

3110	Attendance Policy
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Governance Accountability:	Academic Partners, Leadership
Audience:	Students, Families

Regular attendance and actively participating in class are vital for our students to be academically successful. Learning opportunities are missed when students are absent from school. Being present each day not only ensures that the students have access to the curriculum but also develops behaviors that are needed to be successful in life. Pine Lake Preparatory expects all students to be at school each day. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that their student attends school daily.

Attendance Records

School officials will keep an accurate record of attendance via PowerSchool. Each day, the student’s classroom teacher will take and record an attendance record. In addition to the classroom, the Administrative Associate and the Upper School administration will work with the student and teacher to ensure the accuracy of the records. These attendance records will be used to enforce the [Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina](#). If truancy is suspected, the case must be investigated by a school official and if the “principal or the principal's designee determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal shall notify the district attorney and the director of social services of the county where the child resides.”

A. Attendance Standard

1. To be counted present for the school day, the student must attend more than fifty percent (50%) of the school day.
2. To be counted present for a class period, the student must attend more than fifty percent (50%) of the class period.

B. Excused Absence

An excused absence is also considered a lawful absence. The executive director, principal, or teacher who is in charge of a school has the right to excuse a student temporarily from attendance on account of sickness or other unavoidable cause. In accordance with State policy, absences from school will be excused for the following reasons:

1. *Illness or Injury*: When the absence results from illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
2. *Quarantine*: When isolation of the student is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.

3. *Death in the Immediate Family:* When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. For the purpose of this regulation, the immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters.
4. *Medical or Dental Appointments:* When the absence results from a medical or dental appointment of a student.
5. *Court or Administrative Proceedings:* When the absence results from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness. The Local Board of Education can be considered an administrative tribunal.
6. *Religious Observance:* School principals are required to authorize a minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by faith of a student or a student's parents.
7. *Educational Opportunity:* When it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid education opportunity, such as travel. Approval for such an absence must be granted prior to the absence. This would include, but is not limited to, a student serving as a legislative page or a governor's page.
8. *Local School Board Policy:* Local Education Agencies (LEA's) may excuse temporary or occasional absences for other reasons in accordance with local school board policies, provided that the student has been in attendance for at least one-half of a school day during the current school year.
9. *Absence related to Deployment Activities:* A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting for the purpose of visiting said parent or legal guardian. (G.S. 115C-407.5 Article V (E)) Page 13 of 81
10. *Child Care:* Absences due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent are to be coded excused (lawful). (G.S.115C-375.5)
11. *School Related Activities* such as a field trip, early dismissal for athletics, in school suspension, etc.
12. *Suspension is not included in this list of Lawful (excused) absences but the "3" code for suspension is to be coded/mapped as an excused absence in the school's student information tracking system which is currently PowerSchool.*

Absences are considered unexcused (ie. unlawful), until school receives documentation from the parent or guardian within three days of the student's return certifying the need for the student's absence. Notes must include dates absent, reason for absence and parent/guardian signature. A physician must certify absences of three or more consecutive days in duration. (Note: Emails cannot substitute for hardcopy notes per N.C, Department of Public Instruction)

C. Medically Fragile

Students who are medically fragile are frequently absent from school, and their absences are directly related to their severe or life threatening physical condition. A medically fragile student is identified as follows:

1. A student who qualifies for special education in one of the existing categories of disability and for whom a licensed medical doctor has provided documentation that an associated or accompanying chronic illness is so severe as to affect the student's school attendance. A medically fragile student is one whose illness frequently places him/her in life threatening situations.
2. Rare instances may exist in which a child does not qualify for special education as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, the child would unquestionably meet the definition of disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and thus would be eligible for consideration as a medically fragile student.

D. Hospital/Homebound

If a student is confined at home or in a hospital, is unable to attend school, he/she may be placed on Homebound Services once supporting documentation has been submitted by the family. Once the school has made arrangements with the student to provide instruction, the student will be counted present. The student will continue to be counted present for the span of time during which regularly scheduled hospital/homebound instructional services are delivered.

E. Principal Approved Absences

The following absences are school initiated and principal approved:

1. Field trip (school-initiated activity).
2. College visits (3 approved per year, grades 9 – 12).
3. Special programs (community program sanctioned by the school).
4. Other event(s) approved by the principal that is of educational value.

