Regulation Code: JBD-R Absences and Excuses

7/03/01 REVISED 4/02/02 Revised 7/7/09

All K-12 students of Duplin County Schools are required to attend school on a regular and continuous basis. The Public School Laws of North Carolina (G.S. 115C-378) hold parents or guardians legally responsible for ensuring the child's attendance.

Each time a student is absent from school or any class, legal documentation (parental note, doctor's note, court appearance) is required upon the student's return. This documentation should state the reason for the absence and is necessary before an absence can be coded as "lawful" (documentation).

Lawful and excused absences are limited to: **(1) illness or injury; (2) quarantine (ordered by health department); (3) death in the immediate family; (4) medical or dental appointments; (5) court or administrative hearings; (6) religious observance (requires prior approval of principal or his/her designee); or (7) educational opportunity (requires prior approval of principal). (8) deployment activity (requires prior approval by principal or his/her designee); and (9) other**. All other absences are unexcused.

When a student has accumulated ten unexcused absences, the principal or social worker will conduct an investigation to determine if the parent or guardian has made a good faith effort to comply with the law. Dependent upon the outcome of the investigation, the principal or his/her designee may notify the District Attorney or the Juvenile Intake Counselor.

Elementary (Grades K-5)

Students are expected to be present each of the 180 days in the school year. Students with excessive absences are significantly increasing the risk of failure, which may result in retention. When total absences (unexcused) exceed ten days per year, further documentation may be required (doctor's statement, court order, etc.). No more than five (5) parental notes will be accepted per year for absences before further documentation is required. Absences not documented will be referred to the appropriate authorities. Any student who misses more than ten days per year will have the opportunity to appeal their absenteeism at the local school.

Middle Grades (6-8)

Students must be in attendance 170 days of the 180 days in a school year in order to be eligible for promotion. **When a student has missed more than 10 days (unexcused) he/she may not be promoted due to excessive absenteeism**. When a student is not promoted due to excessive absences, the retention decision **may be appealed to an appeals committee at the local school**. **The appeal must be made in writing by the parent or guardian within five (5) days following the**

receipt of an attendance/failure notice. Documentation verifying why the student was absent will be required.
Following an excused absence, students will have five (5) days to make up work missed during that absence. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the makeup process.

No more than five (5) parental notes will be accepted per year before further documentation is required. **When total absences (unexcused) exceed 10 days per year, further documentation verifying reason for absence may be required (doctor's statement, court order, etc.).** Any student who misses more than 10 days per year will have the opportunity to appeal their absenteeism at the local school.

Students must be present one-half of the day in order to be considered present. Teachers should notify the principal and school social worker when a student has accumulated three (3) unexcused absences. Principals or his/her designee may make arrangements in some circumstances for a student make up unexcused time through methods such as, Saturday detention, after school detention, Study Island, etc.

High School Grades 9-12

Students must be in attendance a minimum of 170 days of the 180 days in a school year in order to meet promotion standards. **Any absence in excess of five (excused or unexcused) per semester may constitute a failure in the coursework being attempted**. Following an excused absence, students will be responsible for initiating the make up process for any work missed.
When total absences (unexcused) exceed five in a semester, further documentation verifying why the student was absent will be required. (doctor's statement, court order, etc.) No more than three (3) parental notes per semester will be accepted unless there is special approval by the principal or his/her designee. Blanket notes to cover a period of time over a semester should be brought to the principal's office for prior approval. This particular type note may require further documentation. Any student who misses more than five days a semester will have the opportunity to appeal their absenteeism at the local school. Please refer to the Appeal Procedure section of this policy.
Absences include both full days of absence and/or an absence from a particular class. Attendance is taken each class period; therefore it is important for students to attend each class every day.
Each high school and middle school principal shall designate a member of his professional staff who shall have legal authority to determine "satisfactory evidence of excuse" for non-attendance in accordance with Section .0404 of the North Carolina Administrative Code. Further, principals are encouraged to utilize the services of the School Social Worker when verification of absences in accordance with the above section appears questionable to the designated staff member(s).

Once a student has accumulated three (3) absences, every effort will be made to inform parents and the student of the seriousness of the situation including the effects of non-attendance on the student's grades (JBD-E1). The parent shall be informed **that more than five absences in the course involved will result in failure for the semester (JBD-E1).**
When the sixth absence occurs the parent will be notified in writing of the compulsory attendance law (JBD-E1) and the fact continued absences may result in prosecution.
A failure for the semester as a result of poor attendance **will result in an assigned academic average for high school of sixty-nine (69) by the attendance committee** unless the student's performance was lower as indicated by the teacher's evaluation. In such a case, the lower grade will be assigned.

Students and parents will be advised when notified of course work failure of the Appeals Procedures**. All attendance appeals will be heard the last ten (10) days of the semester.** Principals or his/her designee will compile a list of reasons for student absences on form JBD-E2, to present to the appeals committee.
Teachers in the high school will notify the school social worker of any absence in excess of three (3) in their particular class period. Each high school will develop a procedure to notify the school social worker in this event. Principals or his/her designee may allow make up in some circumstances for unexcused absences through programs such as, after school detention, Saturday detention, Nova Net, Study Island. A documentation of this time must be maintained.

