

*Forming responsible habits regarding attendance and promptness is important. Parents are expected to support the goals of punctuality and attendance by having children arrive on time, remain in school for a full day, and schedule appointments after school hours whenever possible.*

Under the laws of the State of Delaware, parents/guardians of children between the ages of 5 and 16 are required to ensure that their children attend school (See Delaware Code, Title 14, Chapter 27: School Attendance, <https://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c027/sc01/>). Sussex Montessori requires that students attend school in accordance with these laws. Punctual regular attendance is extremely important. Punctuality and steady attendance foster a classroom community between teachers, students, and families. Research has shown that regular school attendance is an important factor in student achievement and positive social-emotional development.

## **ATTENDANCE RECORDS**

The Attendance Committee or designee will keep daily record of attendance to include absences and tardiness of all pupils. Each student's attendance will be recorded daily in compliance with State regulations.

## **TARDINESS**

The term "tardy" is defined as being late to school, class or an activity, with or without the permission of parents/guardian or school personnel.

- Parents may drop off students at school no earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- Classrooms open at 7:45 a.m.
- Students are expected to be in the classroom by 8:00 a.m. and prepared to learn.
- Students are expected to remain until the end of the school day with dismissal at 3:10 p.m.
- **ARRIVING LATE:**
  - If a student arrives after 8:00 a.m., they will be entered as tardy.
  - For safety reasons and accountability, a parent/guardian must accompany a tardy child into school and sign the child in at the main office.
  - The child will be given a tardy slip for entrance into the classroom.
  - Every third unexcused tardy may initiate a parent letter and/or phone call.
  - Being tardy may also affect student attendance record.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Early dismissal requires a parent/guardian written excuse stating the reason and time of dismissal and expected return time.

- Requests may be handwritten or e-mailed to [dismissals@sussexms.k12.de.us](mailto:dismissals@sussexms.k12.de.us)
- Early dismissal notes **MUST BE** received before 12:00 p.m.
- Emergencies on a case-by-case basis
- Medical appointments should be made as close to the end of the school day as possible.

In efforts to keep everyone safe, requests for early dismissal must be made well in advance so that we may have sufficient time to notify teachers, bus drivers and office staff, to update rosters, and to ensure your child goes where they need to go.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Sussex Montessori School Board has approved the following attendance policy, in adherence with Title 14, Chapter 27: School Attendance of Delaware Code [<https://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c027/sc01/>]:

- Absences, tardiness, and early dismissals are considered excused for the following reasons:
  - Illness of the student
  - Family emergencies
  - Scheduled appointments to a physical or mental healthcare provider, including, but not limited to, a physician, a dentist, an orthodontist, or a psychologist
  - Contagious diseases within the home of the student
  - Death in the family or of a close friend
  - Legal business requiring the student's presence
  - Observance of religious holidays
  - Medical diagnosis and/or treatment
  - Absence, pre-approved by the administration, to participate in other educational experiences or authorized school activities
  - Emergency situations as determined by the Head of School
  - Suspension
- An unexcused absence from school or class for all or part of a day, including absence due to tardiness, is an absence that cannot be explained by any of the reasons listed above and is not otherwise approved.
- Students meeting the requirements of remote attendance, including participation in scheduled and unscheduled synchronous communications and completion of expected work, will not be considered absent

## WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION, SIGNED BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUIRED

- Upon a student's return to school, a written note from the parent/guardian must be presented to SMS via handwritten signed note from the parent/guardian or typed e-mail with typed parent/guardian name at the end of the note sent to e-mail address: [attendance@sussexms.k12.de.us](mailto:attendance@sussexms.k12.de.us)
- Absences, tardiness and early dismissals will be noted as unexcused until a note is received within five school days after returning.
- Students are permitted to have a **maximum of 10 parental excuse notes** for the year. Other written documentation includes notes from physicians, dentists, mental health specialists or as deemed permissible by the Attendance Committee.

**LEAVING SCHOOL:** Sussex Montessori School is a closed campus. Students are not permitted to leave campus during the school day without parent/guardian permission and administrative approval. The "campus" refers to the school buildings and outside areas utilized regularly during recess and physical education. Students arriving by bus, or other means of transportation, are to proceed directly to the school.

## TRUANCY

Truancy is considered if the student fails to arrive at school regularly and/or on time, or if the student fails to remain in school during the designated school hours. The Attendance Committee and school leaders will attempt to resolve any issues and remove barriers to eliminate truancy

issues for the student. Students may be referred to truancy court **after (5) unexcused absences** from school.

**DAYS ABSENT**

<i>Excused/Unexcused Days Absent</i>	<i>School Response</i>
1	Notification call that your child is absent from school. Calls will go out each time your child does not report to school.
3	Notification letter/email sent and/or phone call.
5-9	Notification letter sent and/or phone call. Truancy notice may be sent, and charges may be filed for <b>unexcused</b> absences if student is deemed chronically truant by Attendance Committee.
10-14	Notification call to parent requesting a conference via in-person or zoom. Students to be included in conference. Documentation will be requested for unexcused absences from physician, therapist, etc... Failure to produce documents will result in unexcused absences. Truancy notice may be sent, and charges may be filed for all unexcused absences if student is deemed chronically truant by Attendance Committee.
15-19	Certified notification letter will be sent and phone call. Mandatory conference with parents and students will be scheduled via in-person (when possible) within 10 days of absence. Parents and students will sign an Attendance Agreement agreeing to make every effort to attend school regularly and on time. Documentation will be requested for unexcused absences from physician, therapist, etc... Failure to produce documents will result in unexcused absences. Truancy notice may be sent, and charges may be filed for all unexcused absences if student is deemed chronically truant by Attendance Committee.
20	Second Certified notification letter will be sent and phone call. Second mandatory conference with parents and students will be scheduled via in-person (when possible) within 5 days of absence. Attendance Agreement will be reviewed with parents and student. Documentation will be requested for unexcused absences from physician, therapist, etc... Failure to produce documents will result in unexcused absences. Truancy notice may be sent, and charges may be filed for all unexcused absences if student is deemed chronically truant by Attendance Committee.

Chronic absenteeism issues which cannot be resolved by the Attendance Committee may be referred to the SMS Board for a decision as to the next steps. Chronic absenteeism may result in possible retention of student, mandatory summer school, and/or other consequences.