

Policy Code: 4400 Attendance

School attendance and class participation are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily. School administrators shall communicate attendance expectations to parents and guardians and work with students and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.

A. Attendance Records

School officials shall keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Students will be considered in attendance if present at least half of the instructional day on-site in the school or at a place other than the school attending an authorized school-related activity.

To be in attendance during remote instruction days (with the exception of the initial enrollment day), students must: (1) complete their daily assignments, either online or offline; and/or (2) have a daily check-in through two-way communication with (a) the homeroom teacher for grades K-5 or (b) for all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled. School officials shall communicate the attendance procedures to students and their families before the first day remote instruction begins.

B. Late Arrivals and Early Departures

Students are expected to be at school on time and to remain at school until dismissed. During the school day, students are expected to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class and to remain until the class ends.

When a student must be late to school or leave school early, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian should be presented upon the student's arrival at school. Tardies or early departures may be excused for any of the reasons listed below in Section C.

Any disciplinary consequences for unexcused tardiness or unexcused early departures from school or class will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

C. Excused Absences

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the student's teacher on the day the student returns after an absence. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a health care practitioner. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

1. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
2. isolation ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health or isolation or quarantine that is a required state or local control measure;

3. death in the immediate family;
4. medical or dental appointment;
5. attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
6. a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent or legal guardian;
7. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor's page, with prior approval from the principal;
8. pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary;
9. a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student's parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty or inactive member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting; or
10. any other reason as approved by the board in a board resolution.

D. School-Related Activities

While recognizing the importance of classroom learning, the board also acknowledges that out-of-classroom, school-related activities can provide students with valuable experiences not available in the classroom setting. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. field trips sponsored by the school;
2. job shadows and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in [G.S. 115C-47\(34a\)](#);
3. school-initiated and -scheduled activities;
4. athletic events that require early dismissal from school; and
5. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal.

In addition, students participating in disciplinary techniques categorized as in-school suspension will not be counted as absent.

E. Makeup Work

In the case of excused absences, short-term out-of-school suspensions, and absences under [G.S. 130A-440](#) (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school), the student will be permitted to make up his or her missed work. (See also policies 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission, and 4351, Short-Term Suspension.) Assignments missed due to participation in school-related activities also are eligible for makeup by the student. The teacher shall determine when work is to be made up. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within

the specified time period.

F. Unexcused Absences

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by [G.S. 115C-378](#) for excessive, unexcused absences.

Any school disciplinary consequences for unexcused absences will be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for such offenses. Consequences may not exceed a short-term suspension of two days.

G. Chronic Absenteeism

Because class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process, any absences, whether excused or unexcused, can have a negative impact on a student's academic achievement. Regular attendance must be prioritized within each school and encouraged throughout the community. School administrators shall monitor and analyze attendance data to develop and implement strategies for reducing chronic absenteeism. Such strategies should involve engaging students and parents, recognizing good and improved attendance, providing early outreach to families of students missing school, and identifying and addressing barriers to attendance.

H. Special Circumstances

1. Students with Chronic Health Problems

No penalties will be imposed for absences due to documented chronic health problems.

2. Students Experiencing Homelessness

For students experiencing homelessness (see board policy 4125, Homeless Students), school officials must consider issues related to the student's homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

3. Attendance Requirements for Extracurricular Activities

Absences may impact eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Principals shall inform students and parents of the applicable attendance standards for the various types of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. See also policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

I. Local Attendance Policy

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement. Students are expected to be at school on time and to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class. Excessive absences may impact eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics. See policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

1. Compulsory Attendance Law Reporting

The principal will notify parents and take all other steps required by [G.S. 115C-378](#) for excessive absences.

- a. After a student has accumulated three unexcused absences, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent/guardian of the child's excessive absences.
- b. After not more than six unexcused absences, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent/guardian that he/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. Once the parents are notified, the school attendance counselor shall work with the child and his/her family to analyze the causes of the absences and determine steps to eliminate the problem. The attendance counselor may request that a law-enforcement officer accompany him/her if the counselor believes that a home visit is necessary.
- c. After 10 accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the principal or his/her designee shall review any report or investigation prepared under [G.S. 115C-381](#) shall confer with the student and his/her parent/guardian, if possible, to determine whether the parent/guardian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the principal or his/her designee determines that the parent/guardian 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. Documentation that demonstrates that the parent/guardian was notified and that the child has accumulated 10 absences which cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the local board shall constitute prima facie evidence that the child's parent/guardian is responsible for the absences. If the principal or his/her designee determines that the parent/guardian has made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal may file a complaint with the juvenile court counselor pursuant to [Chapter 7B of the General Statutes](#) that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse. Upon receiving notification by the principal or his/her designee, the director of social services shall determine whether to undertake an investigation under [G.S. 7B-302](#).

