

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

The Caldwell County Board of Education and school officials believe that regular and punctual attendance significantly affects educational achievement and success. Daily attendance is encouraged and stressed at all grade levels in the Caldwell County School System. The board further believes that all students must graduate in order to meet the demands of the 21st Century. With the combined effort of students, parents and school personnel this objective will be attained.

The primary responsibility for school attendance rests with students and parents; however, schools must properly record absences and tardies, notify parents when needed, and discourage excessive absences. Each principal may appoint an Attendance Committee to promote school attendance.

Students are entitled to make up any work they have missed due to an absence. However, at the high school level, after the seventh absence in any class, any unexcused absence will require the principal or designee to authorize the opportunity to make up missed work. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to acquire missed assignments. Generally, such work would be made up within a time period equal to the length of the absence. (Reference: Student Conduct 3300)

The Board and school officials seek full cooperation from parents and students in promoting good attendance and punctuality. Students who drive and parents who transport students are expected to be punctual on a daily basis; therefore, excessive tardiness or early dismissals will not be tolerated. Schools are encouraged to develop expectations and incentives for attendance and punctuality. Parents are asked to schedule medical and dental appointments after school hours except in cases of emergency. They are also asked to schedule family vacations during school vacation periods.

Because quality instructional time is a top priority for Caldwell County Schools, student errands away from the school are discouraged unless the absence has been authorized by the principal/designee. To protect the instructional day, students will not be excused from regular schoolwork to take private lessons in music, art, dance, or any other area without prior approval of the principal.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

#### **A. Lawful Absences:**

The school principal or designee has the right to excuse a student temporarily from attendance on account of sickness or other unavoidable cause. Below are the valid/lawful excuses for temporary nonattendance of a student at school.

1. **Illness or Injury:** When the absence results from illness or injury, which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.

2. **Quarantine:** When isolation of the student is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
3. **Death in the Immediate Family:** When the absence results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. For the purpose of this regulation, the immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters.
4. **Medical or Dental Appointments:** When the absence results from a medical or dental appointment of a student.
5. **Court or Administrative Proceedings:** When the absence results from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
6. **Religious Observance:** When the student is absent due to a religious observance in accordance with local school board policy.
7. **Educational Opportunity:** When it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid education opportunity, such as travel. Approval for such an absence must be granted prior to the absence.
8. The school principal may excuse temporary or occasional absences for other reasons in accordance with local school board policies, provided that the student has been in attendance for at least one-half of the school day.

#### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Absences for reasons other than those listed above will be deemed unexcused. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to missing the bus, oversleeping, car trouble, or babysitting. Schools may develop specific consequences related to such absences. Absences caused by infestation of lice generally will be coded as unlawful if the absence lasts more than one day beyond the identification of the problem, or if more than three infestations occur during the school year.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES (K-12)**

The principal and his/her staff may require documentation to verify reasons for absences. The school will notify parents of excessive unexcused absences under the following conditions:

1. The principal or his designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated three unexcused absences in a school year.
2. After not more than six unexcused absences, the principal shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian by mail that he may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and local boards of education. Once the parents are notified, the school social worker shall work with the child and his family to analyze the causes of the absences and determine steps, including adjustment of the school program or obtaining supplemental services, to eliminate the problem.
3. After the tenth accumulated unexcused absence in a school year:
  - a. The principal shall review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and student's parent, guardian or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law.

- b. If the principal determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal shall notify the district attorney and the director of social services of the county where the child resides. If the principal determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian, has made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal may file a complaint with the juvenile court counselor pursuant to Chapter 7B of the General Statutes that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse. Upon receiving notification by the principal, the director of social services shall determine whether to undertake an investigation under G.S. 7B-302.

### **HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Attendance is an essential element in the learning process. The primary responsibility of school attendance rests with students and parents. Students missing more than seven (7) days per semester (10 in a yearlong class) will not receive credit for the course unless the student makes a “C” or above on the final exam and earns a passing grade for the course. No Credit (NC) will be recorded if the student does not meet both stipulations.

Students with extenuating circumstances may file an appeal with the school attendance appeals committee prior to the completion of the course.

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