



Gaithersburg High School

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Office of the Principal

January 23, 2019

Dear Gaithersburg High School Students, Staff, and Families,

On Tuesday, January 29, 2019 we will begin implementing new “E3” procedures as written in Maryland State Regulation JEA-RA, Student Attendance, indicating that *“Students with five unlawful absences in a class will automatically be notified to submit an appeal of the recording of their absences if they or their parents/guardians believe any absence was recorded incorrectly, or develop an attendance intervention plan with the school counselors/administrators.”*

As part of the procedures, when a student has reached three (3) days of unexcused absences parents/guardians will receive a MCPS-generated 3-day warning letter of possible failure due to attendance. If a student reaches five (5) unexcused absences, parents/guardians will again receive a MCPS 5-day letter notifying of failure due to attendance. Below is an overview of our attendance policy and the Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP) Process should a student have excessive unlawful absences:

- **School attendance, and attendance to every scheduled class, is mandatory.**
- **Lawful Absences:** Absences will not be considered excused unless a note explaining the absence is submitted to the attendance office within three (3) school days of the absence. The Maryland State Board of Education identifies the following as lawful absences:
 - Certified illness of the student
 - State emergency
 - Hazardous weather conditions
 - Lack of authorized transportation
 - Physical and mental incapacity
 - Court summons
 - Religious holiday
 - Suspension from school
 - Work or activity accepted by school authorities
 - Death in the immediate family
- **Unlawful Absences:** An absence for any reason other than those approved by the State Board of Education is considered an unlawful absence. Teachers may deny students the opportunity to earn credit for missed work or course.
- **Unlawful Tardies:** All students are expected to arrive to class on time. Students have five (5) minutes between classes. Three (3) unlawful tardies is equal to one (1) unlawful absence from class. If a student unlawfully misses 15 minutes or more of a class period, the class period will be considered an unlawful absence. Students are held accountable for tardiness under the MCPS attendance policy and may earn an E3 (course failure due to attendance) for having repeated unlawful tardiness in any class.

- **Truancy and Cutting Classes:** Truancy (unlawful absences from school) and cutting classes are serious infractions of state, MCPS, and local school policy. The Attendance Office carefully tracks patterns of student attendance. The Attendance Office verifies excuses for absences, late arrivals, and early departures. Students are held accountable for truancy and cutting classes under the MCPS attendance policy and may earn an E3 (course failure due to attendance) for having more than 5 unlawful absences in any class.

Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP) Process

When a student is at five (5) unlawful absences, the student is at risk of receiving an “E3” (failure due to attendance) for the course. A letter from Montgomery County Public Schools will then be sent directly to the parent/guardian at the student’s home address. The school counselor and administrative team will begin monitoring the situation, including consulting with the teacher of record regarding requirements for make-up.

Should the unexcused absences continue, the school will implement an Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP). This is a collaborative effort to identify the appropriate supports to help the student improve attendance and make up missed work. The plan will be revised in response to student successes and challenges and an administrator will review and sign off on the intervention plan for implementation.

At an established time at the end of the marking period 4, the school team will review the student progress in meeting the AIP. One of the following will be determined:

- AIP interventions resulted in student improvement in attendance. If the student met the expectations of the AIP, s/he will receive the grade earned in the course.
- AIP interventions did not result in improvement in attendance, and is already failing the course, s/he will receive an “E3” in the course. Parents/guardians will be notified of this situation. The Principal will then review the situation to determine if the E3 is being upheld. If upheld, the student will need to repeat the course.
- AIP interventions did not result in improvement in attendance, but is passing the course, s/he will receive a “temporary E3” in the course. Parents/guardians will also be notified of this situation. The Principal will then review the situation to determine additional steps in the process for the student to earn credit in the course. Local school teams will determine a timeline for the intervention steps and the restoration of the passing grade.

Questions regarding student attendance, the new “E3” guidelines, and the attendance intervention process. Can be directed to the student’s counselor or administrator.

Sincerely,



Cary Dimmick
Principal