

## SOUTH CAROLINA COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

“South Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law requires that a parent or guardian shall require his child to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten of this State which has been approved by the State Board of Education, a member school of the South Carolina Independent Schools and Association, a member school of the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church-related school, or other programs which have been approved by the State Board of Education from the school year in which the child is five years of age before September first until the child attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school.”

### Lawful (Excused) Absences

- Absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his or her health or the health of others,
- Absences due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family,
- Absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith, and,
- Absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the principal.

### Unlawful (Unexcused) Absences

- Absences of a student without the knowledge of his or her parents, and,
- Absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his or her parents.

*Note! Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.*

## ATTENDANCE TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Always know the school's policies on absences and making up homework.
- Teach your child that being on time each day is important.
- Talk with your child about why he or she is avoiding school.
- Explain to your child the importance of attending school every day.
- Notify school personnel if your child is going to be absent for any reason.
- Discourage your child from leaving school before the end of the school day.
- Arrange for your child's personal appointments to be held after school or during breaks whenever possible.
- Notify your school promptly in writing to explain why your child was absent from school.
- Contact teachers to find out what your child's homework assignments are when he or she has been absent.
- Enlist the help of a school counselor if your child's academic problems seem to be affecting his or her attendance.

## CONTACT US

Department of Alternative Programs  
and Services (DAP)

4720 Jenkins Ave., North Charleston, SC 29405

Phone: 843-745-7150

Fax: 843-566-7799

#CCSDLetsGetEngaged

# LET'S GET ENGAGED

*Education thrives when  
you keep it under 5!*



Students who attend school every day and on time are more likely to read at grade level, achieve good grades, score higher on standardized tests and graduate from high school.

Charleston > excellence is our standard  
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENTS ARE  
THE HEART  
OF OUR WORK!



## WHY DOES ATTENDANCE MATTER?

**Q: Why is attendance so important?**

A: Regular attendance is vital to student's success in school. A student, who is frequently absent, misses social interaction and direct instruction from his/her teachers. Any day or hour absent is a missed learning opportunity.

**Q: What does truancy mean?**

A: A child age 6 to 17 years is considered truant if they have missed at least 3 full consecutive days of unexcused absences, or 5 full days of non-consecutive unexcused absences.

**Q: What is chronic absenteeism?**

A: Any student in grades k-12 who misses half or more of the school day for any reason for 10% or more of the enrollment period.

**Q: What types of absences contribute to chronic absenteeism:?**

A: Excused Absences, Unexcused Absences and Suspensions

**Q: How do I report absences?**

A: Each and every absence must be reported to the attendance office of your student's school. Handwritten or legal documentation (medical note, court notice, etc.) must be submitted to the attendance office.

**Q: What is considered a excused absence?**

A: Excused absences include: illness, funerals, and religious holidays. Medical and dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside the school day.

**Q: How long does a student have to turn in an excused note?**

A: According to CCSD Policy, an excused note should be submitted within three days upon the students return to school.

**Q: How many absences can a student have per semester?**

A: A student can have 5 unexcused absences for a semester course and 10 unexcused absences for a yearlong course.

**Q: Does tardy count as truancy?**

A: No, tardy does not count as being truant. Truancy is a full day absence only.

**Q: Can you use a parent phone call as an excuse instead of a written excuse?**

A: No, written documentation which includes the student's name, parent/ guardian's full name, telephone number, date of absence and the reason for the absence is required when a student is absent.

**Q: Is a vacation a lawful absence?**

A: No, vacation is considered an unlawful absence.

**Q: Why did I receive a letter requesting for a truancy conference?**

A: According to your child's attendance record, your child has been identified as truant. The South Carolina State Regulation 43-274 requires school personnel to meet with you and your child in a problem solving setting to identify barriers that prohibit regular school attendance. It is very important you and your child attend the conference to develop a plan of action in the efforts to improve your child's attendance.

**Q: What is the Truancy Hearing Panel?**

A: The Truancy Hearing Panel consists of individuals from Charleston County School District and community partners who work collaboratively to help improve your child's attendance. The hearing is a problem solving meeting in which all parties (panel members, school designees, parents, & students) work collaboratively to determine what interventions and resources are needed to increase attendance and academic success.

**Q: Why was I referred to the Truancy Hearing Panel?**

A: A family is usually referred to the hearing panel when unexcused absences continue to accumulate despite efforts made by your child's school team to help improve his or her attendance. It is imperative for you and your child to attend the hearing to avoid possible referral to the Department of Social Services and Family Court involvement.

