

Policy Code: 4050 ATTENDANCE

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. 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

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the school designee within two (2) days of the student's return to school. Written excuses submitted beyond two school days will be subject to principal approval. Failure to comply with this expectation will result in the absence being unexcused. Absences not classified as excused are unexcused and may result in disciplinary action.

An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

1. Illness or Injury. An absence is excused when the absence results from illness or injury which prevents the child from being physically able to attend school.
2. Quarantine. An absence is excused when isolation of the child is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
3. Death in the Immediate Family. An absence is excused when it results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the child. For purposes of this regulation, the immediate family of the child includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters.
4. Medical or Dental Appointments. An absence is excused when it results from a medical or dental appointment of a child and approval of the appropriate school official is gained prior to the absence, except in the case of an emergency.
5. Court or Administrative Proceedings. An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a child at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
6. Religious Observances. An absence may be excused if the tenets of a religion to which a child or his parents adhere require or suggest the observance of a religious event. The approval of the absence should be granted unless the religious observances, or the cumulative effect of religious observances, is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the child.
7. Educational Opportunity. An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as travel. Approval must be obtained from the principal prior to the absence. Full consideration (without requiring reports/projects) should be given to excusing absences of students of deployed Military Personnel and Emergency Responders while parents are home on leave.
8. Temporary or occasional absences for other reasons in accordance with local school board policies may be excused, provided that the student has been in attendance at least one-half of a school day.

Absences due to extended illnesses will require a statement from a physician. Extended illness is considered an absence that is over five (5) consecutive days. After accumulation more than six (6) absences **NOT** excused by a physician's note, the school will require a physician's note for any additional absences to be excused. Notes/statements from a physician may require verification by school staff.

The student is responsible to submit a note signed by the parent citing the reason for an absence to the principal's designee within two (2) days of the student's return to school. Failure to comply with the above will result in the absence being unexcused. Absences not classified as excused are unexcused and may result in disciplinary action.

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 work. 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. Loss of Academic Credit for Excessive Absences (Grades 9-12)

High school students are expected to attend each class for 90 class sessions. In order for a student in grades 9-12 to receive credit for a subject, he must have been in attendance not less than 82 class sessions. The principal may permit make-up for excused absences beyond 8 during a semester upon written request of the student and with the recommendation of the teacher involved. Make-up must be completed outside of the regular school day sufficient to raise minimum class attendance to 82 class sessions.

D. 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 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;
5. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal; and
6. in-school suspensions.

Assignments missed for these reasons are eligible for makeup 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.

E. 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 at school on time and to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class.

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by [G.S. 115C-378](#) for excessive absences.

F. Reporting Unexcused Absences Under the Compulsory Attendance Law

The principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian of his/her child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated three (3) unexcused absences in a school year. After not more than six (6) unexcused absences, the principal shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian by mail that he/she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policy. Once the parent, guardian or custodian is notified, the designated school employee shall work with the child and his/her family to analyze the cause of the absences and determine steps to eliminate the problem. After ten (10) accumulated unexcused absences in a school year the principal or his/her designee shall review any report or investigation concerning absences and shall confer with the student and his/her parent, guardian or custodian if possible to determine whether the parent, guardian or custodian has received notification of the absences and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. In the case of students between the ages of seven and sixteen, if the principal determines that the parent, guardian or custodian has not made a good faith effort, he/she shall notify the district attorney. If the principal determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has made a good faith effort to get the child in school, he/she may file a complaint with the juvenile intake counselor that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid cause.

Any parent, guardian or other person violating the Compulsory Attendance Law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined, imprisoned, or both at the discretion of the court.

For the purpose of enforcing the Compulsory Attendance Law, days missed due to an involuntary suspension shall not be considered unexcused absences.

Legal Reference: [G.S. 115C-47\(9\)](#); [G.S. 115C, Article 26](#); [16 N.C.A.C., Subchapter 6E, Sections .0101, .0102, .0103 and .0104](#)

Adopted: May 13, 1997

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