

Barlow Mountain Elementary School
 115 Barlow Mountain Road, Ridgefield, CT 06877
 Phone: (203) 894-5800 Fax: (203) 894-7701

Ms. Rebecca A. Laus, Principal
 Ms. Sarah E. Weirsman, Elementary Supervisor

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The state of Connecticut has guidelines which schools must follow regarding student attendance. Absences are categorized as either excused or unexcused according to the guidelines. A student's absence from school is considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. the absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- B. the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

For absences, there are two levels that pertain to a student. The first nine absences in a school year can be excused by a parent for any reason the parent chooses by contacting the school within 48 hours of the absence. **In order to excuse an absence, parents/guardians need to call our attendance line at 203-894-5800 prior to the start of the school day. If we do not hear from you at the beginning of the school day, a call will be sent to you to verify your child's absence. You may also email the nurse at lisaac@ridgefieldps.net.** Any absence above the ninth absence is in level 2 (see the chart) and must fall into a particular category with additional documentation in order to be approved. The chart below gives more detailed information regarding the possibilities.

Level	Total # of Days Absent*	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1	One through nine	Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves.	Parent or guardian note only.
2	10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student illness (<i>Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length.</i>) • Student's observance of a religious holiday. • Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family. • Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required). • The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason). • Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators. (Opportunities must meet certain criteria. See below for details). 	Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason).

* Note: The total number of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.

If student absences are at the level 2 threshold and do not have the appropriate required documentation, they are considered unexcused. There are guidelines that all schools must follow for unexcused absences. Connecticut state law reads: "**Sec. 10-198a. Policies and procedures concerning truants.** (a) For purposes of this section, 'truant' means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has ***four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.***"

If you have additional questions, please access the State of Connecticut Attendance Guidelines found at the website: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/publications/guidelines_excused_and_unexcused_absences.pdf

Sincerely,

Rebecca A. Laus, Principal

Sarah E. Weirsman, Elementary Supervisor