



NASSAU COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ATTENDANCE MANUAL



Guidelines

The guidelines and procedures in this manual have been acted on by the School Board of Nassau County, Florida, and may by request through the administrative staff, be reviewed by the Board for change, waiver, or special dispensation.

No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex or race be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.



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Policy Statement

Students must attend school on a regular and timely basis to maximize the educational opportunities offered in Nassau County Schools. This policy is applicable for all K-12 Nassau County students. It outlines strategies and interventions to maximize student attendance thereby creating more opportunities for student success. The superintendent may approve exceptions to this policy for special programs or circumstances.

Attendance Terms and Definitions

Absence: Absence is the nonattendance of a student on days school is in session. Any student must be counted absent who is not physically present at school or at a school activity as defined under the compulsory attendance law.

Attendance: Attendance is the presence of a student on days school is in session. The student must be at the school to which he or she is assigned or present at an educational activity (with prior principal approval) which constitutes part of the approved program for that student.

Habitual Truant: A student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences within 90 calendar days, with or without the knowledge or consent of his or her parent or legal guardian, and who is subject to compulsory school attendance laws.

Membership: Membership is the assignment by a school district of a student to a grade or program in which regular attendance is taken.

I. School Attendance

Florida Statute 1003.21 requires that all students between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school regularly. Students who have attained the age of sixteen (16) and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until a formal declaration of intent to withdraw, signed by student and parent/guardian, is filed with the district. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment. The student's guidance counselor or other school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. Students are obligated to attend one hundred eighty (180) days of school each year. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to see that this law is obeyed.

It is important to note that failure to attend school in a regular and timely fashion hinders the educational process. In addition, truancy and poor performance have a direct relationship to juvenile delinquency and destructive behavior, not to mention the disproportionate percentage of juvenile crime that occurs during school hours. Each parent or legal guardian of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law.

A. Notification of Loco Parentis

In cases in which a student is not residing with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), the parent of the student must designate, in writing, the adult person(s) with whom the pupil resides who stands in loco parentis, so that the pupil may be admitted to or continue in school. This statement must be notarized and presented to the principal for acceptance.

II. Student Absences - Grades K-12

A. Excused Absences

Absences due to the following reasons will be excused:

- Personal illness
- Illness of an immediate family member
- Death in 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.

Parent notes are accepted for 10 excused absences per year. One day absent equals one parent note. (Example: If a parent submits 1 note covering the 3 missed days, this equals 3 parent notes.) After 10 parent notes (excused absences) in a school year, doctor (or other official legal) documentation is required for the absence to be marked as an excused absence. Without verification the absences will be unexcused and addressed by the truancy policy.

The written statement must include the following information for each absence:

- Date the excuse is written
- Date(s) of the absence(s)
- Full name of the student
- Reason for the absence
- Daytime telephone number of parent or guardian
- Signature of parent or guardian

Final determination on whether an absence is excused or unexcused is the responsibility of the principal. Any planned absences, other than medical appointments, must be approved in advance by the principal.

B. Unexcused Absences

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

- Shopping Trips
- Pleasure/Vacation trips
- Other avoidable absences

Final determination on whether an absence is excused or unexcused is the responsibility of the principal.

C. 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.

D. High School Attendance (9-12)

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. Students proving to be habitually truant will be tracked through the school's MTSS process.

Truancy

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.

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.

E. Suspensions

Out-of-School Suspension

- When deemed necessary by the principal, a student may be prohibited from attending their home school.
- To maintain academic progress, students are encouraged to make up work even if full credit will not be awarded.
- All make-up work should be completed within one week following return from absence. This deadline may be extended with the approval of the teacher or principal.
- All students who are suspended from school may take nine week or semester exams for full credit following the period of suspension.
- Florida Statute 984.13 provides authority for a law enforcement officer to take into custody a child who is suspended or expelled and not in the presence of the parent or guardian for the purpose of delivering the child without unreasonable delay to the appropriate school system site. If a student is suspended or expelled from school without assignment to an alternative school placement, the law enforcement officer shall deliver the child to the parent or legal guardian, to a location determined by the parent or guardian, or to a designated truancy interdiction site until the parent or guardian can be located.

In-School Suspension

- Students in In-School Suspension will be allowed to make up work.
- Students will not be counted absent during In-School Suspension.

F. Field Trips

A student on a field trip will not be marked absent if approved by the principal prior to trip.

III. Coding for Absences/Tardies

Use the following codes for reporting purposes:

TYPE	CODE
Excused Absence	1
Excused - communicable disease or infestation	3
Out of School Suspension	0
In School Suspension	C
Field Trip- Present School Function	2
Unexcused Absence	5

IV. Attendance Procedures for School Sites

A. Daily Attendance

As prescribed by DOE, the district will define a particular time of the day that daily attendance will be taken.

