

## **School Achievement Begins With Regular Attendance**

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to ensure that all school-age children in their care are in school and on time every day.

Students have the responsibility to be on time and attend all classes. Students are expected to attend school 180 days.

### **Lawful absences (excused) shall include but are not limited to**

- absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his or her health and the health of others
- absences due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family; the principal shall require a physician's certificate from the parent/legal guardian of a student reported continuously absent for illness.
- absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith
- absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the principal

Approved activities include the following:

- state and national competitions
- ceremonies honoring outstanding students
  - work approved or sponsored by the school, the school district or the state department of education, accepted by the associate superintendent or school principal or designee as reason for excusing the student
- out of school suspension
- in school suspension
- field trips approved by the principal or designee

### **Unlawful absences include but are not limited to:**

- absences of a student without the knowledge of his or her parents
- absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his or her parents
- family vacations

## **Chronic Absenteeism**

As defined by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), chronically absent students are those absent 10 percent or more school days during the school year. According to the OCR, an absent student is one who misses 50 percent of the instructional day for any reason

and regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. In other words, students who are absent for any reason – including suspension, illness, and death in the family – AND miss 10 percent or more of the school year will be considered chronically absent.

### **Documentation of Absences**

All absences require a written explanation from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days of return from the absence. Written explanation of absences must include the student's name, parent/guardian's full name, date(s) of absence(s), and documentation of the reason for absence. Text messages and emails are not acceptable documentation for student absences. All documentation required by the school is subject to review and must be approved by the principal. Absences in excess of ten days per year will not be considered excused with a parent/guardian note unless they are accompanied by official medical or legal documentation.

### **Make-Up Work**

Students who are absent will be required to make up work missed in each class within one week's time. Only in extreme cases of a prolonged absence will students be given more than one week to complete work. A day's absence does not excuse a student from responsibility for all classwork/homework (to be made upon the student's return). Failure to turn in work may lead to failing classes. It is the student's responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his/her teachers immediately upon return to school. Failure to obtain make-up work is no excuse for not completing missed work. All teachers have an email account to communicate directly with parents as needed.

If a student is going to be absent 2 or fewer days, they may get assignments from teachers upon returning to school. If a student is going to be absent for more than 2 days, parents (or students) may call the school guidance office, to provide assistance in getting assignments.

### **Tardiness**

**A student who is tardy is defined as one who arrives after the start time of the instructional day or class period as based on the CCSD bell schedule. Parents of students ages 3-17 must come into the school to sign their children in if they are late to school.**

**LAWFUL TARDIES:** In order for a tardy to be excused, written documentation must be provided.

1. Doctor or Dentist appointment
2. Late bus arrival
3. Teacher, guidance or administrator conference
4. Observance of a religious holiday
5. Court appearance or court ordered activity

#### **UNLAWFUL TARDIES:**

1. Illness on part of the student without a written excuse
2. Oversleeping
3. Traffic / Car trouble
4. Personal reasons
5. Missed bus / Carpool trouble

#### **Check-in/Early Sign-Outs**

Students who are late to school must sign in with the Main Office and receive a tardy slip (excused or unexcused). Students will then proceed to check-in and once checked in will then proceed directly to their assigned class. When students are signed out early on an ongoing basis, their academic performance may be negatively impacted. The school system strongly encourages parents to ensure their student is in school for the full school day every day. Students shall not be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal or designee determines that it is an emergency, the student has a medical/dental appointment that cannot be reasonably scheduled at another time, or the teacher is notified in advance.

#### **Late Pick-Ups**

Students are required to leave campus at dismissal. Students who are consistently picked up late (30 minutes after dismissal) will be addressed on a case by case basis. All unlawful absences, tardies, and sign-outs will result in school-based and district level interventions.

#### **South Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law**

##### **South Carolina Code of Laws Section 59-65-10 (as amended) reads:**

All parents or guardians shall cause their children or wards to attend regularly a public or private school – of this State – from the school year in which the child or ward is five years of age before September 1st until the child or ward attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school. All children are required to attend a public or private kindergarten beginning at age five. If parents choose not to send their children to kindergarten, they must sign a waiver, which may be obtained at the local school.

