

## Absence Policy Guidelines for Students

Walt Whitman High School Attendance Office: 301-320-6576

### I'M LATE, I'M LATE: WHAT TO DO?

- Students who arrive late for their first class period (7:25 am-8:11 am) **DO NOT GO TO THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE.** Go directly to class and present a note to your first period teacher signed by your parent/guardian; otherwise, late arrivals will be considered **UNEXCUSED.**
- Students who arrive late **after** the first period has concluded should **GO DIRECTLY TO THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE.** Present a note from your parent or guardian to the Attendance Office. Students who arrive late without a note from home will be marked as **UNEXCUSED LATE.**

### I HAVE TO GO TO THE DOCTOR/DENTIST/ORTHODONTIST: WHAT TO DO?

- When you have an early dismissal due to a medical appointment, you must present a signed note from your parent/guardian to the Attendance Office to receive an **EARLY DISMISSAL PASS.** Sign out at the Attendance Office prior to leaving the school building for your scheduled appointment. Students need to sign out at the Attendance Office for all appointments even if their departure time is during their lunch period. When you return to school from an appointment, you must sign-in at the Attendance Office. You will be issued an **EXCUSED PASS** to return to your next scheduled class period.
- All medical appointments require a note from the doctor's office when the student returns to school.

### I'M SICK/INJURED AND CAN'T COME TO SCHOOL: WHAT TO DO?

- When you're absent from school due to illness or injury, you or your parent are not required to call the school. Instead, you must bring a note signed by your parent/guardian to the Attendance Office **within three (3) days** after returning to school.
- If you are absent for **five or more (5) days** due to illness or injury, you must submit a doctor's note when you return to school.
- If you become ill at school, **you must report to the Health Room.** Ask a teacher or counselor for a note giving you approval to leave class and visit the Health Room. Students dismissed from school by the Health Room must sign out at the Attendance Office. The Health Room will issue an early dismissal pass to be presented to the Attendance Office. Within **three (3) days** of returning to school, you must bring a note signed by your parent or guardian to the Attendance Office.

### **MY FAMILY WANTS TO TAKE A VACATION WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION: WHAT TO DO?**

- Absences due to family vacations are considered as **UNEXCUSED** unless school administration makes the determination to approve the absence. Your parents must request permission in writing at least **one week (5 school days)** prior to the anticipated absence. You must bring this written request from your parent/guardian to the Attendance Office. The Attendance Office will issue an approval form (attached to parental note) for you to present to each teacher to initial. The teachers' initials indicate their agreement to allow you to make-up any assignments missed. The approval form and note then go to the assigned grade level administrator, who makes the final decision to approve or deny your absence.

### **I NEED TO MISS SCHOOL TO VISIT COLLEGES. WHAT TO DO?**

- You must present a note to the Attendance Office from a parent/guardian at least **one week** prior to the requested absence for college visits or participation in college orientation programs. The Attendance Office will issue an approval form for you to obtain each teacher's approval. You then take this form and the parental note to your grade level administrator for approval. The approval form and parental note are returned to the Attendance Office. You need to limit your visits to colleges so you do not miss too much school.

### **I NEED TO MISS SCHOOL DUE TO PARTICIPATION IN A NON-SCHOOL EVENT. WHAT TO DO?**

- A note signed by your parent/guardian must be given to the Attendance Office at least 24 hours in advance. The Attendance Office will issue an approval form for you to obtain each teacher's approval. You then take this form and the parental note to your grade level administrator for approval. The approval form and parental note are returned to the Attendance Office.

### **WHAT TYPES OF ABSENCES ARE CONSIDERED EXCUSED?**

The State of Maryland regards the following as lawful absences from school\*:

- Student illness
- Death in immediate family
- Court summons
- Religious observances
- Violent/hazardous weather
- Emergencies designated by the Superintendent of Schools
- State emergency
- Work or other activity accepted by school authorities.

**\*Any absences not falling into these categories may or may not be approved. Approval is at the sole discretion of the grade level administrator taking many factors into consideration. Each situation will be reviewed on an individual basis.**

### **MAKING UP MISSED WORK**

- It is the sole responsibility of each student to obtain from the teacher any work missed. The student should request from each teacher a date on which all make-up work for that class is due. Students will receive a zero for missed work if the absence is unexcused.

### **TRUANCY**

- Each teacher is responsible for taking attendance daily. At the end of each school day **CONNECT ED (Automated Attendance System)** will scan the Attendance database for ABSENCES. Any student with an ABSENCE that has not been excused will receive a call home via the automated Attendance system. The call is scheduled to contact parents each evening.

### **AGE OF MAJORITY**

- When students reach age 18, the law allows them to sign their own absence notes, but only if the parents agree and sign the required form, which is available from the Attendance Office. The school can rescind the Age of Majority status if the student has too many absences or tardies.