- Elementary Schools
- Secondary Schools

B. Recording of Tardies and Early Checkouts

The school attendance clerk or data entry operator will record the dates and times of students arriving late or leaving early by following procedures set by the principal.

- A parent or parent designee must sign for a student when checking out.
- In grades PreK–8, a parent or parent designee must sign-in a child who is arriving tardy. Tardies will be determined excused or unexcused. Tardies will be excused according to reasons permitted for excused absences.
- Parents should bring photo identification to sign out their child.
- No student will be released to individuals other than who is designated in the student information system.

V. Attendance Interventions

# Days Absent	Action or Intervention	Person(s) Responsible	Attachments
1 or 2 days	<p>Teacher will ask the student for a parent note. The teacher will submit note to the office. If no note exists, the teacher will request letter in for Grades K-8 and high school teachers will continue to ask for a note. Teachers are responsible to check for notes and submit copies to office on a daily basis.</p> <p>Contact will be made with the parent if documentation is not provided by the end of the third day of the student's return to school.</p>	Primary Teacher	Attachment A - Letter Requesting a Parent Note K-8
4 Consecutive Days without school's knowledge of reason	Parent/guardian contact will be made.	Attendance Clerk Guidance Counselor Teacher Principal or Designee	
5 Unexcused Absences in 30 Days	<p>A computer-generated letter is mailed to parent.</p> <p>Refer the student to the school's Child Study Team</p> <p>The school may refer the student to District Truancy Staffing if the student has previous history of excessive absences.</p>	District Attendance Secretary Attendance Clerk Guidance Counselor	Attachment B – 5 Day Letter Start Intervention Form

10 Unexcused Absences in 90 Days	<p>A computer-generated letter is mailed to parent.</p> <p>Contact is made with the parent via person or telephone conference.</p>	<p>District Attendance Secretary</p> <p>Attendance Clerk, Principal or Designee</p>	<p>Attachment C – 10 Day Letter</p> <p>Complete Child Study Team Summary</p>
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VI. Chile Study Team

According to 1003.26, F.S, if a student has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period, the student's primary teacher shall report to the school principal or his or her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance.

The principal shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, refer the case to the school's child study team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing.

If the child study team finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, whether the absences are excused or not, a meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies.

If an initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the child study team shall implement the following:

- Frequent attempts at communication between the teacher and the family.
- Evaluation for alternative education programs.
- Attendance contracts.

The child study team shall be diligent in facilitating intervention services and shall report the case to the District Truancy Staffing only when all reasonable efforts to resolve the nonattendance behavior are exhausted.

A. Participants of a Child Study Team

The meeting should include the student, parents and or guardians, counselor, teachers, social worker, and other program specialists as applicable.

B. Purpose of a Child Study Meeting

The meeting brings together all parties that may offer assistance to help improve the student's attendance. The purpose of the meeting is to determine reasons/causes for Excessive unexcused or excused absences and to begin interventions to address truancy. School personnel initiate interventions with the student and the family at the time of the meeting.

VII. Enforcement of School Attendance Guidelines (Statute 1003.26)

It is the policy of the state that each district school superintendent be responsible for enforcing school attendance of all students subject to the compulsory school age in the school district.

If a student subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent or the district school superintendent or his/her designee shall refer the case to the case staffing committee pursuant to s.984.12. and the district school superintendent or his/her designee may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures in s. 984.151.

If the court determines that the student did miss any of the alleged days, the court shall order the student to attend school and the parent to ensure that the student attends school, and may order any of the following:

- the student to participate in alternative sanctions to include mandatory attendance at alternative classes to be followed by mandatory community services hours for a period up to 6 months
- the student and the student's parent or guardian to participate in homemaker or parent aide services
- the student or the student's parent or guardian to participate in intensive crisis counseling
- the student or the student's parent or guardian to participate in community mental health services if available and applicable
- the student and the student's parent or guardian to participate in service provided by voluntary or community agencies as available
- and the student or the student's parent or guardian to participate in vocational, job training, or employment services.

The judge will continue to require the child to be present for hearings periodically until the case is resolved or the child becomes ineligible. Additional sanctions may be ordered for the child or parents if attendance does not improve.

VIII. Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Notification Procedures

Per s. 1003.27 (b) Florida Statutes, each principal or the principal's designee shall notify the district school board of each minor student under its jurisdiction who accumulates 15 unexcused absences in a period of 90 calendar days. The district school superintendent must provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles the legal name, sex, date of birth, and social security number of each minor student who has been reported under this paragraph and who fails to otherwise satisfy the requirements of s. 322.091.

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles may not issue a driver license or learner's driver license to, and shall suspend any previously issued driver license or learner's driver license of, any such minor student, pursuant to the provisions of s. 322.091.

