



## Sumter School District's Attendance Policy: Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Is it okay that my child is absent if it is excused/lawful?** An excused absence is indeed better than unexcused/unlawful. However, absences can harm a student's learning just as much as unexcused absences. All absences lawful and unlawful, count towards chronic absenteeism. Chronically absent means missing 18 or more days of school over the course of the school year. Absences add up quickly if a student misses just two days every month.
- 2. What happens if our family has planned an out-of-town trip that will require my child to miss school?** Out-of-town trips, vacations, and cruises are unacceptable reasons for excused/lawful absences, and the days will count towards truancy. Additionally, completing assignments or a report on the trip does not excuse the absence. Only school-sponsored trips are excused for attendance purposes.
- 3. Am I able to have my child's absences excused if I send in a parent note?** Parent notes can excuse an absence for acceptable reasons only. For example, a student may not feel well enough to attend school; however, the parents did not take the student to the doctor. This would be an acceptable use of a parent note. Unacceptable reasons will be coded as an Unexcused Parent Note and will count towards truancy.
- 4. I told my student to inform his/her teacher that he/she was absent because he/she was sick. Do I have to send in a written note?** Yes, a written note is required every time your child is absent from school. The note should include your child's name, teacher/grade, parent's name, an explanation of the absence, and a parent's signature.
- 5. Is my child truant once they have 10 unlawful absences?** Your child is truant once they have missed three (3) consecutive or five (5) or more unexcused/unlawful absences. Even with passing grades, you and your student may be contacted to complete an attendance intervention plan. You may face court intervention if absences continue. Good attendance habits and, if absent, submitting valid excuses are important to keep your student from being truant.
- 6. My son/daughter missed the bus. Is this an excused absence?** No. This will be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence if your child misses the bus and the entire day of school.
- 7. My child was absent from school because of a death in the family. Are these days excused?** Yes, your student will be excused for "bereavement" in the event of the death of the child's immediate family member. The student receives 3 days for a local funeral service and 5 days for an out-of-state funeral service. Please provide a copy of the death notice, obituary, or program from the funeral services along with an excuse once your student returns to school.
- 8. I took my child to the doctor but forgot to get a medical excuse note when we were in the office. Is it too late to submit the excuse?** No, please make every effort to secure a medical excuse whenever your child is seen and misses any part of the school day. Always request a note from the doctor's office as potential documentation. If you forget to get a note, please contact the provider's office, and explore the possibility of having an excuse faxed or sent directly to the school.
- 9. My child was seriously injured and/or physically unable to attend school. What are the options?** If your child is battling a significant illness, enduring a prolonged hospital stay, or surgery, or is physically unable to attend school, they may be eligible for medical homebound instruction with documentation from a medical professional. Please contact the child's administrator to determine if it is in your student's best interest to pursue medical homebound instruction during the period of illness.