



Book	Policy Manual
Section	5000 Students
Title	ATTENDANCE
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#### 5200 - **ATTENDANCE**

Parents and students are responsible for attendance which shall be required of all students during the days and hours that the school is in session.

Absences shall be reported to the school attendance office by the parent or adult student as soon as practicable. The Superintendent shall require, from the parent of each student of compulsory school age or from an adult student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a statement of the cause for such absence. The District reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence.

Educators shall encourage regular attendance of students, maintain accurate attendance records, and follow reporting procedures prescribed by the Superintendent.

Accordingly:

- A. if the parent who has legal custody of a student requests that no one else be permitted to confer with the child at school the principal and/or teacher is required to honor this request;
- B. students are not to be taken out of their regular classes to prepare for programs other than school-sponsored activities;
- C. when a student has been absent three (3) consecutive days and the school has been unable to ascertain the reason for the absences, the absences shall be investigated by the school principal or at any other time if deemed necessary;
- D. the parent or adult student shall report absences to the school as soon as practicable. Failure to report and explain the absence(s) shall result in unexcused absence(s). The principal shall have the final authority for determining acceptability of the reason for the absence(s).

Each school should establish procedures to ensure good attendance. A student, who is absent more than nine (9) days within a semester or more than four (4) days for schools on a block schedule, will not receive a passing grade for the semester unless:

- A. medical evidence is presented to the principal in writing justifying a specific number of days absence, absences are for approved school activities, or absences are approved by the Principal, and
- B. the student demonstrates mastery of the student performance standards in the course(s) as identified in curriculum guides and/or adopted textbooks.

If the absences are excused, all educational requirements for the course shall be met before a passing grade and/or credit is assigned. The student shall have a reasonable amount of time, up to three (3) school days, to complete make-up work for excused absences. Principals may grant extensions to the make-up time limit for extenuating circumstances. Regarding make-up of the work missed as a result of unexcused absences, each principal shall establish site-specific policies that encourage both

regular attendance and high academic achievement, and shall review and modify these policies from time-to-time as required to maintain and improve their effectiveness.

### **Attendance Defined**

- A. School Attendance - Students are to be counted in attendance only if they are actually present for at least two (2) hours of the day or engaged in a school-approved educational activity which constitutes a part of the instructional program for the student.
- B. Class Attendance - Students are to be counted in attendance if they are physically present in class for at least half of the class period, have been excused by the teacher on a class-related assignment, or have been requested by a member of the school support staff for an approved school activity.
- C. Tardiness - A student is considered tardy if they are not present at the moment the school bell rings for the class assigned. NOTE: If a student is not present when attendance is taken but is present later in the school day, that student must be considered in attendance, but tardy, and the absence should be changed. A student who is tardy should never remain on record as being absent.
- D. Early Sign-outs -No student shall be released within the final thirty (30) minutes of the school day unless authorized by the principal or principal's designee (i.e., emergency, sickness).

Each student who is scheduled at a school center for instructional purposes for a partial day, and at an area vocational-technical center, a vocational school or a community college for a partial day shall, if present at the school center, be reported as present one-half day.

Reasonable excuses for time missed at school:

- A. Personal illness of the student (medical evidence may be required by the Principal for absences exceeding five (5) consecutive days). The written statement must include all days the student has been absent from school. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school due to a specific medical condition, s/he must be under the supervision of a health care provider in order to receive excused absences from school.
- B. Court appearance of the student, subpoena by law enforcement agency, or mandatory court appearance.
- C. Absence due to a medical appointment requires a written statement from a health care provider indicating the date and time of the appointment and submitted to the Principal.
- D. An approved school activity (absences recorded but not reported).
- E. Other absences with prior approval of the Principal.
- F. Attendance at a center under Department of Children and Families supervision.
- G. Significant community events with prior permission of the Principal. When more than one (1) school is involved, the Region Superintendent will determine the status of the absence.
- H. Observance of a religious holiday or service when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service should be observed.
- I. Death in the immediate family.
- J. School-sponsored event or educational enrichment activity that is not a school-sponsored event, as determined and approved by the Principal. The student must receive advance written permission from the Principal. Examples of special events include: public functions, conferences, and regional, State, and national competitions.
- K. Outdoor suspension.
- L. Appointments for a therapy service provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to Florida law for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder including, but not limited to, applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.
- M. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the Principal, requires documentation related to the condition.

