

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance in school and participation in class are an integral part of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Regular attendance develops patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory: the State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of seven (or younger if enrolled) and 16 years of age attend school.

### A. Attendance Records

Teachers will keep an accurate record of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Principals or their designee will monitor attendance to address issues of excessive absenteeism and tardiness. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

### B. Excused Absences

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the teacher within two (2) days upon returning after an absence. According to the N.C. Statutes and the Jackson County School System, a student's absences from school must be coded either excused or unexcused. Phone calls or verbal comments cannot be used to excuse an absence. A school-sponsored activity that takes a student from the classroom is considered excused, and, must be determined by the principal. Though a student is not physically present when he/she has a school-sponsored activity absence, he/she is still expected to fulfill all classroom obligations/assignments for the day of the absence.

Code 1/Excused Absences include the following:

- Personal illness or injury which makes the student physically unable to attend school
- Isolation ordered by the State Board of Health or local health office
- Death in the immediate family
- Emergency medical/dental appointment or such an appointment that has prior approval by the principal
- Participation under subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding or a party to the action
- Observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent(s) with prior approval by the principal
- Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel, with prior approval by the principal
- Illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent
- Deployment related activities

Illnesses over four (4) days duration or more than six (6) days per semester require a statement from a physician to be counted as excused. In addition, the principal may require further documentation of the reason(s) provided for any excused absence.

All classwork missed due to absences will be made up to the satisfaction of the teacher. Students will be allowed to make up work for all absences including unexcused and suspensions. Except for unusual circumstances, students are expected to make up work for missed classes within five (5) school days of returning to school. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

In order to be considered in attendance for a day, an elementary student must be present for a minimum of three and one-half hours (this also includes early dismissal days).

### School-Related Activities

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. It is the intention of the Board of Education that classes missed be kept to an absolute minimum through close scrutiny and a monitoring system on the part of the principal. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

- Field trips sponsored by the principal
- School-initiated and scheduled activities
- Athletic events requiring early dismissal from school
- In-school suspension

Assignments missed for these reasons will be completed by students. The teacher will determine when work is to be made up. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

### C. Unexcused Absences

According to N.C. Statutes, parents of students will receive written notification when the student has accumulated three (3), six (6), and ten (10) unexcused absences.

Upon receipt of a six (6) days unexcused absences letter, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student must attend a school-based attendance committee meeting. During this meeting, parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring additional information or documentation showing the reasons for the absences. This committee should consist of the principal/designee, student's regular classroom teacher and exceptional children's teacher (if appropriate), and other personnel deemed as necessary. The committee will work with the child and his/her family to analyze the causes of the absences and determine steps to eliminate the problem and provide necessary school support.

After ten (10) days accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the principal must review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and must confer with the student and his/her parent/guardian, if possible, to determine whether the parent/guardian has received notification and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. Documentation should be on file for any attempts to contact parents. Unless the principal can verify that parents have made a good faith effort to solve the attendance problems, the principal must then notify the district attorney or file a complaint with the juvenile intake counselor. (G.S. 115C-378)

### D. Excessive Absences and Tardiness

Tardies: A tardy is defined as being delayed beyond the expected or proper time. Any student who is ten (10) minutes late to class must receive a note in order to be admitted into the classroom. Any student who accumulates more than ten (10) tardies per year will not be eligible for perfect attendance that school year. Principals may refer any student who is tardy or checked out early five (5) times during a grading period to the school-based attendance committee or school social worker.

Limits on absences: Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement. While there are certainly some circumstances, such as illness, which prevent a child from attending school, there must be clear consequences when parents or students neglect the responsibility for school attendance. Students with excessive absences will be required to make up the days missed.