

ATTENDANCE POLICY

School attendance is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and the cadet. Sarasota Military Academy keeps accurate records of cadet attendance and parents/guardians may view it daily online via the [Family Access Portal](#) located on the [SMA school website](#).

Florida Statute §1003.24 states that the parent/legal guardian of a child of compulsory age is responsible for the child's daily school attendance. School staff, parents, students and state agencies are expected to work together to ensure that all applicable school attendance laws are obeyed, including but not limited to referral to the state-designated agency for possible court action for truancy.

Absences:

- All absences are considered **unexcused until the school receives an excuse note within 3 days of cadet's return to school.**
- An Administrator or designee has the authority to determine whether or not an absence is excused.
- Over nine (9) excused absences per semester for illness OR eighteen (18) for illness in a school year is considered excessive.
- Cadets whose absences for illness exceed these numbers must have a parent/guardian statement on file at the school explaining such absences or tardiness. Once a cadet's absences for illness are excessive without information on file, administration may require a doctor's statement for further absences to be excused.
- Administration has a legal right to ask for a written medical excuse when excused absences for illness are excessive.
- Prolonged absences, 5 days or more, that occur for medical reasons must be documented by a physician.
- If a cadet is present in school all day, but has 1 U (unexcused) absence from one class period, it is the cadet's responsibility to contact that specific teacher within 2 days,, to have the U corrected. This may be done verbally or via email.

Cadets have a right to:

- Appeal a decision about an absence.
- Make up all work missed during an out-of-school suspension or an unexcused absence, including tests and quizzes. In the case of unexcused absence, a teacher may deduct up to 30 percent from the earned grade for the work made up.

Cadets have the responsibility to:

- Attend classes daily and be on time.
- Get absences excused by turning in an excuse note to the main office within 3 days of returning to school.
- Turn in excuse notes to the main office before formation, during lunch, or after school. Notes will not be accepted during class time.
- Request make-up assignments from teachers upon their return to school after an absence and complete it within a reasonable length of time to be no more than one full calendar day for each day missed.
- During an extended absence from school, it is the cadet's responsibility to contact the teacher and to request schoolwork that may be completed at home.

Excused absences include:

- Cadet illness
- Death in the family
- Observance of a religious holiday or service that is recognized as such by members of the cadet's faith.
- Medical/Dental appointment. **With a doctor's note only.**
- Therapeutic service appointment (i.e. speech, occupational, physical, behavioral therapy) **With a note from the organization only.**

- Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance. **With a copy of subpoena only.**
- Leaving school early with written permission from parent/guardian. If leaving for an appointment, a note from the doctor or organization will be required to excuse the missed classes.
- Pre-arranged absences in writing from parent/guardian with all teacher's signatures and administrative approval.
- Other absences beyond the control of the parent or cadet, as determined and approved by the Administration or designee.

Appointments:

Whenever possible, appointments for cadets; i.e., doctor, dentist, driver's license test, etc., should be made after school hours so as to not interrupt the learning process.

Excuse Notes:

- Excuse notes must be **handwritten** by the parent/guardian. **No emails.**
- Only therapeutic service and doctor's notes, as mentioned above, may be faxed or emailed.
- **Absences for 3 or more days** that are prearranged must be approved in writing at least **5 days prior** to absence. The parent/guardian must handwrite a detailed note and before turning it into the main office, the cadet must have each teacher sign it, followed by the signature of an Administrator.

Acceptable Excuse notes must have the following:

1. Date that the note is written
2. Cadet's first and last name
3. Date(s) of absence(s) and/or tardiness, as well as, the time of arrival and/or departure if applicable.
4. Reason for absence, late arrival, or dismissal
5. Parent/guardian signature.

Procedures for Late Arrival/Early Departure:

- Cadets who arrive late to school must first sign in at the main office. To be excused, they must provide a doctor's note or a written note from a parent/guardian with the reason for the late arrival.
- Cadets who leave school early for a doctor/dentist appointment, **must bring a doctor's note when they return.** The absence for the remainder of the day will then be excused.
- Cadets who need to leave school early must bring a written excuse note from a parent/guardian giving permission for the early departure, along with a reason.
- If a cadet does not have written permission to leave early, they should report to the main office to request that their parent/guardian be called for verbal permission. The **cadet must sign out** in the main office prior to leaving.
- At NO time does verbal permission from a parent/guardian excuse a cadet from missed classes. Verbal permission only allows the cadet to leave the school grounds early. Any subsequent time missed in classes is UNEXCUSED until the receipt of a doctor's note or a written note from the parent/guardian.
- **Cadets may NOT sign themselves out** of school without parental permission and without being cleared in the main office, regardless of reaching the age of 18.
- If the parent/guardian is present, they must sign the cadet in/out. A valid driver's license is required to sign their cadet out of school early.
- Cadets who leave school early due to illness must be cleared and signed out through the clinic. In this case, a note will not be necessary to excuse this early departure. This will be excused automatically.
- If a parent/guardian comes to school to pick up a sick cadet, they must first report to the main office before signing the cadet out from the clinic for the day. A valid driver's license is required.

Cadets Must Report to:

Main Office (Urfer Hall) when:

- Late to formation
- Late to school
- Leaving school early
- Need to turn in an excuse note for absences or previous late arrivals to school.

Dual Enrollment:

Cadets who arrive late or leave early due to attending STC or SCF must sign in/out every time in the main office.

Tardiness:

Any cadet who is not in class when the bell rings, is considered tardy, unless they provide a valid hall pass. When tardy to class, cadets should report directly to their classroom, where teachers will record the tardy in PBIS. If a cadet is on campus but is tardy to formation, they should report to the main office. All tardies will reset at the end of each quarter.

Cadets are Tardy if:

- Not standing in formation at 7:10am.
- Not in the classroom when the tardy bell.

Truancy and Driver's License Law:

Truancy is defined as being absent from school without parent/guardian permission or knowledge and/or without permission from school officials. According to the Drivers' License Law, cadets who are truant will face consequences. Cadets between the ages of 14 to 18 years of age who dropout of school or who have excessive unexcused absences (15 unexcused absences in a 90 day period) will be automatically reported to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles by the county truant office.

Any cadet who has 15 unexcused absences (full days or individual class periods), excluding suspensions, within 90 school days, with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the cadet's parent or legal guardian, is considered to be a habitual truant. The county truancy officer will be contacted to investigate habitual truants and the cadet will lose their Driver's License, or the ability to obtain a license or learner's permit. Monitoring of attendance for driving privileges is done during class periods.

Example of Full Days and Individual Class Periods:

- Unexcused Absence from 1 full school day = 1 Unexcused Absence
- Unexcused Absence from 1, 2, 3, or 4 class periods = 1 Unexcused Absence

Reinstating Driving Privileges:

Application for reinstatement of the driving privilege can be made after the cadet has thirty (30) consecutive days of attendance with NO unexcused absences or tardies (full days or individual class periods). Once this requirement is met, please call the District Student Services Office and ask for the Truancy Officer for SMA: 941-927-9000 ext. 34754.