Unexcused absences include absences due to:

- A. vacations, personal services, local non-school event, program, or sporting activity;
- B. older students providing day care services for siblings;
- C. illness of others;
- D. non-compliance with immunization requirements (unless lawfully exempted).

Absences not included in excused absences listed above shall be unexcused. Any student who has been absent from school will be marked unexcused absent until s/he submits the required documentation. Failure to provide required documentation within three (3) school days upon the return to school will result in an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences do not require that the teacher provide make-up work for the student.

A student accumulating ten (10) or more class unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) or more class unexcused absences in a designated semester course may have quarterly, semester and final grade(s) withheld pending an administrative screening and completion of assigned interventions by the Attendance Review Committee.

Unexcused absences shall not be grounds for suspension from school but may result in detention or placement in existing alternative programs.

Any student who fails to attend any regularly scheduled class and has no excuse for absence should be referred to the appropriate administrator. Disciplinary action should include notification to parents or guardians. Chronic truancy or deliberate nonattendance in excess of fifteen (15) school days within a ninety (90) calendar day period shall be sufficient grounds for withdrawal of students sixteen (16) years of age or older, who are subject to compulsory school attendance under F.S. 1003.21.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative procedures that:

- A. ensure proper procedures are established so the student and his/her parents are provided the opportunity to challenge the attendance record prior to notification and that such notification complies with applicable Board policies;
- B. ensure a school session which is in conformity with the requirements of the rules of the State Board;
- C. govern the keeping of attendance records according to State Board rules;
- D. identify the habitual truant, investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs and interests;
- E. ensure that students whose absence has been excused have an opportunity to make up work they missed and receive credit for the work, if completed;
- F. ensure that any student who, due to a specifically identifiable physical or mental impairment, exceeds or may exceed the District's limit on excused absence is referred for evaluation for eligibility either under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or other appropriate accommodation.

The regulations should provide that a student's grade in any course is based on performance in the instructional setting and is not reduced for reasons of conduct. If students violate the attendance or other rules of the school, they should be disciplined appropriately for the misconduct, but his/her grades should be based upon what the students can demonstrate they have learned.

### **Attendance Records and Reports Required**

All officials, teachers, and other employees shall keep all records and shall prepare and submit promptly all reports that may be required by law, State rules, and District policies. These records shall include a register of enrollment and attendance and all persons named shall make reports. The enrollment register shall show the absence or attendance of each child enrolled for each school day of the year in a manner prescribed by the State Board. The register shall be open for inspection by the Superintendent. Violations of this section shall be a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided by law.

### **Falsification of Attendance Records - Penalty**

The presentation of reasonable and satisfactory proof that any teacher, principal, any other school personnel or school officer, has falsified or caused to be falsified attendance records for which they are responsible shall be sufficient grounds for the revocation of his/her teaching certificate by the Department of Education, or for dismissal or removal from office.

The principal shall require:

- A. attendance/tardiness is taken and recorded by authorized persons at a designated time every official school day;

- B. a review of classes that have excessive absences in order to determine if the quality of instruction is a factor in the failure of students to attend class on a regular basis;
- C. an authorized person(s) to determine the status of each absence/tardiness;
- D. parents be notified each time their child is absent from school possible;
- E. the steps outlined in F.S. 1003.26 regarding regular school attendance are implemented;
- F. an Attendance Review Committee is established at the school;
- G. consideration of appeals made by students and/or parents regarding recommendations of the Attendance Review Committee.

The teacher shall:

- A. encourage school and class attendance with challenging and rigorous instruction and curriculum and by demonstrating an interest in the welfare of students;
- B. take attendance during homeroom and whenever students change instructors in elementary schools and take attendance each period of the school day in secondary schools, and report absences as required by the school;
- C. at the request of the student or parent, provide make-up assignments for excused absences/tardinesses.

The student shall:

- A. attend classes 180 days each school year;
- B. request the make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardinesses from teachers upon return to school or class within three (3) days;

It should be noted that all classwork, due to the nature of instruction, is not readily subject to make-up work.

