Policy

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Code **JH** Issued 11/26

The board believes that regular attendance is of utmost importance for school engagement, social adjustment, and scholastic achievement. Continuity in the learning process is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. Further, regular attendance establishes a pattern of responsibility and commitment that will serve students throughout their lives, including during post-secondary education and in the workplace.

According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/legal guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school. However, the board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable. The board will take all reasonable, educationally sound, and corrective actions prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

The educational program offered by the district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress. Each building principal is responsible for overseeing attendance procedures and for ensuring that:

- Attendance is accurately checked, recorded, and reported each day for each class.
- All excuses for student absences, both lawful and unlawful, are recorded for each absence.
- Medical homebound instruction for students experiencing a prolonged illness or injury requiring them to be absent from school is expeditiously initiated and consistently provided.
- When excessive absences and/or tardies become a pattern, the principal or his/her designee oversees the development and implementation of a written intervention plan designed to improve student attendance habits and to link students and their families to all appropriate school and community resources in furtherance of this goal.
- When truancy and/or repeated tardies continue following implementation of a written intervention plan, students are referred to the family court, and parents/legal guardians to the Department of Social Services, to address truancy issues as outlined in the administrative rule accompanying this policy.

Excuses

In order to receive one Carnegie unit of credit, a student must be in attendance at least 120 hours and not exceed the maximum number of absences as set in (rule) JH-R, per unit. The board may grant approval of excessive absences in accordance with board policy.

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by his/her parent/legal guardian. The excuse will contain such other information as directed by the administration. The school administration will keep all excuses confidential.

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If a student fails to submit a valid excuse, he/she will automatically receive an unexcused absence. If a student brings a false (or forged) excuse, the teacher will refer the student to the school administration for appropriate action.

The district will consider a student **lawfully** absent under the following circumstances:

- The student is ill and attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others.
- There is a death or serious illness in his/her immediate family.
- There is a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith.
- Prearranged absences for other reasons and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal.
- A child in foster care who must be absent due to a certified court appearance or related court-ordered activity including, but not limited to, court-ordered treatment services.
- Absences not to exceed ten days to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience or interscholastic activities in accordance with policy JHE- Excused Absences for Career and Technical Student Organization Experiences.

The district will consider a student unlawfully absent under the following circumstances:

- The student is willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian.
- The student is absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian.
- Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.

Adopted ^11/10/25, Revised 11/26

Legal References:

A. United States Code of Laws, as amended:
   1. Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114–95, 129 Stat. 1802.
   2. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C.A. Section 11431, *et seq*.

   S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:
   1. Section 59-1-462 - Excused absences to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience.
   2. Section 59-38-10 - South Carolina Education Bill of Rights for Children in Foster Care.
   3. Section 59-46-10, *et seq*. - Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.
   4. Section 59-65-20 - Parents/Legal guardians required to ensure child or ward attends schools.
   5. Section 59-65-50, *et seq*. - Nonattendance reported to court of proper jurisdiction.

B. S.C. State Board of Education Regulations:
   1. R43-274 - Student attendance.