

- A. ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR ALL SCHOOLS** (ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, HIGH)  
School Code 1003.26 states that it is the responsibility of the superintendent to enforce school attendance and those schools must respond in a timely manner to every unexcused absence or absence for which the reason is unknown.

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures and guidelines to be utilized by parents, students and school and district staff.

1. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- a. The teacher's grade book or other approved school attendance records at the school will be the final authority in determining the number of absences for each student.
- b. Each of the schools will document attempts to notify parents of each absence for which the reasons are unknown. However, failure to successfully notify parents/guardians shall not negate the attendance policy.
- c. All students will be allowed up to 3 days to make up work in the event of an absence. All assignments announced in advance of the student's absence must be made up on the day the student returns to class.
- d. School day attendance definition – An absence is defined as missing more than one-half of the school day.
- e. All questions relating to the attendance policy are to be directed to the school. The concerned party should contact the school's attendance officer for clarification first and then the school principal or his/her designee. An attendance committee from the school will be selected to handle all attendance/grade/excused absence issues.

2. TARDIES AND CHECKOUTS

- a. A student who arrives to school after the scheduled beginning time will be recorded as tardy for that day.
- b. A student who is checked out before the class or school day is officially over will be declared a "checkout". Checkouts are recorded in the school office. However, the school principal has the authority to excuse or determine the consequence arising from recorded checkouts.

- c. Four (4) unexcused tardies or unexcused checkouts in a nine (9) week grading period will be considered as one (1) unexcused absence for the period in which the tardy or checkout occurred. This is for the purposes of contacting parents and referring to the district office.

3. ABSENCES

- a. Parents/guardians are to sign in/out their child when missing school for excusable appointments or emergencies and are to comply with the individual school procedures established with the school's attendance officer.

- b. Excused Absence

Excused absences will be given for the following reasons:

- Religious instruction and/or religious holidays
- Sickness, injury or other medical condition
- School leave – school approved trips such as instructional field trips, club events, athletics, etc. These are not counted as absences
- Other academic classes or programs
- Educational trips – when requested by parents (five (5) school days in advance), trips for educational purposes may be granted
- Pre-approved absences – absences from school approved by the administration prior to occurrence
- Funerals (documentation must be provided)
- Legal reason (documentation must be provided)
- Other absences as approved by the principal/designee

Parents or guardians are required to justify each absence. A parent note for reasons as listed above will be accepted for each absence up to four (4) days during a nine (9) week grading period.

All absences, after the fourth day, will **only** be excused with a note from a doctor or dentist, funeral program of immediate family member, religious holiday, documentation for a legal reason or principal's/designee's approval.

Students **must** turn in excuse documentation to the office upon return to school. If the appropriate documentation is not provided after a reminder and within a reasonable amount of time, the absence(s) will be unexcused.

#### 4. PRINCIPAL REFERRAL TO CHILD STUDY TEAM

If a student has five (5) or more 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 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 per F.S. 1003.26(1)(b).

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 per F.S. 1003.26(1)(b). If the child study team finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, a meeting or phone conference with the parent must be held to identify potential remedies. The principal or designee must maintain documentation or attempts of parent documentation.

If an initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the child study team shall implement interventions that best address the problem. The interventions may include, but need not be limited to:

- Frequent communication between the teacher and the family;
- Changes in the learning environment;
- Mentoring;
- Student counseling;
- Tutoring, including peer tutoring;
- Placement into different classes;
- Evaluation for alternative education programs;
- Attendance contracts;
- Referral to other agencies for family services; or
- Other interventions - including but not limited to a truancy petition pursuant to s.984.151

The child study team shall work diligently in facilitating the intervention services; however, if a parent refuses to attend the child study team meeting, the child/parent may be referred to Truancy Court.

If a student accumulates 15 unexcused absences in a period of 90 calendar days, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the district school board contact and the child/parent will be referred to truancy court per F.S. 1003.27(2)(b). Due to length of time in the referral to truancy process, the principal or designee may begin the notification to truancy upon the 12<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence of the student.

5. PENALTIES ASSOCIATED WITH HABITUAL TRUANCY

**Parents.** A parent who refused or fails to have a minor student who is under his or her control attend school regularly, or who refuses or fails to comply with the requirements of school attendance, commits a misdemeanor of the second degree per F.S. 1003.27(7)(a). The court may also order a parent who violates compulsory attendance to participate in approved parent training class, attend school with the student, perform community service hours at the school, or participate in counseling

**Students.** In addition to any other authorized sanctions, the court shall order a student found to be a habitual truant to make up all school work missed and may order the student to pay a civil penalty of up to \$2, based on the student's ability to pay, for each day of school missed, perform up to 25 community service hours at the school or participate in counseling or other services, as appropriate per F.S. 1003.27(7)(d).

Upon a second or subsequent finding of habitual truancy, the court, in addition to any other authorized sanctions, shall order the student to make up all school work missed and may order the student to pay a civil penalty of up to \$5, based on the student's ability to pay, for each day of school missed, perform up to 50 community service hours at the school, or participate in counseling, as appropriate per F.S. 1003.27 (7)(d).

**B. ATTENDANCE POLICY SPECIFIC FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL**

Florida Statute 1003.21(c) states a student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age **if** the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board.

Students placed on out-of-school suspension shall receive all assigned work for the days of the suspension. However, the student will not receive credit for completion of those assignments. In addition, the student will receive a zero for any daily grade, pop quiz or other grade assigned while the student is suspended. Exception: when an assignment is made prior to the student's suspension the student will be allowed to make up that particular assignment i.e. test, project, etc. Students shall be allowed to make up nine (9) weeks or semester exams, or other major projects or assignments.

Individual class period attendance definition – An absence is defined as missing more than one-half of the class period.

ATTENDANCE/DRIVER'S LICENSE (15-18 YEAR OLDS)

The Superintendent must provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles the legal name, sex, date of birth, and social security number of each minor student who has been reported under this paragraph and who fails to otherwise satisfy the requirements of s322.091. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles may not issue a driver's license or learner's driver's license to, and shall suspend any previously issued driver's license or learner's driver's license of, any such minor student. The student will also be referred to truancy court.

**C. ATTENDANCE POLICY SPECIFIC FOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Students are to sign in/out when missing school for excusable appointments or emergencies and are to comply with the individual school procedures established with the school's attendance officer. Failure to sign out may result in an unexcused absence and the consequences thereof.

Teachers will provide all work to students (whether absence is excused or unexcused. All work will be graded for all students. If students do not complete work, they receive a zero.

Whenever a student receives a 4<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence in a 9-week grading period, the student's end of 9-week grade will be reduced by (10) points.