

School District of Leon County Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE

Florida law requires each parent of a child from six to sixteen years of age to be responsible for the child's school attendance. Students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment is filed with the district school board by the student or parent/legal guardian of a student who is less than 18 years of age.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Florida Statutes, 1003.24 defines the responsibility of parents for the attendance of their child at school and requires them to provide an explanation for any absence from school.

If a student has unauthorized absences sufficient enough to jeopardize academic progress and it is determined that the student's parent or legal guardian is at fault for the absence, in accordance to F.S. 1003.24, the procedures under Florida Statutes 1003.26 and 1003.27 shall be followed by the appropriate school personnel.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

It is the parent/guardian responsibility to notify the school regarding the reason for a student's absence in a timely fashion.

Absence is nonattendance of a student at school or in an approved educational activity/field trip or program on days school is in session. A student who is not physically present at school or not participating in an approved school activity as defined under the compulsory school law shall be counted absent and shall not be recorded as in attendance on that day.

The law allows absences for illness or medical care, death in the family, religious holidays, prearranged absences for educational purposes approved by an administrator, financial and certain other special circumstances or insurmountable conditions. A student with an excused absence is not subject to any disciplinary or academic penalties.

An unexcused absence takes place any time a child is out of school for reasons not recognized in the law. In these cases, the child may be subject to academic penalties. Unexcused absenteeism sufficient enough to jeopardize academic progress at the elementary and middle school levels is defined as a student being absent without an acceptable reason five (5) times in a calendar month or ten (10) times in a 90-calendar day period.

TARDINESS

Tardiness is any arrival at school after the tardy bell has sounded without an approved excuse.

Likewise, students who leave school before the end of the school day have their learning interrupted. Unless the reason for leaving or late arrival is covered under Florida Statute, elementary and middle school students who are chronically tardy or leave early without an acceptable excuse more than five (5) times in a calendar month or ten (10) times in a 90 calendar day period will be subjected to action as dictated by 1003.27, F.S.

If the parent is the cause of the chronic tardiness or leaving early without an acceptable excuse, then 1003.27, F.S. shall be used to gain compliance. Tardiness and leaving early without an acceptable excuse are seen as a form of nonattendance, which is in violation of compulsory attendance statutes.

TRUANCY

A *truant* is one who is not in attendance, with or without approval of the parent or other person having charge of the student, and whose absence has not been excused.

A *habitual truant* is a student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences within ninety (90) calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the student's parent or legal guardian. A student's primary teacher shall report to the principal or his/her designee if the student is exhibiting a pattern of non-attendance and is a potential habitual truant because of at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period.

If a child subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent, the guardian, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall refer the case to the district staff and Child In Need of Services/Family In Need of Services (CINS/FINS) provider committee. *If the child has had more than 15 unexcused absences on a 90 calendar day period the Superintendent or his/her designee may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures in F.S. 984.151.*

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Students are not allowed to be absent from school except for the following documented reasons:

- a. Illness and/or medical care
- b. Death in the family
- c. Legal reasons
- d. Financial conditions
- e. Religious Holidays
- f. Pre-arranged absences for educational purposes approved by an administrator

Unexcused absences are absences which are not used for the legitimate purposes as described above. For each class in which the student has any unexcused absence(s), a grade of "F" shall be assigned for that nine (9) week grading period.

Every absence, be it part of the day or all day, requires a written excuse (note or email) from parent/guardian within five (5) school days of the absence to be excused. It is always best to submit a medical note if there is an appointment, as parents may only write ten (10) notes per semester.

Tardiness

A student who arrives unexcused to class up to 10 minutes after the bell scheduled beginning time shall be recorded tardy. Four (4) tardies shall equal one late.

A student who arrives unexcused to class over 10 minutes after the scheduled beginning time shall be recorded as late.

A student with four (4) tardies shall be required to attend in-school suspension or Saturday school. A student with absences and/or lates totaling four (4) shall be assigned a grade of "F" for that nine (9) week marking period for that class if any absences or lates are unexcused, subject to a parent/guardian conference.