

STUDENT ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

The School Board maintains that daily school attendance is essential to the educational success of each student. Students are expected to be in school all day, every day and in class on time in order to receive full benefit from the instructional programs of the Charlotte County Public Schools. All absences must be reported and explained by a parent or guardian within two (2) school days after the student's return to school. Research has shown that 10% or more of instructional time missed by students (pre-k to grade 12) is an early warning indicator for possible academic struggles; this measure is used to define chronic absenteeism nationwide.

Florida Statute 1003.24
School Board Policy 5200

Compulsory School Attendance

School attendance is required of all students, who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1st of any school year, but who have not attained the age of 16, unless otherwise exempt by law.

Florida Statute 1003.21 (1)(a)(b)

Non-Enrollment

Under the direction of the Superintendent, a designated representative shall give written notice, in person or by return receipt mail, to the parent/guardian when no valid reason is found for a child's non-enrollment in school. The letter requires enrollment within 3 days after the date of notice. If the notice and requirements are ignored, the designated representative may initiate steps necessary to bring criminal prosecution against the parent/guardian.

Florida Statute 1003.26 (2)(a)

Students Under Compulsory Attendance Age

Early education is vital to a student's success therefore, schools encourage consistent attendance of pre-k and kg students who are under compulsory attendance age.

Students Beyond Compulsory Attendance Age

All students age 16 or over are required to comply with all school rules and all rules and regulations established by the School Board. All notices, report cards, attendance information and other similar information will be made available to the parent/guardian with the understanding that the parent/guardian is fully responsible for student progress, attendance and behavior.

Students between the ages of 16 and 18 must file with the School Board a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment in order to be exempt from compulsory school attendance requirements. An exit interview with appropriate school staff is required, and the declaration form must be signed by both the parent and the student.

Florida Statute 1003.21

Attendance Recording

Students shall be counted in attendance when they are present. Students who are on hospital/homebound instruction are counted as present.

Florida Statute 1003.23 (2)

Reporting Student Absence

There must be communication between the school and home regarding each absence. All absences must be reported and explained by a parent or guardian within two (2) school days after the student's return to school. All absences are considered unexcused until the school receives explanation, written or oral, from the parent/guardian. The principal or designee has the authority to determine whether or not an absence is excused. Excessive excused absences for illness may result in the student being required to provide a doctor's note or other substantiating medical evidence.

Florida Statute 1003.23 (2)

Types of Absences

For purposes of gathering statistical data, all absences will be recorded in the school office as excused, unexcused, or absence due to an out-of-school suspension.

- A. Excused Absence - An absence will be recorded as excused for the following reasons:
- (1) Illness of student.
 - (2) Serious illness or death in student's immediate family, including significant other.
 - (3) Students having or suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation that can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, bed bugs, head lice, ringworm, impetigo and scabies. Students excluded from school for head lice will be allowed a maximum of three (3) school days excused absence for each occurrence.
 - (4) Doctor or dental appointments. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments after school hours.
 - (5) Treatment of autism spectrum disorder by a licensed healthcare practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to s. 393.17, FS.
 - (6) Health issues as they relate to pregnant teens, teenage mothers and/or their children. Appointments after school are encouraged.
 - (7) Legal matters.
 - (8) Religious holidays/training of the student's specific faith or religious instruction. Students shall be excused from any examination, study, or work assignment for observance of a religious holiday or because the tenets of his/her religion forbid secular activity at such time.
 - (9) The principal must be notified at least five school days in advance of any planned trips with parents or special events such as State/National competitions, student conferences, education enrichment activities, important public functions and post-secondary educational institution visits. The principal may excuse the absence depending on an individual student's attendance record and academic standing.
 - (10) Absence is with knowledge and consent of the Principal.

Note: School-sponsored activities such as field trips, extracurricular activities, assemblies, and internal suspensions are not considered absences. Students are allowed to make up work in the same manner as an excused absence.

- B. Unexcused Absence – A student's absence will be recorded as unexcused if the student is absent from school or class for any reason not listed in the above types of absences.
- C. Absence Due to Out-of-School Suspension – Absence due to an out-of-school suspension will be recorded in a category separate from excused or unexcused.