### **South Carolina Code of Laws of Section 59-65-20**

Any parent or guardian who neglects to enroll his child or ward or refuses to make such child or ward attend school shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than fifty dollars or be imprisoned not more than thirty days; each day's absence shall constitute a separate offense; provided, the court may in its discretion suspend the sentence of anyone convicted of the provisions of this article.

### **South Carolina Code of Laws of Section 59-65-70**

If the court determines that the reported absence occurred without the knowledge, consent, or connivance of the responsible parent or guardian or that a bona fide attempt has been made to control and keep the child in school, the court may declare such a child to be delinquent and subject the provisions of the law in such cases.

### **South Carolina Code of Laws of Section 16-17-510**

It is unlawful for a person to encourage, entice, or conspire to encourage or entice a child enrolled in any public or private elementary or secondary school of this State from attendance in the school or school program or transport or provide transportation in aid to encourage or entice a child from attendance in any public or private elementary or secondary school or school program. A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

### **Truancy (Three Levels)**

#### **Truant:**

A child, at least 6 but not yet 17 years old, who has accumulated three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences

#### **Habitual Truant:**

A child, at least 12 but not yet 17 years old, who (1) fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parents or guardians, and (2) accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences

#### **Chronic Truant:**

A child, at least 12 but not yet 17 years old, who (1) has been through the school intervention process; (2) has reached the level of a habitual truant and has been referred to family court and placed under an order to attend school; and (3) continues to accumulate unlawful absences

## **Truancy Intervention Procedures**

1. The School Level Truancy Intervention Team must communicate positive attendance challenges to the parent/guardian beginning with the first unlawful absence. The school will notify the parent by telephone or mail.
2. When a student accumulates three (3) consecutive or a total of five (5) unlawful absences the principal or designee will complete a truancy investigation.
3. A conference is required with student and parent or guardian to develop a truancy intervention plan designed to improve student attendance and eliminate unlawful absences.
4. A written truancy intervention and attendance contract should be signed by all participants with a copy provided to the parent and student.
5. When a student accumulates 2 or more additional unlawful absences, the school will update the truancy intervention plan, indicate why the plan was unsuccessful, and make amendments as needed.
6. If the student continues to accumulate unlawful absences and after exhaustive interventions, a referral will be made to the Department of Alternative Programs and Services.
7. In the event that unlawful absences continue following the district level conference, the case will be reviewed for additional interventions and/or further action. The case may be referred to the Department of Social Services, the Ninth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office for participation in Family Court, or other interventions.

Note: Suspensions are not counted as unlawful for truancy purposes. A deadline will be imposed for the work to be made-up and the responsibility for getting and completing assignments will be on the student.

## **Attendance Requirement for Promotion and/or Credit**

All students previously enrolled in the District and those residing in the state who are entering for the first time shall be counted unlawfully absent for each day missed due to late enrollment. All absences are defined as lawful or unlawful. Students having a lawful absence shall be permitted to make up work missed during the absence. Absences determined as unlawful will not entitle a student to make up work missed during the time of the absence. Principals may use discretion in permitting students to make up work. High school students will be counted absent for a full period if they miss more than half of the class period. The principal may determine the lawful or unlawful nature of the absences. Students in grades nine through twelve must attend:

- Quarter Course 42 out of 45 Days
- Semester or 4 x 4 Course 85 out of 90 Days
- Year Long Course 170 out of 180 Days

### **Appeal Process for Denial of Credit**

Consistent with state regulations, parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal attendance violation decisions and/or question the school records regarding attendance. The appeal should be made in writing to the school principal or designee. The decision of the principal or designee may be appealed to the associate superintendent or designee. The decision of the associate superintendent or designee may be appealed to the superintendent or designee by written request for appeal within 10 days of receipt of the decision of the associate superintendent or designee. The decision of the superintendent or designee is final.

specific plans to transition the student back to the school setting in order to justify the need for extended services.

### **Tardiness to school**

All students are expected to be on time every day. If however, circumstances force a student to arrive to class after 8:35 AM, he or she must check in through the main office. A student may be excused for being tardy a maximum of three times with a note from a parent or a guardian. Habitual tardiness may result in disciplinary action.