

Pathways Elementary School Attendance Policy

At Pathways Elementary we care deeply about your child's growth and development as a student. **Adequate attendance is KEY to fostering that growth and ensuring students are given all the tools they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.** Because of our dedication to our student's learning, we are also dedicated to addressing attendance issues promptly and with genuine concern. To achieve this **we monitor attendance closely for each one of our students.** Students in North Carolina enrolled in grades Kindergarten and beyond (pre-K excluded) are required to attend school regularly at the school they are enrolled in. We ask our families to join us in prioritizing attendance and prevent unnecessary absences by bringing your child to school every day possible throughout the year. **When missing school is necessary, we ask parents to communicate with teachers, support staff, and admin promptly through written communication so eligible absences can be excused.**

Arriving On Time

Students are expected to arrive at school on time and be in their classroom by 7:45 am. Upon arrival, tardy students must check in at the office. **If a student arrives after 11:10 am they will receive an unexcused absence for the day unless proper documentation is provided to be excused.**

Early Dismissal

We request that you do not pick up your child before regular school dismissal at 2:30 pm. If you need to take your child out of school before the end of the school day, you will need to come to the front office to sign them out as an early dismissal. For the safety of our students and ease of the dismissal process, no early dismissals will be allowed after 2:00 PM. All adults must be prepared to show photo identification when picking up a child. This simple procedure is for the protection of your child. We will not release a student to anyone except the parent, legal guardian, or a person you have authorized to pick up your child. **If a student departs before 11:10 am they will receive an unexcused absence for the day unless proper documentation is provided to be excused.**

Excused Absences

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian must be presented to the school social worker, the data manager or 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 physician.

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 State Board of Health;
3. death in the immediate family;

4. medical or dental appointment;
5. participation under subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding;
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(s);
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; or
9. visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian, at the discretion of the superintendent or designee, if the parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by Board policy regarding 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.

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 work. The teacher will 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.

*****Parents are encouraged and expected to present documentation from doctors/dentist appointments when possible.*****

Unexcused Absences

Any absence that does not comply with the guidelines for an excused absence or does not provide the necessary documents for an excused absence within the allotted time frame will be labeled as an unexcused absence.

Written Communication for Excused Absences

We can accept **written** communication from parents to excuse eligible absences in the form of emails, text messages, class dojo messages and handwritten notes. **The date of the absence(s) and the reason for missing school must be included** for the absence(s) to be excused. **Please send any emails, texts or doctor's notes directly to our data manager or school social worker.**

Data Manager: lisa.allen@orange.k12.nc.us

School Social Worker: abigail.gillis@orange.k12.nc.us OR 984-336-7274 (work cell)

Attendance Letters

Attendance Letters are printed off on a weekly basis in an effort to keep parents up to date on the status of their child's absences. Letters are sent home when students reach 3 days, 6 days and 10

days of unexcused absences respectively. These letters list the dates that a student was marked absent and are meant to increase awareness of potential developing attendance issues so they can be addressed and corrected in a timely manner. An attendance policy letter will be sent home with the 6 day letter that outlines our policy and is to be signed and returned by a parent acknowledging that they are aware of the attendance policy. Additionally, parents will be contacted directly by the school social worker once their child has reached 6 unexcused absences. Once a student has reached 10 unexcused absences, parents will be contacted to schedule an attendance meeting with the school social worker, administration and their child's teacher(s) to discuss the impact that chronic absenteeism is having on the child's learning.

Limit for Excused Sick Days **Without** a Doctor's Note

We understand that sometimes a student may miss a day or two of school every once in a while because of a minor cold/condition that does not require a doctor's visit. We can excuse sick absences without your child having to be taken to the doctor each time they are under the weather and we encourage you to keep your child home if they are unwell. However, in an effort to limit excessive sick day absences, we do have a limit on sick days that can be excused without documentation from a medical professional. **We can accept up to 15 absences excused for illness/injury without a note from a doctor's office. Once a student has reached 15 absences excused for illness/injury without a doctor's note, we will require documentation from a medical professional to excuse sickness absences from that point forward, unless a child is identified by the school as being medically fragile. This is why it is important to provide the school with a doctor's note each time a student is seen by a medical professional.** You will be notified if/when your child reaches the 15 day limit.

Truancy and Reporting

In an effort to address and combat truancy, students will be reported to the District Attorney once they reach 11 unexcused absences. A student will be reported to Child Protective Services for educational neglect if/when they reach 20 unexcused absences and parents are unresponsive to the efforts of school officials to address and correct their child's chronic absenteeism. If a student's absenteeism escalates, school officials may refer the case to truancy court.



Please contact our school social worker, Ms. Gillis, with any questions or concerns about our attendance policy: abigail.gillis@orange.k12.nc.us

Pathways Attendance Policy is based on county and state policy/legislation outlined in:
[Orange County Schools Attendance Policy Code 4400](#)
[North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law](#)