Explanation of Educational Opportunity
A. Educational opportunities are excused absences but trips normally would not include absence for: hunting, fishing, visiting relatives, going to the beach, shopping, skiing, athletic events, subsequent trips to the same area.
B. Trips normally would not exceed:
1. 3 days for in-state trips
2. 7 days for out-of-state trips
3. 10 days for out-of-country trips
4. 10 days per year maximum

C. A student shall provide the principal with a full agenda of any planned trips prior to approval of the trip.
D. A student shall maintain a daily dairy and submit a written report to the principal upon return. The report may include brochures, pictures, etc.
E. Approval to excuse an absence for any trip shall be requested by the parent.
F. Class work missed shall be due on the day that the student returns to class, unless additional time is granted by the teacher. The student will receive a zero for any work not made up.
Unexcused Absences
All absences for reasons other than those defined by this regulation as an excused absence shall be considered as an unexcused absence. **A student shall received a zero on all work missed because of an unexcused absence**.

Excessive Absences
Any time a student is absent for six days without a valid excuse, the principal or designee shall notify the school Social Worker who shall investigate the cause of the absence and report such to the principal or his/her designee.
Written Excuse
If a student is absent for any reason, a written statement from the parent, guardian, or other acceptable documentation of such absence shall be submitted to the principal or designee upon return to school. The absence may be excused and the student permitted to make up all graded work missed. These notes should be kept for documentation until the school year has ended. Notes should be returned to the school within three (3) days of the absence. A procedure should be developed at each school for maintaining and recording the notes. Parents and students should be informed of the procedure for turning in notes in writing preferably in the student handbook. Written parent notes will be considered excessive if there are more than five (5) per year at the elementary and middle school and three (3) per semester at the high school.
All excuses for absence must be written in accordance with lawful absences guidelines and signed by the student's parent. If the student fails to bring a valid excuse on the day of return to school, his/her absence shall be considered unexcused.

Homebound
For attendance purposes, students served by the homebound teacher shall be considered as if the student is in school and shall be coded as homebound.
Tardiness to Class
A student who is tardy to class shall be answerable to the classroom teacher. When tardiness becomes a concern or becomes a disruptive factor to classroom instruction, the problem shall be referred to the principal or school social worker. A tardy policy for each individual school will be indicated in the student handbook. The same procedure will be followed for the student that habitually leaves school or class early.

Attendance Records
Accurate records of student absences and tardies are the responsibility of all teachers. Absences shall be reported daily to the principal's office. Tardies and absences shall be recorded on the student's report card and on his permanent record. The students who are tardy to school shall sign in through the office and pick up a class-admission slip. Students are either present or absent. Students in grades six through twelve who are absent one-half the class will be counted absent for the class period.

Verification of Absences
In the event of absences or tardiness, it shall be the responsibility of the student to bring to the office a note signed by the parent or guardian giving reason for such absence or tardiness.

Every student is to receive an admittance slip from the staff member charged with determination of reason(s) for an absence on the first day he returns to class and/or homeroom after an absence. This admittance slip will indicate whether the absence is to be considered excused and unexcused. This slip should be presented to either the subject teacher, homeroom teacher and/or all of these when applicable.
Notes will not be accepted after three (days).

Attendance Committee
Each school shall appoint an attendance committee. The committee shall be composed of the following:

A. One or more counselors

B. At least two teachers

C. The principal or his designee

D. The school social worker
Involuntary Unexcused Absences (Suspension)
Involuntary unexcused absences are defined as those absences which are determined to be outside the criteria established in Section .0404 of the Administrative Code that occur as a result of an action by the principal or other designated school official. The most frequent example would be a suspension from school.

Make-Up Work For Out of School Suspensions

A. All quarterly, semester or final exams will be made up.

B. The time and place of the examination shall be designated by the principal or his designee. Primary consideration shall be given to providing this service at a time and place convenient for the teacher(s) involved.

C. All graded work missed during a suspension may be made-up. The student shall receive a zero for any work that is not made up during a time period designated by the teacher.

D. Once the student has been given an opportunity to complete grades assignments work and make up exams but fails to be present to take exams and complete work, that student shall receive a zero.
Make-Up Procedure For Excused Absences
Make-up of all work missed will be convenient to all concerned. Preferably, this work will be accomplished during the regular day, learning Center or lab time (before or after school) by the subject teacher assigning lessons or administering test.
Appeal Procedures

Parents and/or students adversely affected by this policy shall have the right to appeal the decision(s) of the committee. The appeal process should follow the order listed below. Parents must notify the principal of the intent to appeal within ten (10) days after notification of failure. Appeals will be heard the last ten days of each semester.

A. Appeal first to the Local School Attendance Committee (the committee at the school where the failure occurred).

B. A second appeal may be made to the Duplin County Attendance Policy Committee. The central appeals committee will be: administrator from uninvolved district, school nurse from uninvolved district, social worker from uninvolved district, guidance counselor from uninvolved district, and Director of Support Services.

C. A third appeal may be made to the office of the Superintendent of Duplin County Schools.

D. The final appeal, as provided by this policy, may be made to the Duplin County Board of Education.

Probation

Students who have successful appeals will be placed on probation for the following semester and should not expect successful attendance appeals two consecutive semesters.

DUPLIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION