

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### ATTENDANCE

ALL COMPULSORY AGE STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY OF THE 180-DAY SCHOOL YEAR. PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILD'S DAILY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. BECAUSE POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH NONATTENDANCE, SCHOOLS WILL RESPOND IN A TIMELY MANNER TO PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATTERNS OF NONATTENDANCE. SCHOOLS WILL COLLABORATE WITH APPROPRIATE LOCAL AND STATE AGENCIES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN TRUANCY PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND JUDICIAL ACTION.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO ATTENDANCE CAN ALSO BE FOUND IN THE CURRENT EDITION OF THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT WHICH IS APPROVED, AS SCHOOL BOARD POLICY, ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

AUTHORITY: F.S. 1003.21, 1003.23, 1003.24, 1003.26, 1003.27, 1003.28, 1003.29.

Board Approved: 9/21/99

Adopted: 11/14/00, 4/18/06

### RULES:

### DEFINITIONS

#### I. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- A. All children who have attained the age of six years or who will have attained the age of six years by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six years of age but who have not yet attained the age of 16 years, except as hereinafter provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire 180-day school term. (F.S.1003.21)
- B. 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 School Board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the child and parent. A student who attains the age of 18 years during the school year is not subject to the legal sanctions for compulsory school attendance. (F.S.1003.21 (2) (c))
- C. Students under 16 years of age may not be withdrawn from school for any reason unless expelled through Board action or covered by an exemption allowed by Florida Statute. Exemption requests are coordinated by the School Social Work and Attendance Department and approved by the Area Superintendent. Exemptions are reviewed on an annual basis.
- D. Compulsory school attendance requirements may be met by attendance in a home education program (F.S.1002.01 (2) (b). defines home education as sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent or guardian in order to satisfy the requirement for compulsory education.

- E. Although 180 days is the standard requirement for compulsory school attendance, Florida Statutes require a longer term for Department of Juvenile Justice Programs. For students in those programs, the compulsory school attendance requirement is consistent with state law and regulations.

## **II. PATTERNS OF NON-ATTENDANCE**

Non-attendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early-sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day. The minimum number of days that a student is required to be in attendance is 40 days in a standard marking period, or its equivalent for schools on the semester system. A student may be absent no more than 5 days in a standard marking period.

- A. If a student has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or 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 or her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. (F.S. 1003.26 (b))
- B. A pattern of non-attendance is established when an accumulation of non-attendance excused or unexcused, equals 5 days (30 hours) in a marking period or 10 days (60 hours) within 90 days. These hours may be accumulated by tardiness, early sign-outs, or daily absences.
  - 1. Once a student has exceeded the maximum absences (5 days in a marking period) sanctions may be imposed.
- C. Once a pattern of non-attendance has been established, a statement to the school provided by the parents, explaining such absences and tardiness, must be on file at the school (F.S.1003.24 (4))
- D. A habitual truant is a child who has 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the child's parent. (F.S.1003.02 (8))

## **III. ABSENCES**

### **A. EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below. For reasons "1" through "5" on the list below, parents must report the absence the day before, the day of, or within two school days following the absence or the absence will be considered unexcused. Students' absences may be reported by either notes or telephone calls from parent/guardians. If the student exhibits a pattern of nonattendance, principals may request documentation from a physician or public health unit. (F.S. 1003.24(4))

Absences may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Illness of student.
2. Illness of an immediate family member.
3. Death in the family.
4. Religious holidays of the student's own faith.
5. Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency.
6. Special event. Examples of special events include important public functions, conferences, state/national competitions, as well as exceptional cases of family need. The student must get permission from the principal/designee at least five days ahead of time.
7. Scheduled medical or dental appointment.
8. Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of five excused days absence for each infestation of head lice. Students on field trips and students who attend alternative to suspension programs are not considered absent.

## **B. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

1. Absences may only be excused for the reasons listed above. If absences are not excused, as defined in the previous section, the absences are considered unexcused.
2. Students without a completed Certificate of Immunization indicating compliance with the current required schedule of immunizations will not be allowed to attend classes until this document is provided or a waiver is obtained. Absences due to non-compliance with immunization requirements shall be considered unexcused. (F.S. 1003.22(1))
3. For students transferring into Broward County, including but not limited to foster care students, or a homeless student, a temporary 30 day waiver of both health examination documents and certificates of immunization may be granted. (F.S. 1003.22(1) (5) (e))
4. Students who have been externally suspended may be offered an opportunity to participate in an alternative to suspension program. If they do not attend, the assigned days, the absences will be considered suspensions. For students with disabilities, standard policies will be applicable. (SBBC Policy 5006.1; IDEA 300.520)

## **C. TARDINESS**

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and can have a negative impact on student achievement.

1. Tardiness is defined as a student not being in the classroom when the class is scheduled to begin.
2. Excessive tardiness will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance.
3. Parents must follow the same process to excuse a tardy as they do to excuse an absence.
4. Tardiness to any class may be considered unexcused.
5. Each school must establish procedures for admitting students to class who have been tardy. These procedures will ensure that all students are treated consistently.
6. Schools will provide appropriate interventions for students who exhibit a pattern of habitual tardiness. Habitual tardiness is defined as being tardy 5 times within a marking period.