The following procedures should be followed to refer students to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles:

1. After verifying the students with the school, District ITIS personnel will submit the information on students 14 to 17 years old having 15 unexcused absences in 90 calendar days.
2. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will mail an Intent to Suspend letter to the student.
3. The student or parent has 15 calendar days to provide proof of compliance or schedule a hearing to document hardship. The school principal must immediately notify the district contact of a student's request for a waiver. The district contact must notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles within 24 hours after a student's request for a hearing.
4. The hearing, which will be heard and processed by the principal or the principal's designee, must take place within 30 days. The principal must notify the district contact of the outcome of the hearing as notification must be given to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles within 24 hours.
5. If no response and/or no improvement in attendance has been made, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will send an Order of Suspension letter to the truant student.

6. Students must attend school for 30 consecutive days without an unexcused absence to have their license reinstated. The principal of the school will provide the student with a paper document certifying no unexcused absences within the past 30 days. The signature on this document must be notarized or accompanied by the official school seal. Upon receiving written verification that the minor is again in compliance with the requirements, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall reinstate the minor's driving privilege. Thereafter, if the school district determines that the minor is not in compliance with the requirements, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall suspend the minor's driving privilege until the minor is 18 years of age or otherwise satisfies the requirements of subsection (1), whichever occurs first.

Attachment A

Sample Letter Requesting Parent Note

Grades K-8

Dear Parent:

Florida Statute 1003.26 states, "each parent or guardian must justify each absence and the school must evaluate each justification based upon policies that define an excused and unexcused absence."

According to our records your child, _____ was absent _____, and no record of a phone call or note by you was received. Please complete the following and return it to school.

Student's Name: _____

Date of Absence: _____

Reason for Absence: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

To avoid this extra paperwork, we ask that you please call the school the day your child is absent. If a telephone is unavailable to you please write a note.

Sincerely,

A Team/Problem Solving Team Meeting Summary

STUDENT'S NAME: _____ DATE: _____

AGE: _____ DOB: _____ GRADE: _____

Meeting Summary: Please include details regarding interventions and or resources discussed.

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Please sign and include your job title

Child Study Team Meeting Summary

STUDENT'S NAME: _____ DATE: _____

AGE: _____ DOB: _____ GRADE: _____

Parent or Guardian Information:

Name: _____ Relationship to student _____

Address:

Phone: _____

SCHOOL CONCERNS/WHY STUDENT IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL?

Late to school

Late to class

____ Skipping school

____Missing bus

Bus suspension

Peer Conflicts

School anxieties

Illness: Afraid of school

Afraid of school

Interventions

____ Counseling Referral

____ Education Classes

____ Mentor

_____ Extra-Curricular Activities

Interventions Discussed

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Other

Principal or Designee

Attendance Tidbits

Make sure you...Document...Document...Document!

TIER I

5 unexcused absences in 30 days

- Attendance clerk will receive letters from the Office of IP&SS.
- Review and mail the letters home as applicable.
- The attendance designee should start the School Attendance Intervention Form.
- Document all conferences, contact, and interventions using the A Team Problem Solving Team Meeting Summary form.

TIER II

10 unexcused absences in 90 days

- Attendance clerk will receive letters from the Office of IP&SS.
- Review and mail the letters home as applicable.
- The school's Child Study Team should meet with the parent or guardian and complete the necessary documentation.
 - The goal is to connect the parent or guardian with resources or initiate a contract to assist with mitigating the issues.

TIER III

15 unexcused absences in 90 days

- Attendance clerk will receive letters from the Office of IP&SS.
- Review and mail the letters home as applicable.
- Requires a referral to the Mental Health Counselor.

OFFICE OF IP&SS

- If the issue is not rectified, a truancy packet should be sent to the Office of IP&SS.
 - Ensure all documents are completed entirely with supporting documentation.
- The Office of IP&SS will mail a certified letter to the parent/guardian(s).
- The Office of IP&SS will review the file for a Truancy Staffing Meeting.
- Possible affidavit with SAO.

1

2

3

4

Attendance Reminders

01



Attendance Notices

Attendance notices will be shared on Thursday of each week through One Drive.

02



Postage

Please mail all notices home in a timely manner and maintain a record of postage used. Email George Raysor the number of stamps used by the 15th of each month for reimbursement.

03



Child Study Meeting Required FS 1003.26

This meeting should consist of parent(s), student, teacher, social worker, counselor, and program specialists as applicable. Please consider involving your guardian or SRO if possible.

04



Intervention(s)/Resources

Document how long each intervention or resource has been in place. Documentation will strengthen the case if it goes to the SAO.

05



Process

If everyone follows the process, attendance will not be overwhelming for anyone involved.

