

**REVISED POLICY - \*.\***

**ATTENDANCE**

**Philosophy**

The classroom experience is of unique value and that it cannot be duplicated by make-up work. Student interaction and the development of ideas through discussion are lost when a student is absent. A student's enrollment in a course is his/her commitment to attend all class sessions. Therefore, it is the intent of this policy to disallow student from being absent from class unless a situation exists which makes their absence absolutely necessary.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this attendance policy is to foster responsibility and reliability on the part of District students to attend all classes. Students will acknowledge greater emphasis on attendance at school because credit in their classes will be contingent upon their presence.

**Absences**

A. **Excused Absences**

Excused absences include:

1. An illness of the student documented by a doctor's statement or a documented medical/dental appointment
2. An observance of an established religious holiday or for pre-arranged religious instruction as defined in F.S. 1003.21. (documentation of the religious affiliation of the student may be required by school officials)
3. A court subpoena, a required court appearance, or placement in detention at a juvenile center in which the student continues his/her education.

B. **Approved school-related activities (not to be counted as absences):**

1. Academic activity or school-sponsored field trip directly related to the instructional outcomes of one (1) or more courses.
2. Other approved student activities such as Student Council, National Honor Society, class meetings, and academic/athletic competitions.

The student's parent or legal guardian shall make a call to the school or give advance written notification to the school when a student will be absent for excused reasons.

C. **Validated Absences**

Brief illness, appointments, and family business are considered absences for purposes of meeting attendance policy requirements. Absences must be documented by written notes from parents.

D. **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences shall include, but not be limited to Out of School Suspensions, truancy, class cuts, and tardies to class of ten (10) minutes or more.

**Driver's License and Truancy Court**

Accruing excessive unexcused and/or validated absences will cause a student to be designated "habitually truant" and will result in a referral of the student to Truancy Court or recommendation for revocation of the student's driver's license.

**Make-up work**

Students are to be provided one (1) school day for each school day absent to make-up work missed without academic penalty. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for such make-up work. Work not made up within the specified time period will receive a grade of "F". The principal may extend the time for make-up work when in his/her judgment extenuating circumstances justify such extension. However, long-term assignments given before the student is absent are expected to be turned in on the date the student returns to school. These provisions shall apply to all grade levels.

**Tardiness/Early Dismissal**

It is necessary that a student be in attendance throughout the school day in order to benefit fully from the educational program of the District. The School Board recognizes, however, that from time-to-time compelling circumstances require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

A student is tardy when the student arrives after the beginning of the school day or when the student is not inside the assigned room of a class when the tardy bell rings.

It is required that the school be notified in advance of such absences by request of the student's parent, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. A student's tardiness to school or early dismissal from school shall be excused at the discretion of the principal or designee. A

student who is habitually late to school and/or chronically dismissed early shall be subject to disciplinary action by the school administration including but not limited to in-school suspension, a required parent conference, and/or referral to Truancy Court.

### **Attendance Procedures**

Classroom activities are of unique value and cannot be duplicated by make-up work. Student interaction and the development of ideas through discussion are lost when a student is absent. A student's enrollment in a school is a commitment to attend school each day. Therefore, it is the intent of this rule to encourage students to be present daily in school unless a situation exists which makes their absence absolutely necessary. Further, it is incumbent on each school to provide a meaningful and relevant program with appropriate incentives to promote student commitment to education and attendance.

School attendance shall be the responsibility of parents and students. All students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.

A student who is absent without the principal's or designee's approval shall have his/her parent or legal guardian report such absences to the school center in the manner prescribed by the District Code of Student Conduct.

A student shall be considered truant when absent without parent or legal guardian permission or when the parent or legal guardian consents to unnecessary absences (e.g., vacations, etc.) which will be recorded as unexcused.

### **Student Absence Notification**

Parents/Guardians are required to notify the school when their child is absent and inform the school of the reason for the absence within twenty-four (24) hours by a telephone call or written note. In order to qualify for an excused or validated absence the parent must notify the school of the child's absence within twenty-four (24) hours of the date of the absence. A phone

call on the date of the absence prior to 10:00 a.m. is preferable. If it is not possible for the school to be contacted by phone, then the parent is to send a note with the student on the day s/he returns to school explaining the absence. Failure to notify the school within twenty-four (24) hours by phone or note when the student returns will result in the absence being unexcused regardless of the reason for the absence. If the school is not notified by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent when practical and possible. The principal may waive the twenty-four (24) hour notification requirement when in his/her judgment extenuating

circumstances justify such a waiver. In addition to parent notification, absences require written verification to be excused.

The school will make a good faith effort to contact parents per Administrative Procedure 5200 and Florida Statute 1003.26.

**High School Course Credit**

High School Course Credit shall be a function of demonstrated mastery of the student performance standards in the course of study as provided by the rules of the School Board. At the high school level and for high school courses taken at middle school, credit is earned by attaining a passing average for the semester and by accumulating NO MORE THAN NINE (9) days absent for the semester. No distinction will be made between excused, validated, and unexcused absences when calculating absences for earning of credit.

**High School Course Credit - Due Process Procedure**

A student who does not earn high school credit because of the failure to meet attendance requirements may file an appeal within ten (10) days of the date of notification of loss of credit. A committee consisting of an administrator, a counselor, and a faculty member will review cases in which granting of credit is requested by a student and/or parent. After review of the student's case, the committee shall make a recommendation to the principal as to the granting of such credit.

**High School Course Credit - Late Entry Procedure**

Students may enter school late at any time for the purpose of gaining skills and knowledge in courses. The fact that the student may enter does not, however, guarantee that academic credit will result.

Students entering after the drop-add period are to be graded as follows:

- A. Absences prior to enrollment excused - student may make up work and be graded.
- B. Absences prior to enrollment unexcused, other than out-of-school suspension - student receives a failing grade for work not completed while not enrolled. Marking period grades are derived from accumulated F's and work done from entering to end of the grading period.
- C. Attendance policy requirements for earning credit are to be applied as with any other student, with the days prior to enrollment counted as absences.

- D. A student enrolling after the commencement date of a course must attend at least ninety percent (90%) of the class meetings occurring after the student's date of enrollment. Upon absences exceeding ten percent (10%) in any course and absence of more than ten percent (10%) of the time remaining in the course after enrollment of transfer students, the student and parents shall be notified that the student will not earn credit for the course in that and any other courses in which these absence limits are exceeded

NOTE: F.S. 1003.26, 1003.27, 39.01(73)(a), and 984.03(27) requires each school principal or designee to report each habitually truant student to the designated District Administrator. Further, it requires school district superintendents or designees to report to the Department of Highway, Safety, and Motor Vehicles the name and other identifying information of students who are habitually truant. The definition of habitually truant is a student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences within ninety (90) calendar days.

F.S. 1002.20, 1003.21, 1003.24, 1003.26, 1003.27