## **D. EARLY SIGN-OUTS**

Early release of students causes disruption to the academic performance of all students and may create safety and security problems.

1. All schools will establish procedures for early release that ensure that all students are treated consistently. No students shall be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines it is an emergency.

# **STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **1. RULES**

1. Students have a responsibility to ask their parents (in an age-appropriate manner) to notify the school when they are absent.
2. Students have a responsibility to ask teachers (in an age-appropriate manner) for, and to complete, make-up assignments. Two days (not including the day of return) are allowed for each day of excused absence. Previously assigned work is due the day of return.
3. Students must maintain current assignments while on internal suspension and turn in work daily.
4. Students who are externally suspended and who attend one of the alternative to suspension programs have the right to make up work.

5. Students who are married, are parents, or are expectant parents have the right to remain in the regular school program or attend a special center program tailored to their specific needs.

Note: For additional information on students' rights and responsibilities, see the Code of Student Conduct as well as the Driving Privileges & Attendance section of this policy.

## **PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Parents have a right to be informed of the attendance responsibilities and consequences for truancy for both parents and students as described in the Code of Student Conduct.
2. Each parent of a child of compulsory school attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law.
3. Parents must report their child's absence in accordance with the procedures in the Code of Student Conduct. The parent shall provide documentation of illness from a physician or public health unit, if requested.
4. Parents have the right to request a hearing if they refuse to participate in the interventions developed by the child study team because they believe that those interventions are unnecessary or inappropriate. (F.S.1003.26 (1) (b) (e))
5. The parents of a student expected to miss at least 15 consecutive school days due to illness, medical condition, or social/emotional reasons, or who would miss excessive days intermittently throughout the school year for the same reasons, and could benefit from instruction should notify the school and request a copy of the Hospital/Homebound referral packet.
6. Parents have a right to be notified if their child misses school and the parents have not reported the absence to the school.

## **SCHOOL/DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. MAINTAINING RECORDS AND IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS**

- a. Each principal must make the necessary provisions to ensure that all school attendance reports are accurate and timely and must provide the necessary training opportunities for staff to accurately report attendance (F.S.1003.23(1)). Principals are required to maintain an attendance record which shows the absence or attendance of each child enrolled for each school day of the year. (F.S.1003.23(2)).
- b. Upon each unexcused absence, the school shall contact the student's parent. (F.S.1003.26 (1) (a)) The school shall respond in a timely manner to every unexcused absence.

- c. If a student has five days (30 hours) of absences in a marking period or 10 days (60 hours) within 90 days, the principal/designee shall determine if there is a pattern of nonattendance. If there is such a pattern, the principal/designee shall refer the student to the child study team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing, and provide appropriate interventions. (F.S.1003.26(1)(b)).
- d. The principal/designee shall provide a Hospital/Homebound referral packet to the parent of a child who is expected to miss at least 15 or more consecutive school days due to illness, medical condition, or social/ emotional reasons, or who would miss excessive days intermittently throughout the year for the same reasons.
- e. If the parent or guardian of a child who has been identified as exhibiting a pattern of non-attendance enrolls the child in a home education program, the Superintendent/designee shall refer the parent to a home education review committee composed of the district contact person for home education and at least two home educators selected by the parent from a district list of all home educators who have conducted a home education program for at least three years and have indicated a willingness to serve on the committee.

## **DRIVING PRIVILEGES AND ATTENDANCE**

Florida Statute 322.091 requires school districts to report to the Division of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) the names, dates of birth, sex and social security numbers of students ages 14–18 who accumulate 15 unexcused absences in any consecutive 90 calendar day period. Districts are also required to hold hardship hearings if requested by a student whose license has been suspended. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop administrative procedures to implement this legislation.

- a. The principal/designee will conduct the hardship hearing within 30 days of receiving the request in accordance with the procedures established by the Superintendent.
- b. Students are eligible to have their driving privileges reinstated if they accumulate 30 days of attendance with no unexcused absences.

## **CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO TRUANCY**

- a. A child who is found to be truant may be taken to the Juvenile Assessment Center or other locations that are established by the school district to receive students who are absent from school. It is the responsibility of the Law Enforcement Officer to call the school to determine if the child is legitimately out of school.
- b. Students 14-18 years of age who have 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days and have a driver's license will have their driver's license suspended by the Division of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles or will not be issued a license if they apply for one.

- c. If a child subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance and the superintendent elects not to file a truancy petition or if the child does not successfully complete the sanctions ordered by the Court, the child will be referred to the case staffing committee pursuant to Section 984.12. The staffing committee may file a child-in-need-of-services petition. (F.S. 1003.26)
- d. If the parent refuses to participate in the truancy interventions and exercises the right to appeal to the School Board because the parent believes the interventions are unnecessary or inappropriate, the school district will provide a hearing officer who shall make a recommendation for final action to the Board. If the Board determines that the interventions are appropriate and the parent still refuses to participate or cooperate, the Superintendent/designee will seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance. (F.S. 1003.26 (1) (e))
- e. Students who are habitually truant may lose their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants through the Learnfare Program. The grant will be restored only when conditions as provided by law are met (30 days of attendance with no unexcused absences).