

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

- (1) All **elementary, middle and high school** students who are absent will be marked “unexcused” “U” until the parent/guardian notifies the school in writing and justifies the absence. If the school staff has **specific or prior knowledge**, then the student may be marked “P”, “R”, “O”, “E”, or “S”.
- (2) It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify and justify the absence of their student. Parents/guardians are encouraged to telephone the school during a student’s absence and to request assignments if the absence is anticipated to be two or more days. **Upon the student’s return the parent/guardian must provide written justification for their student’s absence. Failure to do so within three school days will cause the absence to be recorded as “unexcused.”**
- (3) Upon each absence the school shall contact the home.
- (4) 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 teacher or counselor shall report to the school principal or his/her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of non-attendance. The principal (or designee) shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of non-attendance, refer the case to SWST (School Wide Support Team).
- (5) The SWST will determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the team finds that a pattern of non-attendance is developing, whether the absences are excused or not, a meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies.
- (6) If the initial parent/guardian meeting does not resolve the problem, the team shall implement interventions that best address the problem. The interventions may include but need not be limited to:
 - (a) Frequent communication between the teacher and the family
 - (b) Changes in the learning environment
 - (c) Mentoring
 - (d) Student counseling
 - (e) Tutoring, including peer tutoring or Saturday School
 - (f) Placement into different classes
 - (g) Evaluation for alternative education programs
 - (h) Attendance contracts
 - (i) Referral to other agencies for family services
 - (j) Referral to CINS/FINS (ages 10-17) for voluntary services

The team shall be diligent in facilitating the intervention services and shall refer the case to Pupil Support Services staff only when all reasonable efforts to resolve the non-attendance behaviors are exhausted.

(7) Documentation and referral to Pupil Support Services

Each case should be documented for steps (3), (4), (5), and (6) listed on the previous page and the documentation (School Attendance Documentation Form) becomes the referral to Pupil Support Services for the action of a School Social Worker or School Truancy Worker and implementation of District Truancy Procedures.

This chart should be available to all staff responsible for marking student attendance.

| ABSENCE CODES | |
|----------------------|---|
| CODE | DEFINITION |
| E | EXCUSED – Includes illness of student, documented major illness in student’s immediate family, funerals as excused by principal, and special and unique situations pre-approved by the principal. Work can be made up; an Independent Study Agreement can be used in special situations. |
| U | UNEXCUSED – The reason or excuse for absence is inadequate or does not meet the criteria above for an excused absence. |
| O | OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION – Work can be made up. |
| S | IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION |
| R | RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY – Religious holidays of the specific faith of the student. Work can be made up. Religious holidays are not counted as absences when calculating perfect attendance. |
| P | PRESENT – Encompasses field trips, extracurricular activities (such as band, orchestra, choral, sports, debate, etc.), in the clinic, administrative offices, guidance, in school-restriction, etc. Work can be made up. |
| T | TARDY – Late to class or school without adequate excuse. |
| D | EARLY DISMISSAL – Early dismissal without adequate excuse. |

DISTRICT PROCEDURES – ATTENDANCE

PROCEDURE:

(1) Please see School Board Policy 5.40 (2) Compulsory Attendance

All children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years but have not attained the age of 16 years are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. A student who attains the age of 16 during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. Public school students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the formal declaration of intent is filed with parent consent.

(3) Student Absences

In complying with his/her responsibility to administer the state's compulsory attendance law, the principal shall record each absence as being either "excused" or "unexcused."

In order to be considered present for the day, a student must be in attendance for:

- High School – equivalent of four periods in a traditional seven period day (200 minutes) or three block periods (270 minutes)
- Middle School – four periods of the day (200 minutes)
- Elementary – half of the school day (200 minutes)

(a) Excused Absence: An excused absence is one which results from:

1. Illness of the student, documented by the parent, guardian, or medical doctor. If the student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excuse from attendance. Such excuse provides that a student's condition justifies absence for more than the number of days permitted by the school board rules. (See (4) on the following page.) CODE "E"
2. Documented major illness in the student's immediate family. CODE "E"
3. Funerals as excused by the principal. CODE "E"
4. Special and unique situations pre-approved by the principal; e.g., Take your Daughters and Sons to Work. CODE "E"
5. Religious holidays (s) of the specific faith of the student. CODE "R"
6. Out-of-School Suspension. CODE "O"

(b) Unexcused Absence: An unexcused absence is one which:

1. The reason or excuse is inadequate or does not meet the criteria for an excused absence. CODE "U"
2. The absence is unexplained

- (c) **Present**: Students should be marked "P" for "present" by the period or for the day if they are on a field trip, extra-curricular activity (such as band, orchestra, choral, sports, debate, etc.), in the clinic, administrative office, guidance, etc. The student is "P" if they are under the supervision of a staff member. CODE "P"
- (d) **Tardy**: Students are tardy if they are late to school or late to class without a reasonable excuse. CODE "T"
- (e) **Early Dismissal**: Early dismissal from school without a reasonable excuse. Code "D"
- (f) **In-school suspensions**: Students who have received an IN-SCHOOL suspension from the principal or designee should be marked. CODE "S"

(4) **Acceptable Attendance**

Students are expected to attend school each of the 180 regular school days, however it is understood that excused absences will occur. Over nine excused absences per semester for illness OR eighteen for illness in a school year without a doctor's note is considered excessive. Once a student's absences for illness are excessive without information on file, the principal may require a doctor's statement for further absences to be excused.