- C. complete the make-up assignments for classes missed within the equivalent number of days absent;  
Failure to make up all assignments will result in a lower assessment of the student's academic and/or effort grade.
- D. be reported as present for the school day in order to participate in athletic and extra-curricular activities.

The parent shall:

- A. be responsible for their child's school attendance as required by law and stress the importance of regular and punctual school attendance with their child;
- B. report and explain an absence or tardiness to the school;
- C. ensure that the child has requested and completes make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardinesses from the teachers upon return to school or class;
- D. appear before the Attendance Review Committee at the scheduled time to provide information relating to their child's absences and to support prescribed activities.

### **Truancy**

If a child does not comply with efforts to enforce school attendance, the Superintendent may file a truancy petition. Any student who has a total of fifteen (15) days of unexcused absence from school within a ninety (90) calendar day period will be considered habitually absent. The Superintendent shall inform the student and parents of the record of excessive absences as well as the District's intent to notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

If a student has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a ninety (90) calendar day period, the student's primary teacher shall report to the school principal or his/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 with the child study team to identify potential remedies.

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

- A. frequent attempts at communication between the teacher and the family;
- B. evaluation for alternative education programs;
- C. attendance contracts.

### **Emergency Student Data Form**

The registrar/attendance clerk is responsible for all student assignment and student accounting procedures during the school year. At the end of the first day, each homeroom teacher will submit to the main office the corrected and alphabetized sets of Emergency Student Data Forms. After the first day of school, all new enrollees must register in the main office and have on file an Emergency Student Data Form completed with truthful and accurate information. Anyone who knowingly makes a false statement in writing with the intent to mislead a public servant in the performance of his/her official duty is guilty of a second degree misdemeanor under F.S. 837.06. In addition, anyone who knowingly makes a false verified declaration is guilty of perjury, a third degree felony under F.S. 92.525. The registrar/attendance clerk will also be notified of any transfer or withdrawal so that the files may be purged as changes occur. In addition, changes of address must be reflected on student records.

Where parents are divorced or separated, the parent who enrolled the student is responsible for completing the Emergency Student Data Form with truthful and accurate information that is consistent with the most recent court order governing their divorce, separation, or custody matters. Any parent contesting the information on the Emergency Student Data Form may seek assistance from the court governing their divorce, separation, or custody matters to compel the enrolling parent to revise the information on the form.

### **Legal Names of Students**

Requests from a parent to enroll a child in a public school under a name other than the legal name may be granted on a temporary basis provided court action is in process to make the assumed name legal. Official school records must list both the legal name and assumed name of the student. Students entering a District school for the first time must have an Emergency Student Data Form completed with both legal and assumed names shown.

### **Principal's Report on Attendance**

The dates to be covered by the Principal's Report on Attendance are announced annually by the Federal and State Compliance Office. Reports are to be certified on-line by the principal by the fifth working day after the close of a reporting period. Attendance reports shall be accurate and current according to the State-approved recording and reporting system.

### **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Surveys**

During each of several school weeks during the fiscal year, a program membership survey of each school shall be made by aggregating the full-time equivalent student membership of each program by school. The District's full-time equivalent (FTE) membership shall be computed and currently maintained according to rules of the State Department of Education. Instructions will be distributed by the Federal and State Compliance Office prior to each survey. These surveys are the basis of State monies forwarded to the District according to prescribed cost factors and base funds under the Florida Education Finance Program. For FTE Surveys 2 and 3, FTE will be prorated and allocated to schools based on student enrollment/attendance.

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Legal

F.S. 984.151

F.S. 1002.20

F.S. 1003.02

F.S. 1003.21

F.S. 1003.23

F.S. 1003.24

F.S. 1003.26

F.S. 1003.27

F.A.C. 6A-1.044, Pupil Attendance Records

F.A.C. 6A-1.09512, Equivalent Minimum School Term for Compulsory Attendance Purposes

F.A.C. 6A-1.09513, Parents' Responsibility for School Attendance

F.A.C. 6A-1.09514, Excused Absences for Religious Instruction or Holiday