- D. Absences Due to Incomplete State Immunization Requirement or Health Examination Requirement - Children and youths who are experiencing homelessness, and children who are known to the Department of Children and Families as defined in F.S. 39.0016, shall be given a temporary exemption for thirty (30) school days to present documentation of school-entry health examination, certificate of immunization or proof of immunization exemption. Failure to provide documentation within the 30 school day exemption period will result in the student being excluded from school beginning on school day 31. All school days missed after the 30 school day exemption period will be recorded as unexcused absences and the student's absences will be subject to Florida's truancy laws.

Florida Statute 393.17, 1003.22, 1003.23, 1003.24

Excessive Excused or Chronic Absences

The Principal has administrative discretion in cases of excessive absences to reject a written note and consider the absence as unexcused when absences are impacting academic progress, with the exception of sickness, injury or insurmountable conditions.

If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school, he or she must be under the supervision of a physician in order to receive an excused absence. The Principal of the school shall determine when it is necessary to require a physician's statement from the student's medical provider. The parent/guardian will have to provide a copy of this documentation within two (2) school days after the student's return.

Florida Statute 1003.27 (3)

Elementary and Middle Students: Late Arrivals (Tardy) and Early Dismissals

The term "tardy" means being late to school, class, or an activity, with or without permission of parents/guardians. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement.

The parent/guardian/caretaker of each student of compulsory school age, who has been tardy or released from school for any reason, shall explain the cause for such tardiness or partial absences from school. Parents of tardy elementary school students are required to sign the student in at the office. The School Board reserves the right to verify such documentation and to investigate the cause of any tardiness or early dismissal. The Principal or designee will decide if the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence.

During the school year, failure to document and explain the cause for the late arrival or early dismissal may result in an unexcused tardy or unexcused early dismissal. Every three (3) unexcused tardies or early dismissals, or a combination thereof, will result in one (1) unexcused absence for the purpose of determining whether a pattern of non-attendance exists. A student who has accumulated a combination of 15 unexcused tardies and/or early releases may be referred to the Truancy Intervention Program (TIP). Additionally, procedures for filing a Child In Need of Services (CINS) petition may be commenced.

Florida Statute 1003.24 (4); 1003.02 (1)(b); 1003.26 (1)(6)
School Board Policy 5230.01

Pattern of Non-attendance

Poor academic performance is associated with non-attendance; therefore, schools will respond in a timely manner to prevent the development of patterns of non-attendance which may indicate early signs of truancy.

If a student has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reason is unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reason is unknown, within a 90 calendar day period, the student's teacher shall report to the school principal or his or her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of non-attendance.

The principal shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, refer the case to the school's attendance intervention team, or equivalent (referred to in the law as the Child Study Team) to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the attendance intervention team finds that a pattern of non-attendance is developing, whether the absences are excused or not, a meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies. If this parent meeting does not resolve the attendance issue, the team shall implement interventions that best address the barriers to regular school attendance.

If the student exhibits a pattern of non-attendance, principals may request documentation for subsequent absences.

Note: Absences for truancy referral are cumulative and carry over for the entire school year.

Florida Statute 1003.26 (b)(c)

Approved Documentation to Excuse an Absence When Required

- Doctor's note from doctor, dentist or other health care professional
- Proof of hospitalization
- Obituary notice, death certificate
- Note from school nurse
- Subpoenas
- Letter from a judge/attorney, copies of legal documents
- Proof of legitimacy of a religious holiday
- Letter citing invitation to a special event

Make-up Work/Homework: Guidelines and Responsibilities

Definitions for the purposes of this document:

<i>Make-up work:</i>	<i>work, assignments, tests, etc., done in class that a student has missed due to absence.</i>
<i>Homework:</i>	<i>work assigned for a student to complete outside of class time.</i>
<i>Long Term Assignment:</i>	<i>assigned projects where the student is given seven (7) or more calendar days to complete.</i>

While make-up work will be provided for all students as outlined below, no activities or assignments can replace the learning that occurs in the classroom when the student is present.

It is the responsibility of the student/parent to request all make-up work and homework from teachers. Two (2 days) for each day of absence shall be given to complete all work. Exams, tests, or quizzes shall be rescheduled at the discretion of the teacher. Long-term projects assigned prior to the absence shall be due on the date the student returns to class. Exceptions may be made with proper documentation.

