for scheduled meetings, refuse assistance that is offered – and unexcused absences continue to accumulate, the student may be excused from BACS.