

Meridian PCS Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is a vital aspect of student success. It is important that students are present and on time every day of school. The Compulsory Attendance Law of the District of Columbia requires children from age 5 to 18 to enroll in and attend school regularly. If your child is aged 3 or 4, it is important to understand that enrolling your child in Meridian Public Charter School means that you have enrolled your child in an educational program, and Meridian encourages families to establish attendance habits during a child's first years of school. Students physically attending school must be present for 80% of the school day to be considered "present" for attendance purposes under DC regulations. Students who are attending distance learning for the day will be authenticated through our school's learning management system Schoology to determine if students logged in and completed their work for the day.

- Our Elementary School doors open at 8:00 am for breakfast. Class begins at 8:30 am and ends at 3:30 pm.
- Our Middle School doors open at 7:50 AM for breakfast. Class begins at 8:25 am and ends at 3:45 pm.

All students are expected to attend school every day that we are in session. Families are expected to ensure their student is in school. Attending school every day and on time is critically important and has a huge impact on your child's academic success. We ask that families not schedule vacations or non-emergency appointments during school time.

Students at Meridian are expected to:

- Arrive to school on time
- Be prepared for class with supplies and books
- Ask their teacher for missed assignments after an absence
- Seek assistance from staff if you have trouble getting to school

Students who are absent from school are not permitted to:

- Be on school property
- Participate in school activities
- Attend school activities and/or after school activities

Remote Learning Attendance Policy

Meridian recognizes that in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and mandatory health restrictions from DC Health, while some students may attend school on most days each week, other students will only attend in-person instruction on some days or attend fully virtual instruction.

Until Meridian communicates an end to COVID-related restrictions on in-person attendance for students, students will be considered present while learning remotely if they satisfy the following requirements:

PreK - Log into school LMS (Schoology) at least once each instructional day.

K-3 - Log into school LMS (Schoology) at least once each day AND either submit at least one assignment/exit ticket during that day or actively engage with instruction or instructional materials for at least 60 minutes each instructional day.

4-8 - Log into school LMS (Schoology) at least once each day AND either submit at least two assignment/exit ticket during that day or actively engage with instruction or instructional materials for at least 120 minutes each instructional day.

Excused Absences

Excused absences count towards a student's total absences. All excused absences must be documented within **5 calendar days of the absence**. The following absences are considered excused absences.

1. Death in the student's immediate family (verification required);
2. Illness of the student
NB: doctor's certificate is required for a student absent more than three (3) consecutive days. Parents can submit a maximum of three (3) handwritten notes to excuse an absence due to illness if the student is too sick to attend school but does not necessarily require a doctor visit. After three parent notes are submitted, all other absences due to illness can only be excused with a doctor's note.;
3. Observance of a religious holiday;
4. Out-of-School Suspension or In-School Suspension;
5. Medical reasons such as a doctor's appointment (a doctor's note must be provided when the student returns to school);
6. Failure of the District of Columbia to provide transportation in cases where the District of Columbia has a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student;
7. Absences to allow students of military to visit with their parent or legal guardian immediately before, during, and after deployment, as appropriate;
8. Other absences approved **in advance** by the Meridian administration upon the written request of a parent/guardian;

Students with disabilities will not be treated adversely for absences that are directly caused by their disabilities. Students who miss class to receive related services documented on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans are considered present.

Documenting an Excused Absence

When a student returns to school after an absence, s/he should bring a completed Absence Excuse Note form (see annex), note or the parent/guardian may email the Attendance Officer within five (5) days. The Elementary School Attendance Officer can be reached at attendance@meridian-dc.org; the Middle School Attendance Officer can be reached at MSattendance@meridian-dc.org. You may call the school to inform us that your child will be absent; however, this call WILL NOT excuse the absence and is for our information only. The email/note should include the date(s) of the absence, parent name and best contact (phone number or email address), student name, the valid reason for the absence, and any required documentation. ***An original doctor's certificate should be provided for medical appointments scheduled during the school day and for absences due to illness totaling three or more consecutive days.*** If no documentation is submitted to the Attendance Officer, the absence will be considered unexcused. Reporting the absence does not automatically excuse the absence; excuse notes are subject to monitoring and verification.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are when students are absent from school without a valid excuse, with or without parental approval. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Doing errands
- Cutting classes
- Shopping

- Oversleeping
- Babysitting
- Student employment