

Attendance Policy

Attendance rules are established by the State Department of Public Education. BMS must keep accurate records and make attendance reports to the local school districts in which students reside. Enforcement is the responsibility of the public school districts.

1. Excused Absences

Pupils may legally be absent because of personal illness, quarantine, impassable roads, death in the immediate family, or other compelling situations directly affecting the child. Advance written requests for excused absences in special cases, such as family trips, religious observances, interviews, college visits, etc., must be submitted to the superintendent at least one week in advance. To be excused, these absences must be approved by the administration.

Parents who are planning to take their child on an educational trip during the time school is in session must complete an educational trip form and have it approved by the administration. Educational trips will be limited to five school days and there can only be one trip per academic year. Family trips should include historical, geographical or cultural activities. Students are responsible for work missed and should make arrangements with the teachers at least one week before leaving. Students going on excused educational trips are required to do a daily journal and submit it to their homeroom teacher when they return. Parents are urged to carefully weigh the consequences of lost instructional time. Any such absence extending beyond five days requires board approval and should be requested prior to the monthly board meeting preceding the trip.

2. Unexcused Absences

Absences of students under the age of 17 resulting from reasons other than those listed above are considered unlawful (illegal, unexcused) according to compulsory attendance regulations. Students under 17 with three days of unexcused absences will be reported to the school authorities of the district in which the student resides. The local school superintendent of that district will serve the parents with a “first notice.” This notice informs the parents of the unexcused absences and of their liability for prosecution should further offenses occur. Notices will also be sent home from the BMS office.

Students should make prior arrangements for all work related to unexcused absences. In the event a student has an unexcused absence when a test is administered without prior arrangements having been made, the student will take the test the following day with 85 % being the highest possible grade.

Seniors quite regularly plan and participate in a “skip day”. This activity is not sanctioned by either the Board or Administration, and we do not believe it is conducive to the overall atmosphere at BMS nor to the academic standards to which we adhere.

3. Parents’ Responsibility

Parents are responsible for exercising whatever reasonable supervision and control is necessary for their child to maintain regular attendance.

4. Returning to School Following Absence

When a student returns to school following an absence he/she should bring to their homeroom teacher a note from the parents stating the reason for the absence. If a note for an absence is not received by the third day after the absence, the absence is considered unexcused.

5. Arriving Late

State law requires that a tardiness record be kept of each student. A student who reports to the office after 8:00 a.m. is considered tardy. Six unexcused tardies equal a half day unexcused absence. A student who reports after 10:00 a.m. is no longer considered tardy but will be charged for one-half day absence. A student who reports to school after 1:15 p.m. will be charged with a whole day absence.

6. Early Dismissal

Any student who needs to leave school early should bring a note from the parents and give it to their homeroom teacher. Any student who leaves before 10:00 a.m. will be recorded as absent for the whole day. A half day absence will be recorded for any student leaving between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. A record will be kept of students leaving school after 2:00 p.m., but no absence will be recorded. Middle School and High School students are required to sign-in at the School Office upon late arrival and sign out before leaving the campus during school hours.

7. Emergency Closing

Emergency school closings will be announced over radio stations WKVA, WMRF, WTLR, WQJU, WIEZ, WHUN, WJUN, WQHG and WCHX.

8. Arriving at School

Students should not arrive at school before 7:50 A.M. unless special arrangements have been made.

9. Riding with Other Persons

Elementary and middle school students who plan to ride home with someone other than their usual means of traveling to and from school must bring a note from their parents. Students are not permitted to ride home on a bus to which they have not been assigned.

10. Staying After School

Elementary and middle students who plan to stay after school for a school activity must bring a signed note from a parent indicating parental permission for such plans. Staying after school is permitted only for activities that begin by 4:00 p.m.

11. Driving and Bus Regulations

To ensure the safety of children loading or unloading from buses and moving around the parking lots, the following traffic and safety regulations must be followed:

- During school hours, the driveways to and from school are considered one way. All traffic will enter the school by the south driveway and leave by the north driveway.
- Vehicles may be parked only in designated areas.
- Students should leave their cars immediately upon arriving at school and not return to them during the school day without permission.
- All cars must stop for buses or vans loading or unloading children.

- All cars are to remain parked until school buses and vans have left campus.
- Automobiles must be operated at a reasonable speed and in a safe manner on or near the campus at all times.
- Students traveling to and from school by bus are asked to refrain from use of electronic devices including but not limited to game boys, CD players, headsets, ipods, etc.

Operating an automobile is a privilege that carries with it the responsibility of looking out for the safety of others.

12. Transfer and Withdrawal

Parents should inform the school office if a student intends to withdraw or transfer to another school. Transcripts and records can be forwarded to the receiving school only after all financial obligations to Belleville Mennonite School have been met.