

Attendance in school and participation in class 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 and student outcomes that are not always measured by classroom examinations. 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.

A. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

School officials shall keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

B. EXCUSED ABSENCES

For an absence to be considered excused a written note signed by a parent, guardian, or medical professional must be presented to the school's main office within two days following the student's return after an absence. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

1. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
2. isolation ordered by the State Board of Health;
3. death in the immediate family;
4. medical or dental appointment;
5. participation under subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding;
6. observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent(s) (may be limited to no more than two days per academic year);
7. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal;
8. absence due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary; or
9. visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian, at the discretion of the superintendent or designee, if the parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty

member of the uniformed services, as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

Absences due to extended illnesses generally require a statement from a physician. High school students who check in late or check out early with a medical professional's documentation of an appointment will be marked with an excused absence for the entire class period and may be allowed to be in class for the partial class period.

In the case of excused absences and short-term out-of-school suspensions, the student will be permitted to make up his or her work for credit. See also policy 4351, Short-Term Suspension. The teacher will 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.

C. SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. Principals shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to an absolute minimum. 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 shadowing and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a);
3. school-initiated and -scheduled activities;
4. activities in which the student represents the school in an official capacity;
5. athletic events requiring early dismissal from school;
6. Career and Technical education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal;
7. in-school suspensions; and
8. successful participation in a board-approved structured day program.

Assignments missed for these reasons are eligible for make-up by the student. The teacher will 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.

D. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement. Students are expected to be present for a minimum of 91% of instructional time. Failure by the student to meet the attendance standard will be taken into account by the principal when making a promotion decision at the elementary and middle school levels. Students who are excessively tardy or truant may be suspended for up to two days for such offenses.

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences. This includes providing a student's parent, guardian, or custodian separate written notifications after three and six unexcused absences occurring within a school year. After 10 unexcused absences within a school year, the principal will review available reports and take needed action in accordance with G.S. 115C-378.

If a student is absent from a high school class for nine or more days in a semester, the principal or a committee established by the principal shall consider whether the student's credit should be forfeited because of the absences. The principal or committee shall review the presence, timeliness and legitimacy of written excuses (including any out-of-school suspensions); the circumstances of the absences; the number of absences; and the extent to which the student made up missed work outside of school hours, if given prior permission by the principal. A committee may recommend to the principal and the principal may make any of the following determinations:

1. the student will not receive course credit for the semester;
2. the student will receive course credit for the semester; or
3. the student will be given a school-sponsored alternative option before a determination of the appropriate grade is made.

Students with excused absences due to documented chronic health problems are exempt from this policy, as will students having experienced severe emotional and/or physical trauma documented by a physician, licensed psychologist, or licensed mental health professional, as long as all absences are properly documented as excused.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -375.5, -378 to -383, -390.2(d), -390.5, -407.5; 16 NCAC 6E.0102-.0103; State Board of Education Policies TCS-L-000, -002, -003

Cross References: Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students (policy 4023), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Short-Term Suspension (policy 4351)

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