Students with excused absences due to documented chronic health problems are exempt from this policy. In addition, for students experiencing homelessness (see board policy 4125, Homeless Students), school officials must consider issues related to the student's homelessness, such as change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

2. Grades K through 5

Recognizing that regular school attendance is the foundation for learning and that North Carolina Attendance Law requires attendance of students between the ages of seven (or younger if enrolled) and 16, students in Iredell Statesville Elementary Schools are required to be in attendance at least 94.5% of the school year in order to be promoted to the next grade. A student absent more than 10 days shall be referred to the principal/designee for possible retention. Upon the 5th absence (excused or unexcused) the principal or designee will notify the parent of the school's concern and of interventions necessary for student success.

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 reasons for the absences and completion of all make-up work. If summer school attendance is determined to be appropriate, a final decision regarding promotion will be made following the summer school session.

For the purpose of promotion and retention, 10 tardies and/or early dismissals equal one day's absence.

3. Middle School

As a local promotion standard, a middle school student may not miss more than 10 days of school a year or must be present more than 94.4% of the days he/she is enrolled in an ISS middle school. The student must make up time for each day of absence over 10 days during the school year. When a student accumulates more than 5 absences, he/she may begin to attend make up sessions/days as designated by the school. Makeup sessions/days could include before and after school learning labs, workdays, and summer school.

For the purpose of promotion and retention, 5 tardies and/or early dismissals equal one day's absence.

When a student has been absent for more than 10 days and has failed to make up the time missed, he/she will be referred to the principal/designee as a candidate for retention. The principal/designee will notify the parent of the school's concern and will inform the parent of the attendance requirements in regard to the local promotion standard.

If the student has accumulated more than 10 absences and has not made up the required time by the end of the last grading period, he/she will be retained in the current grade. The decision to retain may be re-evaluated before the beginning of the fall term, based on the student's participation in opportunities for make-up time, such as summer school. If the student has fulfilled the make-up requirement, the decision may be made to promote him/her to the next grade level.

Parents/Guardians who feel that extenuating circumstances have resulted in their child missing more than 10 days, may request an attendance waiver through the school attendance committee. Waiver requests must be submitted within 5 days of return to school or no later than the current 9 weeks. The committee will review the waiver requests and determine if the student must make up the missed days.

4. High School

1. Students absent from school and/or individual classes more than three (3) times during any nine-week period or more than 6 per semester (whether excused or unexcused) will receive a code of FA (failure due to attendance) for the specific nine-week period. For the code FA (failure due to attendance) to be removed time and work must be made up by the time specified by the principal (in the student/parent handbook).

2. High school students must make up class time on an hour-for-hour basis. It is important for students to begin making up time immediately after each absence. Make-up classes are organized by the principal and may be offered before school, after school or on Saturday morning. The school system may provide additional make-up opportunities during an extended day and/or a summer program. Make-up classes will be designed specific to student needs and/or to compensate for time

missed due to absences.

3. Parents/Guardians who feel that extenuating circumstances have resulted in their child missing more than 10 days, may request an attendance waiver through the school attendance committee. Waiver requests must be submitted within 5 days of return to school or no later than the current 9 weeks. The committee will review the waiver requests and determine if the student must make up the missed days.

4. The total number of absences for a 90 day term cannot exceed six (6) excused or unexcused). If a student is absent from school and/or individual classes more than six (6) times, he/she will not receive credit for the course(s) unless make-up classes are completed or the school attendance committee grants a waiver.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, [42 U.S.C. 11431](#), *et seq.*; [G.S. 115C-47](#), [-84.2](#), [-288\(a\)](#), [-375.5](#), [-378 to -383](#), [-390.2\(d\)](#), [-390.2\(l\)](#), [-390.5](#), [-407.5](#), [-407.12](#); [130A-440](#); [16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0102](#), [.0103](#), [.0106](#); State Board of Education Policies [ATND-000](#), [-003](#)

Cross References: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students (policy 4023), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Homeless Students (policy 4125), Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Short-Term Suspension (policy 4351)

Other Resources: NC DPI Multi-Tiered System of Support Implementation Guide, available at <https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2957986#anchor>

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