

SECTION 2

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1. ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is a necessary part of a student's education. Excessive absences impair a student's educational progress, can impact whether the student passes or fails a grade, and may result in court proceedings and/or the loss of driving privileges. Students are considered absent when they miss 50% or more of the school day. Absences are defined as follows:

Excused Absences

- Students must be in school unless the absence has been excused for one of the reasons listed below. Excused absences include the following:
- Personal Illness.
- Illness of an immediate family member.
- Death in the family.
- Religious holidays of the student's religious faith.
- Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency.
- Special events, including, but not limited to, important public functions, student conferences, student state/national competitions that are school-sponsored, administrative approved post-secondary educational institution visitation, as well as exceptional cases of family need.
- Doctor or dentist appointments.
- Students having or suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation that can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (Florida Statute 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) days excused absence for an infestation of head lice.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Shopping trips
- Pleasure/Vacation trips
- Truancy
- Other avoidable absences.

2. REPORTING ABSENCES

Any student who has been absent from school shall bring a note from a parent or guardian within forty-eight (48) hours of returning to school stating the cause of the absence. Failure to bring in a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence. However, the fact that the student brings in a note does not require the school administration to excuse the absence. The principal or designee will decide whether the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence, and that decision will be final. The administration may request additional documentation, such as a doctor's note. The excuse must state specific dates of absence, and must be signed by the treating, licensed physician. After fifteen (15) days of absence, whether excused or unexcused, a student must present verification from a licensed doctor for all subsequent absences due to illness.

3. MAKE-UP WORK

When a student is absent from school the student shall be responsible for all work and assignments missed during the student's absence. The student shall make arrangements with teachers for "make-up" work. The number of days allowed to make up the work shall be the same as the number of days the student was absent. This deadline may be extended with approval of the teacher or principal. Previously assigned projects or tests are due upon return from absence or as determined by the teacher's grading standards.

4. TRUANCY

A student may be deemed truant after (i) five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or (ii) ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period.

- Students are subject to the following actions for preventing and correcting truancy:
- When a student may be exhibiting a pattern of non-attendance, the principal shall refer the student to the school's attendance team to determine if a pattern of truancy is developing.
- The school's attendance team shall meet with the student and parent or guardian to determine if a pattern of truancy is developing and to identify and implement potential remedies.
- If the school-based efforts to resolve non-attendance are unsuccessful, the student shall be referred to the Superintendent or his designee for truancy.
- The Superintendent or his designee will review the case and may refer the student to the District Truancy Prevention Task Force. The District Truancy Prevention Task Force is conducted with representation from law enforcement, school district, State Attorney's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children and Families, Youth Crisis Center, the parent, and the student. A decision may be made to file a petition in court for truancy.

5. TARDINESS

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and can have a negative impact on student achievement. Disciplinary action for unexcused tardiness shall be progressive and will be specifically defined in each individual school's discipline plan.

6. DRIVER'S LICENSES

Florida law requires that minors who fail to satisfy attendance requirements will be ineligible for driving privileges. The School District is required to notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles of the following:

- Students ages 14-18 who accumulate fifteen (15) unexcused absences, not including out of school suspensions, in a ninety (90) calendar-day period.
- Students between the ages of 16-18 who have signed a declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment.
- Students ages 14-18 who are expelled.
- Students ages 14-18 who did not enter school and for whom the school has received no indication of transfer to another educational setting.

These students may not be issued a driver's license or learner driver's license. Also, the Department of Motor Vehicles shall suspend any previously issued driver's license or learner driver's license of any such minor pursuant to Florida Statute 322.091. In order to have a driver's license reinstated, the student must attend school regularly for thirty (30) days with no unexcused absences and pay the appropriate reinstatement fee.

7. GRANTING PERMISSION TO LEAVE SCHOOL GROUNDS

No student shall be sent off the school grounds to perform an errand or to act as a messenger except with the approval of the principal, provided that approval shall be granted only for urgent and necessary school business and with the consent of the student's parent or guardian.

8. EXEMPTION FROM REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A student of compulsory attendance age shall be required to attend school as provided by the law unless issued an exemption certificate by the Superintendent. Students who have reached age 16 must file a "Declaration of Intent to Terminate School Enrollment" if they wish to discontinue their education. Upon filing the intent, the student must allow the school to conduct an "Exit Interview" and "Exit Survey" to determine the reasons for the decision to terminate school enrollment and the actions that could be taken.

9. HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (6-12, Loss of Privileges)

Middle and High school students must be in attendance for at least 90% of their total possible class periods in order to participate in extracurricular activities, parking privileges, social events and after school activities, homecoming dances, prom, commencement ceremonies, etc. Once all attendance is recorded and verified, the rate of attendance will be pulled from the Student Information System.

This is not an excused/unexcused absence policy; it is an attendance policy. The type of absence does not matter with the following exceptions:

- Doctor appointments or doctor mandated stay at home that is documented on a physician's professional stationary subpoenas to court
- Bereavement time for an immediate family member
- Participation in a school-sanctioned activity
- Pre-approved college visits documented by email or regular mail correspondence
- Parent approved absence from school

It is the student's responsibility to bring verification from the doctor, parent or court for an exception; otherwise, the absence will count against the policy. Verification must be supplied within three school days following the absence.

Student athletes must have a 90% attendance rating at the conclusion of each semester to maintain eligibility.