In order to be excused, educational trips must be approved 10 days prior to the trip by the building principal. Failure to submit appropriate documentation will result in an unexcused absence.

F. Unexcused Absence

An unexcused absence is also considered an unlawful absence. For students who are entitled to attend public school and who have enrolled in a public school, unlawful absence is defined as:

1. A student's willful absence from school with or without the knowledge of the parent;
2. A student's absence from school for any reason other than those listed in 1C., under "Lawful Absences."
3. When students are not permitted to attend school because they lack proper immunization.
4. When students are not permitted to attend school due to no health assessment being on file.

G. Excessive Absences

The Pine Lake Preparatory Upper School defines excessive absences when a student exceeds eight (8) absences in a semester long course or sixteen (16) absences in a year long course. This number is the sum of excused and unexcused absences. Please note that absences for a school related activity will not count towards this total. Sixteen days is approximately 10% of the total number of annual school days:

Student chronic absenteeism is a risk factor for adverse student outcomes. "Student Chronic Absentee" is a student who is enrolled in a North Carolina public school for at least 10 instructional days at any time during the school year, and whose total number of absences is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year; This definition applies to all students enrolled in a school, including those who have not reached the compulsory attendance age, as well as those who have reached or exceeded the compulsory attendance age. Student chronic absenteeism refers to missing an excessive number of instructional days, for any reason— excused, unexcused, disciplinary – that a student is at risk of falling behind.

H. Maximum Number of Absences

1. If a student is absent more than 10 days within a school year, Pine Lake Preparatory reserves the right to require the student to provide medical documentation for any other future absence to be considered excused. This is to ensure students do not accumulate more than 10 unlawful/unexcused absences.
2. A student in grade 9 – 12 missing greater than eight (8) total (lawful or unlawful) absences in a semester long course or sixteen (16) total absences (lawful or unlawful) in a year long course for any reason other than a principal-approved absence will receive a grade of "F" for the course.
 - 2a. If a student has an average above 60%; yet, exceeds the number of absences detailed above, the student will receive an FF as their final grade for the course.

This grade indicates that the student passed the course but was not granted credit due to excessive absences.

2b. If a student has an average below a 60%; yet, exceeds the number of absences detailed above, the student will receive their final failing grade for the course.

3. A student in kindergarten – Grade 8 missing eight (8) total (lawful or unlawful) absences in a semester long course or sixteen (16) total absences (lawful or unlawful) in a year long course for any reason other than a principal-approved absence will be referred to the principal/designee as a candidate for retention. The principal/designee will notify the parent of the school's concern. If the principal determines retention is necessary based on attendance, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing. The parent/guardian will have five days to appeal the principal's decision. Written documentation must be provided to the principal and must be based on appropriate reason of the absences and completion of all make up work.

I. Recovery Opportunity

If a student exceeds the number of absences detailed above (8 - semester long course or 16 - year long course), the student will be provided a recovery opportunity to make up time and earn credit for the course. A student to whom this rule applies should participate in the school-based Recovery Program available at the high school. Make-up classes are organized by the principal and may be offered before school, after school or on Saturday morning. Students will need to recover time by individual course under the supervision of staff member.

J. Communication

1. The principal or the principal's designee must notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his/her child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated three (3) absences in a school year. This action will be conducted by the classroom teacher and/or Administrative Assistant.
2. After not more than six (6) absences, the principal or the principal's designee must notify the parent, guardian, or custodian by mail that he or she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and local boards of education. This action will occur at the end of each month.
3. After ten (10) accumulated absences in a yearlong class, the principal or the principal's designee shall review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal shall notify the district attorney and the director of social services of the county where the child resides. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has made a

good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal may file a complaint with the juvenile court counsel or pursuant to Chapter 7B of the General Statutes that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse.

K. Tardies

Being punctual to class is extremely important as every minute of instruction is critical; therefore, the expectation is that class will begin on time. Walking into a classroom late can be a distraction for both the teacher and the other students that are engaged in a lesson. Like attendance, tardies are tracked. Four tardies will equal one unexcused absence.