

Dropout Prevention Driver's License Guidelines

The Dropout Prevention/Driver's License legislation is a statewide effort to motivate and encourage students to complete high school. The revocation of a student's driving permit or license will result if a student is unable to maintain adequate progress or drops out of school. The law went into effect August 1, 1998. This legislation is directed to all North Carolina students under the age of 18 who are eligible for a driving permit or license.

There are several changes in the procedures regarding how a student obtains and retains his or her driver's permit and license. A student will need to have a Driving Eligibility Certificate in order to receive a North Carolina driver's permit or license. The Division of Motor Vehicles will not issue a driver's permit or license without a Driving Eligibility Certificate.

Driver Eligibility Hardship Rules

A Driving Eligibility Certificate can be issued to a student based on hardship. Cases of hardship must reflect specific circumstances that are beyond the control of the student, his or her parents or the school. The specific hardship circumstances are divided into four categories:

#1: Medical Considerations

#2: Work-related Considerations

#3: Exceptional Students Considerations

#4: Other Considerations

In all cases of hardship, documented proof must be submitted. It is also the responsibility of each school to maintain a record of students given Driving Eligibility Certificates.

Examples of Hardship:

Medical considerations can involve the student, the parents or the student's dependents.

Example #1: A student was making adequate progress in school, but was unable to attend school due to medical reasons. In this case, documented proof must be submitted to the school from a doctor citing reasons why the student missed school, dates of illness, etc. In addition, documentation must be submitted to demonstrate the student was making adequate progress prior to the illness.

Example #2: A parent has special medical circumstances. This would apply to parents who may be legally blind or have other medical impairments that require the student to have a license in order to maintain the general welfare of the family. In this case, documented proof of the parent's illness or medical impairment must be submitted, along with evidence demonstrating the absolute necessity of the student to have a driver's license.

Work related consideration would apply if a student requires transportation to and from a job that is necessary to the family's financial welfare and is unable by any other means to do so. There should be documented proof that the student is working and that the student's earnings go directly to support the basic needs of the family. In addition, there must be proof that the student is unable to get to work by any other means.

Exceptional children consideration can be given to a student when it has been determined that the student is unable to make progress toward obtaining a high school diploma or GED. This ruling is not intended to apply to EC students who have the ability to obtain a high school diploma or GED.

“Other considerations “ this is used for unusual circumstances not covered by the first three categories.

The process for a hardship request would begin by the parent or guardian to contact the school. Then to facilitate the procedure fill out the Driving Eligibility Hardship Request Form and attach all supporting documentation and mail all information to the Driver Education Coordinator. You will then be notified when a hearing is scheduled.

Lose Control, Lose Your License

This law became effective July 1, 2000. This law will suspend a student's permit or license for at least one year. This legislation directs the schools to notify the NCDMV whenever a student is given an expulsion/suspension for more than 10 consecutive days or receives an assignment to an alternative educational setting for more than 10 consecutive days for one of the following reasons:

1. The possession or sale of an alcoholic beverage or an illegal controlled substance on school property.
2. The possession or use on school property of a weapon or firearm that resulted in disciplinary action or that could have resulted in that disciplinary action if the conduct had occurred in a public school.
3. The physical assault on school personnel on school property.

Unlike the "Dropout Prevention/Driver's License" law that stops when a student turns 18 years old, the "Lose Control" law does not stop at 18. It is possible for a student to have his or her license suspended as a 17 ½ year old. If a student is unable to demonstrate exemplary behavior then he or she will be 18 ½ before being eligible to drive.

Driving privileges can be restored under one of the three following conditions:

1. The student conduct occurred before the student reached the age of 15, and the student is now at least 16 years old.
2. The student conduct occurred after the student reached the age of 15, and it is at least one year after the date of ineligibility.
3. The student needs the certificate to drive to and from school, a drug or alcohol treatment counseling program, as appropriate, or mental health treatment program, and no other transportation is available.

A student may be eligible to a certificate after a six month period for displaying exemplary behavior. The school principal or the principal's designee shall issue a Driving Eligibility Certificate to the student under the following:

1. The student has returned to school or has been placed in an alternative educational setting, and has displayed exemplary behavior.
2. The student has successfully completed a drug or alcohol treatment counseling program and has displayed exemplary behavior.