At all grade levels students are permitted to:

1. Make-up work and homework for absences due to the first out-of-school suspension of the school year may be requested. Work will be made available for full credit upon request by the student/parent within twenty-four (24) hours of the suspension and will be subject to the normal make-up work policy. These privileges shall not exist for subsequent out-of-school suspensions except for exams (or equivalent).
2. Make up a semester exam (or equivalent) for full credit regardless of the type of absence or number of suspensions. The date for the make-up exam will be determined by the principal (or designee).

3. All state mandated testing will be made up according to the Florida Department of Education's published state assessment testing windows and state testing rules.

Elementary and Middle School students will be permitted and encouraged to make up work, tests, and quizzes regardless of the status of the absence (excused/unexcused) and receive full credit.

At the high school level, students with excused absences will be permitted and encouraged to make up work, tests, and quizzes and will not receive an academic penalty unless the work is not made-up within the allowable time frame.

1. If a pattern of non-attendance develops, the principal or designee may require documentation to excuse an absence.
2. In the case of unexcused absences, a teacher may deduct up to 30% from the earned grade for work made up.

NOTE: It is understood that all syllabi distributed and/or communicated by instructional staff to students and parents, for the purposes of setting guidelines and responsibilities within the domain of make-up work policies and procedures, will comply with the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Dual Enrollment

Students participating in dual credit classes will follow standard make-up guidelines set forth by the college instructor.

Florida Statute 1003.24

Consequences Related to Non-Attendance/Truancy

- A. **Revocation of a Reassignment**
Students who accumulate absences and tardies shall be reported to the Hardship Committee for review.
- B. **Referral to Child in Need of Services (CINS) / Family in Need of Services (FINS)**
A referral to the CINS/FINS provider may be initiated for additional case management and interventions when school based interventions have failed.

A student with fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences within ninety (90) calendar days will be considered habitually truant from school. In these cases, procedures for filing a (CINS) petition with the courts may be commenced.

When a parent is non-compliant with recommended interventions and with bringing their child(ren) to school, the Superintendent may file with the State Attorney's Office a case for criminal prosecution against the student's parents.
- C. **Revocation of a Driver's License**
Students between 14 to 18 years of age who are habitually truant are subject to the Driver's License law (refer to Attendance and Driver's License Program).
- D. **Loss of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants through the Learnfare Program**

Students 6 to 16 years of age who are habitually truant may lose benefits. The Department of Children and Families will reinstate the grant only when conditions as provided by law are met (30 days of attendance with no unexcused absences).

Note: When a student transfers to another school district in an attempt to circumvent the applicable remedial truancy procedures, copies of all records pertaining to said procedures shall be forwarded to the new school district free of charge (F.S. 1003.28).

Florida Statute 322.091(2), 414.1251, 1003.27(2)(b), 1003.27 (3), 1003.28, 1003.01(8)

Leaving School Grounds without Permission

Students are not permitted to leave school grounds without authorization. All related absences will be considered unexcused.

Note: Leaving school grounds without permission, and/or skipping class are subject to disciplinary action. Please refer to the matrix for more information.

School Board Policy 5130, 5230

Attendance and Driver's License Program

Florida Statute requires each school district to report to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles the names of all minors between 14 and 18 years of age who accumulate 15 unexcused absences in any 90-day period. Students whose names have been submitted will not be issued a driver's license or learner driver's license, and any previously issued license will be suspended.

Parents or guardians of students whose driver's licenses have been suspended, or the issuance of which has been denied because of excessive unexcused absences may request the principal to have some or all of the absences changed to the status of excused. However, all such requests, in order to be considered, must be accompanied by proper documentation as outlined in the section on "Approved Documentation to Excuse an Absence When Required". In order for a driver's license to be reinstated, a student must be in attendance for at least 30 school days without any unexcused absences.



Out of School Suspensions

An out-of-school suspension is an administrative action that prohibits a student from attending school as compared to truancy. In order to avoid a double penalty, absences due to out-of-school suspensions will not be reported to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV).

Florida Statute 1003.27(2)(6)

Attendance and Suspension

Students shall not be suspended for unexcused absences, unexcused tardies, lateness or truancy.

School Board Policy 5200, 5500