

Attendance in school and participation in class are an integral part of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Regular attendance develops 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 seven (or younger if enrolled) and 16 years attend school. Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily.

A. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

School officials will keep an accurate record 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 student's teacher on the day returning after an absence. If the student does not present a signed parental note within two days, the absence will be coded as unexcused and an excuse note will no longer be accepted. An absence may be excused for the following reasons:

1. personal illness or injury which makes the student physically unable to attend school;
2. isolation ordered by the State Board of Health;
3. death in the immediate family;
4. emergency medical or dental appointment or such an appointment which has been approved in advance by the principal;
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) with written prior approval from the principal; The student shall have the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to the excused absence for a religious observance;
7. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel, with prior approval from the principal; or
8. absence due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary.
9. Principal discretion.

In addition, a student whose 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 will be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the superintendent or designee to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian.

Absences due to extended illnesses generally require a statement from a physician.

In the case of excused absences and out of school suspensions, 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. SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. It is the intention of the board of education that classes missed be kept to an absolute minimum through close scrutiny and a monitoring system on the part of the principal. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. field trips sponsored by the school;
2. school-initiated and scheduled activities;
3. athletic events that require early dismissal from school; or in-school suspension.

Assignments missed for these reasons will be completed by students. 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.

If no local funds are available, the classroom teacher will assume the responsibility for obtaining the money for gas through parent donations

D. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement.

The principal will notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences.

High School Attendance Policy

High school students can have no more than eight total (excused and unexcused) absences in a class per semester. Absence in excess of this amount will result in the student not receiving credit for the class. Each high school will have a standing Attendance Committee that meets bi-weekly to review attendance data, contact students and parents, and intervene as necessary to ensure success for all students. Violations of the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law will be reported as required by NC General Statutes.

High school students must make up time on an hour-for-hour basis. Make-up times will be arranged at the discretion of the principal, based upon the individual needs and resources of the school.

For the purposed of this policy, Montgomery County Schools recognizes that tardiness and early departures to and from school and individual classes is a major disruption to school operations and distracts from the learning environment of the student who is tardy and other students. High school students who are tardy or leave early from an individual class period five times (5) will be counted as absent for one (1) class period for that class. If total absences, including tardy/early departure absences exceed 8 for the class, the time must be made up on an hour-for-hour basis in order for the student to receive credit for the class. Persistent tardiness will be reviewed by the Attendance Committee and reported to parents/guardians.

High school students may request a waiver of the attendance requirement due to extraordinary, extenuating circumstances. Waiver request forms must be submitted five (5) days prior to the end of the semester. This timeframe may be adjusted at the discretion of the principal. The Attendance Committee will review the request for waiver and decide to grant or deny the request. If the request is denied, the student shall be allowed the opportunity to make up the missed time and work at the discretion of the principal.

Middle School Attendance Policy

Middle School students may not miss more than fifteen (15) days in a given school year. Any student who misses more that fifteen (15) days will be referred

to the principal for possible retention. The principal/designee will notify the parent of the school's concern and remind the parent of the district's attendance policy, promotion standards/requirements, and the NC Compulsory Attendance Law requirements.

Students may make up time for any absence over fifteen (15) days at the discretion of the principal, based upon the needs and resources at the school.

If students do not make up required time under this policy, they may be retained in the current grade at the discretion of the principal. Parents/Guardians who feel that extraordinary, extenuating circumstances warranted the excessive absences can file a waiver request with the Attendance Committee at the school. The waiver request should be received at least five (5) days before the end of the final grading period. The Attendance Committee will grant or deny the waiver. If the request is denied, the student shall be allowed the opportunity to make up missed time and work at the discretion of the principal.

For the purposes of this policy, seven (7) tardies or early dismissals will equal one (1) class absence.

At 3, 6, and 10 absences letters are sent to parents as required by NC General Statutes. Any student with excessive absences will also be required to meet with the Student Assistance Team:

A doctor's note may be required if the student is absent three days in a row. Teachers must daily complete attendance reports for NCWISE.

Elementary School Attendance Policy

Recognizing that regular school attendance is the foundation for learning and that NC Compulsory Attendance Law requires students to be in attendance, students in the Montgomery County Schools are required to have regular attendance in order to be promoted to the next grade. An elementary student who is absent more than fifteen (15) days will be referred to the principal for possible retention. Upon the 5th absence (excused or unexcused) the principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of the school's concern and remind the parent of the district's attendance policy, promotion standards/requirements, and the NC Compulsory Attendance Law requirements.

If the principal determines that retention is necessary based upon attendance, the parent/guardian will be notified of this fact in writing. The parent/guardian

may appeal the decision of the principal to retain the student to the Superintendent. Requests for appeal must be received by the Superintendent within five (5) days of receiving final notice of retention from the principal.

For purposes of this policy, ten (10) tardies or early dismissals will equal one day's absence.

E. TARDINESS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

Superintendent shall work with principals to develop procedures for enforcing this policy. The principal shall work with school staff to develop procedures for accurate accounting of tardies and early dismissals. Schools are encouraged to develop check out schedules whereby a child can only be checked out of school with a doctor's note.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -84, -288(a), -375.5, -378 to -383, -407.5; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E.0102-.0103; State Board of Education Policies TCS-L-000,-002,-003

Cross References: Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students (policy 4023), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

Adopted: April 10, 2000
Amended: June 3, 2002
Amended: April 2, 2007
Updated: September 15, 2010
Updated: January 20, 2011
Updated: May 2, 2011