

School attendance and class participation are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop 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 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily. School administrators shall communicate attendance expectations to parents and guardians and work with students and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.

A. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

School officials shall keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Students will be considered in attendance if present at least half of the instructional day on-site in the school or at a place other than the school attending an authorized school-related activity.

To be in attendance during remote instruction days (with the exception of the initial enrollment day), students must: (1) complete their daily assignments, either online or offline; and/or (2) have a daily check-in through two-way communication with (a) the homeroom teacher for grades K-5 or (b) for all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled. School officials shall communicate the attendance procedures to students and their families before the first day remote instruction begins. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

B. LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DEPARTURES

Students are expected to be at school on time and to remain at school until dismissed. During the school day, students are expected to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class and to remain until the class ends.

When a student must be late to school or leave early, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian should be presented upon the student's arrival at school. Tardies or early departures may be excused for any of the reasons listed in Section C.

Any disciplinary consequences for unexcused tardiness or unexcused early departures from school or class will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies.

The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

C. LAWFUL ABSENCES

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the student's school on the day the student returns after an absence. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a health care practitioner. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

1. **Illness or Injury:** personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
2. **Quarantine or COVID Related Absence:** When the absence results from Covid or other CDC/Health Department determined infectious disease; or when isolation of the student is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health or when isolation or quarantine of the student is a required state or local control measure.
3. **Death in the immediate family:** When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. For the purpose of this regulation, the immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters.
4. **Medical or dental appointment:** When the absence results from a medical or dental appointment of a student.
5. **Court or Administrative Proceedings:** attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal of the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
6. **Religious Observance:** a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent or legal guardian;
7. **Educational Opportunity:** When it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal;
8. **Child Care:** pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary;
9. **Absence related to Deployment Activities:** a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student's parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty or inactive member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting; or

10. Local School Board Policy: any other reason as approved by the board in a board resolution.

D. UNLAWFUL ABSENCES

A student's absence from school for any reason other than those listed under "Lawful Absences" will be considered unlawful (unexcused.)

E. SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

While recognizing the importance of classroom learning, the board also acknowledges that out-of-classroom, school-related activities can provide students with valuable experiences not available in the classroom setting. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. field trips sponsored by the school;
2. job shadows and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a);
3. school-initiated and -scheduled activities;
4. athletic events that require early dismissal from school; and
5. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal. In addition, students participating in disciplinary techniques categorized as in-school suspension will not be counted as absent.

F. MAKEUP WORK

In the case of excused absences, short-term out-of-school suspensions, and absences under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school), the student will be permitted to make up his or her missed work. (See also policies 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission, and 4351, Short-Term Suspension.) Assignments missed due to participation in school-related activities also are eligible for makeup by the student. The teacher shall 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.

G. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES and EXCESSIVE TARDIES

Students are required to be in attendance at least 90% of each school year (a limit of 18 absences per year-long course or 9 absences per semester course) to be eligible for promotion to the next grade level or to receive credit for the course. In order to be recorded present, the student must be in attendance for a least 50% of the school day or the class for period attendance. For excessive absences, high school students may be assigned SMART

Breakfast tutoring or Saturday School to makeup missed time in order to receive course credit.

Students who are excessively tardy are subject to disciplinary actions as determined by each school, including the requirement to make up time missed. The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive, unexcused absences.

Any school disciplinary consequences for unexcused absences will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

H. CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Student chronic absenteeism is a significant risk factor for adverse student outcomes. Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of the days enrollment at any time during the school year. This definition applies for all students enrolled regardless of age. Chronic absenteeism differs from truancy, which only measures unexcused absences.

Because class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process, any absences, whether excused or unexcused, can have a negative impact on a student's academic achievement. Regular attendance must be prioritized within each school and encouraged throughout the community. School administrators shall monitor and analyze attendance data to develop and implement strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism. Such strategies should involve engaging students and parents, recognizing good and improved attendance, providing early outreach to families of students missing school, and identifying and addressing barriers to attendance.

I. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Students with Chronic Health Problems

No penalties will be imposed for absences due to documented chronic health problems.

2. Students Experiencing Homelessness

For students experiencing homelessness (see board policy 4125, Homeless Students), school officials must consider issues related to the student's homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

3. Attendance Requirements for Extracurricular Activities

Absences may impact eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Principals shall inform students and parents of the applicable attendance standards for the various types of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. For excessive absences, high school students may be assigned SMART Breakfast tutoring or Saturday school to makeup missed time. See also policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -375.5, -378 to -383, -390.2(d), -390.2(l), -390.5, -407.5, -407.12; 130A-440; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0102, -.0103, .0106; State Board of Education Policies ATND-000, -003

Cross References: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students (policy 4023), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Homeless Students (policy 4125), Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Short-Term Suspension (policy 4351)

Other Resource: NC DPI Multi-Tiered System of Support Implementation Guide, available at <https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2957986#anchor>

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