

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 misses school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian shall be provided to the student's teacher on the day the student returns after an absence. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a physician. 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. a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent(s).
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. 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 duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

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. (See also Board Policies 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission, and 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 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.

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 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.

Students in grades six through eight must be in attendance at least 170 school days. Students with more than 10 unexcused absences may not be promoted to the next grade level.

School attendance committees will review student absences at the end of the first three grading periods and in the middle of the last grading period. The committee shall submit to the principal or designee the names of students who are in danger of not being promoted due to excessive unexcused absences.

If a high school student is absent from any class for seven or more days, the principal or designee shall have the authority to determine whether the student will be permitted to make up missed work.

High school students who miss more than seven days in a semester course or 10 days in a yearlong course will not receive credit for the course unless the student achieves proficiency on an End of Course (EOC) exam or a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Post-Assessment or a “B” or above on the final exam in a non-EOC or non-CTE Post-Assessment class and earns a passing grade for the course. No Credit (NC) will be recorded if the student does not meet both stipulations.

Absences due to disability or for religious observance will not be included in determining the cumulative days absent in a course. All other absences, both excused and unexcused, will be combined to determine the cumulative days absent. Before a student is denied credit for a course due to excessive absences, the principal shall ensure that any absences due to disability or for religious observance are excluded from the calculation of cumulative absences.

Students with extenuating circumstances may file an appeal prior to the completion of the course as follows:

ALL attendance appeals are presented to the School Attendance Appeals Committee, which has sole responsibility for approving attendance appeals. Either the student or a teacher of the student may file an appeal.

Students with excused absences due to documented chronic health problems are exempt from this policy.

Excessive absences may impact eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics. See policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations and policy 3621, Student Athletic Eligibility.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -375.5, -378 through -383, -390.2(d), -390.2(1), -390.5, -407.5; 130A-440; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0102, .0103; State Board of Education Policies TCS-L-000 through -003

Cross References: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Student Athletic Eligibility (policy 3621), Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students (policy 4023), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Short-Term Suspension (policy 4351)

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