

## STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Code **JH** Revised **3/13**

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Purpose: To establish the basic structure for allowing and excusing student absences.

The board believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. However, the board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

In order to receive credit for a high school course, a student must attend at least 85 days (for a 90-day semester course) or 170 days (for a 180-day year course) in order to receive credit. The administration may grant approval of excessive absences in accordance with board policy.

The district will utilize a written intervention plan for improving student attendance. The purpose of the plan will be to link students with attendance problems and their families to all appropriate school and community resources.

The board recognizes that truancy is primarily an educational issue and will take all reasonable, educationally sound and corrective actions prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by his/her parent or legal guardian. The excuse will contain such other information as directed by the administration. The school administration will keep all excuses confidential.

If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school, he/she will automatically receive an unexcused absence. If a student brings a false (or forged) excuse, his/her teacher must refer the student to the school administration for appropriate action.

The district will consider students lawfully absent under the following circumstances:

- They are ill and their attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
- There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family.
- There is a recognized religious holiday of their faith.
- There are emergency conditions approved by the principal.
- A child in foster care must be absent due to a certified court appearance or related court ordered activity including, but not limited to, court ordered treatment services.

The district will consider students unlawfully absent under the following circumstances.

- They are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parents.
- They are absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parents. Some examples are truancy, shopping, birthdays, missing the bus, fishing/hunting,

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vacation, cleaning house, babysitting or gainful employment not approved by the district. This list is not inclusive.

- Their absences are not verified by written permission of parent within three days of return to school after an absence (phone calls are helpful, but are not acceptable excuses).

Adopted 1994; Revised 10/5/98, 10/4/10, 3/4/13

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Legal references:

A. Federal law:

1. 20 U.S.C. Section 7112 (2002) – No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
2. 42 U.S.C. Section 5601, et seq. (2002) – Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974.
3. McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Improvements Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 42 U.S.C. Sections 11431-11435.

B. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 59-65-90 – State Board to establish rules and regulations defining lawful and unlawful absences.
2. Section 59-38-10 – Education Bill of Rights for Children in Foster Care.

C. State Board of Education Regulations:

1. R-43-274 – Student attendance.