



March 12, 2020

Dear Palisades Community,

Last night, the Palisades School Board passed a motion to temporarily suspend the following line in Policy #204 - Attendance:

All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed physician.

This change in policy will go into effect immediately and will remain in effect until such time that the Board reinstates the aforementioned sentence.

### **What does this policy change mean for families?**

Your child's absence record will be frozen until such time that the Board reverts back to the original language in Policy #204. Although absences will be accounted for, a doctor's note will NOT be required for those absences incurred during the time that Policy #204 was suspended as to not overburden our doctors' offices with minor symptoms.

When the policy is reinstated, the absence count prior to the Policy suspension will pick up again. Once the student exceeds ten (10) days - less any days accumulated while the aforementioned sentence from Policy #204 was temporarily suspended - a doctor's note will again be required.

Please Note: It is still encouraged for you to submit a doctor's note if your child went to the doctor. These notes provide our nurses with important information regarding student health. The difference now is that you are not required to submit a doctor's note if your child has been out of school for more than ten (10) days.

Scenario #1: Your child had nine (9) absences as of yesterday, Wednesday, March 11, 2020. If there were no changes to policy and your child is absent on two days next week, your child would be placed on a doctor's note requirement. With the change in this policy your child is not on a doctor's note requirement. Once the doctor's note requirement is placed back into the attendance policy, your child will start with nine (9) absences.

Scenario #2: Your child was on a doctor's note requirement as of yesterday, Wednesday, March 11, 2020. As a result of this policy change, you will not be required to submit a doctor's note as long as this change is in effect.

### **What should I do if my child is sick?**

If your child is sick, please keep them home and notify the school nurse if your child is experiencing a fever of 100 degrees or more, a cough or shortness of breath. We can then monitor symptoms locally and share with the Department of Health. School nurse phone numbers are included below my signature.

In addition, and according to CDC guidance, if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider immediately and follow their guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

### **My child has perfect attendance and wants to go to school even if they are not feeling well. What do you advise?**

Keep your child home if they are sick. As of today, students who have perfect attendance will have that designation frozen. According to guidance from the CDC for schools which do not have COVID-19 identified in their community, perfect attendance awards or designations are discouraged.

In closing, we have several upcoming events scheduled, and the current recommendation from the Department of Health is that these activities can continue. However, as the situation evolves, this advice may be modified, and we will inform the community of changes. At this time, the Department of Health is asking anyone with any flu-like symptoms, respiratory illnesses or fever to refrain from attending any large group or social activities. In addition, they recommend that anyone with a compromised immune system and the elderly use discretion in attending public events.

Thank you for your help in keeping our schools and community safe.

Sincerely,



Dr. Bridget O'Connell  
Superintendent

Please contact 610-847-5131 and use the following extensions for school nurses:

High School - Dawn Fulton - 2011; Middle School - Elyssa Harwick - 1011; Durham Nox - Penny Neeld - 3011; Springfield - Kate Sadow - 6011; or Tincum - Robin Hahn - 7011