The Superintendent must provide the Department of Highway and Safety and Motor Vehicles the legal name, sex, date of birth and social security number of each minor who has been identified as having 15 unexcused absences within a rolling 90 day period.

(5) **Habitual Truant**

Any student who has 15 unexcused absences, excluding suspensions, within 90 calendar days, with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the child's parent or legal guardian is considered to be a habitual truant.

(6) **Make Up Work**

A student who has been absent (includes "P"), shall be expected to make up the work missed. The school shall provide opportunities for the student to make-up assigned work and not receive an academic penalty unless the work is not made-up within a reasonable time. In the case of unexcused absences, students will be expected to make-up all work missed during the period of the unexcused absence. In the case of unexcused absence, other than for suspension, a teacher may deduct up to 30% from the earned grade for work made up. The teacher shall specify a reasonable period of time for make-up work. In no case shall the time be less than one full calendar day for each day missed.

- (a) A student who has been excused for observance of a religious holiday shall be given a reasonable period of time to complete any work missed, including any homework, study, or work assignment. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result. Examinations should not be administered on the day of a known religious holiday.

(7) **Married and Pregnant Students and Unwed Parents**

Married students and unwed parents of compulsory attendance age shall be required to attend school regularly. Pregnant students shall be exempt from such attendance during the term of the pregnancy, but must attend school regularly thereafter until age (16). The Superintendent may exempt a student of compulsory school age who is a parent of a child from the compulsory attendance when a determination has been made that the parent has no access to childcare.

(8) **Religious Instruction**

A student may be released from school, with prior approval of the principal, during the regular school hours for religious instruction, provided that:

- (a) The instruction takes place off the public school premises;
- (b) The parent/ legal guardian provides a written statement including:
 - 1. A request for the release of the student;
 - 2. Assumption of responsibility for the student while off the public school campus; and
 - 3. An identification of the person or institution to which the student is to be released.
- (c) Responsibility for transportation of any student released for religious instruction shall be that of the parent or guardian.

(9) **Declaration Of Intent To Terminate School Enrollment**

Florida Statute 1003.21 (c) indicates that a student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he/she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the school board. Parents/guardians need to sign the declaration. Parents/guardians must be notified of receipt of the student's declaration to terminate school enrollment.

- (a) Lifetime earning potential – declaration must include a statement which indicates that they understand that by leaving school prior to graduation they are likely to reduce their lifetime earning potential.
- (b) Driving privilege – students terminating their enrollment at the age of 16 years or older who leave prior to graduation, will be informed that they will be reported to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles which will in all likelihood cause their drivers license to be suspended or prevent them from obtaining a drivers license until they reach the age of 18.
- (c) An exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and to identify actions that could be taken to keep the student in school must be conducted by the guidance counselor or other school personnel.
- (d) The student must complete a survey in a format prescribed by the Department of Education.

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

5.40*

- I. All children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years but have not attained the age of 16 years are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. A student who attains the age of 16 during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board.
 - A. A student who is absent without the principal's approval shall have his/her legal guardian report such absences to the school in the manner prescribed by the Code Of Student Conduct and District Procedures.
 - B. District procedures shall prescribe attendance requirements including, but not limited to, provisions for excused and unexcused absences, opportunities to make up work assignments, reporting absences, tardies, and early dismissals.
 - C. Students shall be excused from any examination, study, work assignments, or homework for observance of a religious holiday or because the tenets of his/her religion forbid secular activity at such time. The school principal shall implement this provision on an individual basis pursuant to Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.
- II. Teachers must track student attendance on a daily basis. Parents shall be contacted regarding student absences as required by law. Student absences must be reported by period at the middle and high school levels.
 - A. In order to be considered present for the day, a student must be in attendance minimally for:
 - High school – equivalent of four periods in a traditional seven period day (200 minutes) or three block periods (270 minutes)
 - Middle school – present four periods of the day (200 minutes)
 - Elementary school – present half of the school day (200 minutes)
 - B. Accumulated tardies and early departures without an adequate excuse will be recorded as prescribed by district procedures.
- III. A person designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate truancy problems.

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

- A.** District procedures shall prescribe the requirements for identification of a pattern of non-attendance, interventions at the school level, and referral requirements for habitual truancy.
- B.** District procedures shall prescribe the requirements for monitoring and intervention for habitual truancy pursuant to Florida Statutes.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED: 984.12, 984.15, 985.03, 1001.43, 1003.21,
1003.23, 1003.24, 1003.26, 1003.27 F.S.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE(S): 6A-1.044, 6A-1.09514

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FORMERLY: 2.133, 7.103, 7.406

NOTES: Please Refer To: Attendance Procedures Manual