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Descriptor Term:
ATTENDANCE

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4.2000

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -378 through -383, -407.5; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0101–.0103; State Board of Education Policy TCS-L-001, TCS-L-002

Cross References: 4.0023 Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students, 4.0050 Children of Military Families

Attendance in school and participation in class are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Regular attendance develops 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 seven (7) (or younger if enrolled in school) and sixteen (16) attend school. Parents, legal custodians and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily.

A. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

School officials shall keep an accurate record of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Specifically, classroom teachers shall keep accurate daily attendance rosters, including providing specific coding instructions for substitute teachers, and report the attendance of each student to the principal or his/her designee. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

B. ATTENDANCE DEFINED / SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES DEFINED

1. Attendance Defined. To be considered in attendance, a student shall be present in the school or at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official to attend an authorized school-related activity. (See NC State Board of Education Policy TCS-L-0001).
2. School-related Activities Defined. The following are considered school-related activities and shall not be counted as absences from either class or school:
 - a. field trips sponsored by the school;
 - b. school-initiated and scheduled activities that are approved as a school sponsored activity;
 - c. athletic events requiring early dismissal from school;
 - d. student conventions that are approved as a school sponsored activity;
 - e. music festivals that are approved as a school sponsored activity;
 - f. participation in career technical education programs or activities;
 - g. job shadowing by students;
 - f. students working as a Governor or legislative page with prior approval of the principal;
 - g. in-school discipline and in-school suspension; and

- h. one (1) school day for seniors to participate in post-secondary school opportunities.

(See NC State Board of Education Policy TCS-L-0001).

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. Principals shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to an absolute minimum.

C. EXCUSED ABSENCES

When a student is absent from school, the student's parent, legal guardian or legal custodian must provide the following in writing to the principal or his/her designee on the day the student returns to school after the absence:

- 1. a request to have the absence declared excused in order for the principal, and
- 2. written proof satisfactory to the principal of the reason for the absence.

The principal or his/her designee may excuse an absence of a student upon a showing of satisfactory evidence of one of the following reasons:

- 1. personal illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school;
- 2. the local health officer or State Board of Health orders the isolation of the student;
- 3. the student is absent due to the death of a member of his/her immediate family;
- 4. the student has a medical or dental appointment;
- 5. the student is a party to or is under subpoena as a witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal;
- 6. for a minimum of two (2) absences each academic year if the student is absent due to a religious observance of an event required or suggested by the student's or student's parents' religion;
- 7. participation in a valid educational opportunity and the student has received prior approval by the principal; or
- 8. the student's absence is due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary.

In addition, a student whose parent, legal custodian or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4.0050, 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 will be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the superintendent or his/her designee to visit with his/her parent, legal custodian or legal guardian.

Absences due to extended illnesses should generally require a statement from a physician.

In the case of excused absences and out-of-school suspensions, the student will be permitted to make up his/her work. The student's teachers 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.

D. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement.

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences.

E. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

With regard to high school students, if a student is absent from a class for more than eight (8) in a semester, the principal or his/her designee shall consider whether the student's grades should be reduced to sixty (60) because of the absences. In such case, the principal or his/her designee shall review other measures of academic achievement, the circumstances of the absences, the number of absences, and the extent to which the student completed missed work. After reviewing these factors, the principal may make any of the following determinations:

1. the student will not receive a passing grade for the semester, in which case the numerical grade recorded for the student for the course shall be sixty (60); or
2. the student will receive the grade otherwise earned.

Students having excused absences due to documented chronic health problems may be exempted from this policy upon providing a written statement to the principal from a licensed medical professional that the absences were due to the chronic health problems of the student.

In the event the principal determines that the student will not receive a passing grade for the semester, within ten (10) working days of the last day of school for each semester, the principal shall notify the student and the student's parent, legal guardian or legal custodian of his/her decision in writing and provide the student and the student's parent, legal guardian or legal custodian with written notice of his/her right to request a hearing before the principal regarding the principal's determination. Within five (5) working days of such notification by the principal, the student, the student's parent, legal guardian or legal custodian may request a hearing before the principal regarding the principal's determination. In the event no hearing is requested within such time, the principal's initial determination shall stand and neither the student, the student's parent, legal guardian nor legal custodian shall have any further right to appeal the principal's initial determination. In the event a hearing is requested in a timely manner, the hearing shall be conducted within fifteen (15) days of the hearing request. At the conclusion of the hearing, the principal may affirm or modify his/her determination. The principal's determination shall be final and the student and parent shall have no further right to appeal the principal's decision.