

BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

There are three types of student absences as defined by New Jersey:

1. Excused
2. Unexcused
3. Unexcused that counts toward truancy

An “**excused absence**” is a student’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the observance of a religious holiday pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16, for Take Your Child to Work Day, or any other absence determined to be excused by the New Jersey Department of Education. On the other hand, an “**unexcused absence that counts toward truancy**” is a student’s absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not excused as defined above or for any unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy listed below.

Absences that are “unexcused” and do not count toward truancy:

- a. The student's illness supported by a note from the parent upon a student's return to school or a verbal message from the parent on the day of the student's absence;
- b. The student's required attendance in court supported by a note from the parent or a verbal message;
- c. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
- d. The student’s suspension from school;
- e. Family illness or death supported by a written letter from the parent upon the student’s return to school or a verbal message from the parent;
- f. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;
- g. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed unexcused that does not count toward truancy by the Principal upon a written request by the student’s parent stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy.

If you take your child on vacation and he/she misses school, the State of New Jersey requires that we record these absences as “unexcused that count toward truancy.” All school districts are required to send an attendance letter to the parents/guardians of children upon the accrual of their fourth unexcused absence that counts toward truancy. Furthermore, the Parents/Guardians of students who miss over ten days of school because of unexcused absences that count toward truancy will have a complaint signed against them in municipal court.