

Seneca Valley School District



Tracy L. Vitale, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Administration Center
124 Seneca School Road
Harmony, PA 16037-9134
PHONE: (724) 452-6040
FAX: (724) 452-6105

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 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, final exams, or 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.

Complete the attached form and return 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. Please note that a written excuse must be submitted to the attendance office after 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 daily 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 holidays
It's none of your business
Sightseeing
Only listing location of 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 in order to participate in 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 Seneca Valley 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 2949, 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.

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.

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Secondary Student Application for Educational Tour or Trip

Part I: To be completed by parent/guardian

Student's Name: _____

Address: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Homeroom: _____

Were prior requests granted during this school year? _____

Dates students will be absent from school: _____

Proposed destination: _____

Purpose of tour or trip: _____

Itinerary of Trip: _____

Reason trip cannot be taken when school is not in session: _____

I hereby request that the above student be excused from compulsory attendance during this period of absence. I have read and understand the details regarding Educational Trips included with this form. I assume responsibility for supervising the completion of all assignments and responsibilities which are to be submitted upon his/her return to school or within a reasonable period of time as designated by his/her teacher(s).

Please reference the PA Department of Health recommendations for any travel outside of Pennsylvania. If you plan to travel to an area where there are high amounts of COVID-19 cases, it is recommended that you stay at home for 14 days upon return to Pennsylvania. If you travel to the states listed on the Covid-19 Information to travelers page, <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>, it is recommended that you quarantine for 14 days upon return.

Date: _____ Signature Parent/Guardian: _____

Part II: To be completed by student's teachers

Period	Teacher's Initials	Comments / Assignments	Due Date
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

Part III: To be completed by the building principal

Please check one: Approved _____ Conditionally Approved _____ Disapproved _____

Comments: _____

Date: _____ Signature of Principal: _____ Counselor's Initials (7-8 MS only) _____

PLEASE BE ADVISED THESE DAYS WILL COUNT AGAINST THE ATTENDANCE POLICY