

DIANE WORKMAN
Acting Superintendent

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ERIN BLUEDORN, CPA
Business Manager
School Board Secretary

www.freedomareaschools.org

1702 SCHOOL STREET
FREEDOM, PENNSYLVANIA 15042

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Pennsylvania School Code requires that we classify absences as “unexcused” unless the absence is the result of illness, death in the immediate family, quarantine, exceptionally urgent matters, or approved educational trips. These educational trips must be approved by the office in advance of the trip and include valid educational activities to be completed during the trip.

Under the Itinerary of Trip section of this form, you are asked to provide us with “activities which could be educational in nature and will provide the child with some valuable experience outside of the classroom.” Some examples of both acceptable and unacceptable activities are listed below.

Please note that only one educational trip will be approved per year. Trips will not be approved during the first or last two weeks of a semester, during final exams, or during state mandated assessments. In addition, students should have a grade of “C” or higher and less than 10 percent absenteeism. Days missed as a part of an educational trip will count against the school attendance policy.

Please complete the attached form and return it to the school office (a separate form must be completed for each building). These requests should be submitted to the attendance office two weeks prior to the proposed absence. Absences for trips which have not been pre-approved or did not include acceptable educational activities will be marked “Unexcused” and addressed appropriately within the attendance policy. Please note that a written excuse must be submitted to the attendance office upon returning from your trip.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Principal

Acceptable Activities:

- Museum visits
- Visits to national landmarks
- Study of local geography/history
- Keeping a journal of the trip
- Map Skills/Trip planning skills
- Writing/Presenting a report
- Learning about other cultures at Epcot
- Learning about marine life
- Religious activities/functions

Unacceptable Activities:

- Travel to relatives
- Vacation
- Holiday travel
- Leaving early for the holidays
- It’s none of your business
- Sightseeing
- Only listing the destination of your travel

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EDUCATIONAL TOUR OR TRIP

1. Request for Excuse

The parents or guardians of a student who wish to have the student excused from compulsory school attendance for an educational tour or trip must submit an application to the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. Except for emergency situations, which must be fully explained, this request must be submitted at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the date on which the student seeks to be excused from compulsory attendance.

2. Administrator's Discretion

The principal of the school shall exercise discretion in determining whether to excuse the student from compulsory attendance. Consideration shall be given to the length of the tour or trip, the number of requests made during the school year, and whether the educational tour or trip is likely to enhance the educational growth of the student. It is the practice of the Freedom Area School District not to approve absences for educational tour or trips during the first or last two weeks of each semester, mid-term exams, final exams, or during state mandated assessments.

3. Assignments

Upon request by a parent, guardian or student, teachers shall submit a list of student assignments or classroom activities for the period of absence during an approved educational tour or trip. Assignments/responsibilities may be made either prior to the absence or upon return to school. All assignments/classroom activities which are to be completed shall be submitted to the teacher(s) upon return to school or within the period of time as designated by the teacher(s).

4. Return to School

The students shall return to school by the first scheduled school day after the excused absence or date previously specified by the building principal.

5. Failure to Comply

A student who is absent from school on a tour or trip after being denied an excused absence shall be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance requirements set forth in the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and shall earn a failing grade for the assignments/responsibilities made during the period of absence. A student, who after being granted an excuse, fails to complete the assignments/responsibilities within a reasonable period of time as designated by the teacher, shall earn a failing grade for the incomplete assignments/responsibilities.

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6. Athletic Eligibility

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (P.I.A.A.) Constitution stipulates: A pupil who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of twenty or more school days, shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he has been in attendance for a total of sixty (60) school days following his twentieth day of absence, except that where there is a consecutive absence of five or more school days, due to confining illness, injury, or quarantine, such absence may be waived from the application of this rule by the district committee, if a thorough and complete investigation warrants such waiver. Attendance at summer schools does not count toward the sixty days required. Absence from school for an entire semester, or for several semesters, shall disqualify a pupil for the same period as stated in this section.

7. Implementation

This policy is designed for implementation at the building level. Frequent recurrence of requests for educational tours or trips during a school year shall result in disapproval, although the requested trip may be meritorious. This policy is designed to foster better school student relationship rather than excessive absence.