

# ATTENDANCE

In accordance with state law, all children between the ages of 5 and 17 are required to attend a public or private school. The school year consists of 180 school days. **A student will be considered truant if he or she accumulates 3 consecutive unexcused absences or a total of 5 unexcused absences.** As a result, the student will be placed on a **Truancy Intervention Plan**. Subsequent absences may result in the student and his/her parents being referred to Family Court in keeping with the provisions of the Education Improvement Act of 1984.

## **ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

The district considers students present only when they are actually at school, on homebound instruction, or attending an activity authorized by the school such as field studies, athletic contests, music festivals, student conventions, etc.

If absent, a student must present a written excuse signed by a parent/guardian, physician or other appropriate person within **three** days after returning to school. **(Note: Parent notes do not excuse absences except for those indicated below. Please see below for district-approved excused absences.)**

The excuse must include the date the excuse is written, date of the absence, reason for the absence, telephone number where the parent/guardian may be reached and the required signature.

If a student fails to provide a proper excuse, the excuse may be recorded as unexcused. Students enrolled in a course for high school credit cannot accumulate more than five unexcused absences in a semester-long course or 10 unexcused absences in a year-long course to receive credit. ***This includes absences covered by parent excuses, which means that parent excuses count as unexcused absences in high school credit courses. A parent excuse, however, does enable the student to make up work missed.***

Principals require a student who accumulates more than five absences in a semester or 10 absences in a year to provide a doctor's excuse for all medically related absences in order to receive course credit.

Parents can routinely monitor absences by accessing their students' information in PowerSchool. If a parent has a question or concern about an absence, the parent should contact the school as soon as possible.

Principals have the authority to review absences in excess of 10 days (five days in a semester course) and to use their own discretion for follow-up.

Any student who provides a false excuse will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

The district gives **excused** absences for:

- Ill students whose attendance in school endangers their health or the health of others, as determined by a doctor or the school nurse.
- Students who are chronically ill. A doctor's statement explaining that the student does not need to see a doctor every time the illness occurs must be turned into the attendance office. Once the statement is on file with the school, the parent/guardian can inform the doctor of the occurrence of the illness and the doctor can fax the attendance office the excuse or the original may be picked up from the doctor and given to the attendance office when the student returns to school. (Schools do not accept faxes from parents/guardians.)
- Students who must keep medical or dental appointments. **Called-in doctor's notes are not accepted.** The student must see the doctor for the absence to be excused except in cases where the student has been determined to be chronically ill as explained above.
- Students who have prior permission from their high school administration to visit a college. One excused absence in the junior year and two excused absences in the senior year are permitted. A note from the admissions office of the college visited must be turned into the attendance office.

- Students who have an immediate family member who is seriously ill. A parent/guardian note stating that the family member is seriously ill must be turned into the attendance office.
- Students attending a funeral of an immediate family member. A parent/guardian note must be turned into the attendance office.
- Students participating in a recognized religious holiday of their faith.
- Students who have prior permission to participate in school-sponsored or school-approved activities.
- students who have unusual or mitigating circumstances as determined by the school principal.

### **UNEXCUSED/UNLAWFUL ABSENCES**

The district gives unexcused absences for:

- Students willfully absent from school.
- Students absent without the knowledge of their parents/guardians for any reason other than those described in the previous section.
- Students suspended from school.

After three consecutive unexcused absences or after a total of five unexcused absences, the principal or designee will identify the reason(s) for the student's continued absence and will, with the student and parent/guardian, develop a plan to improve that student's attendance. The student may be referred to a truancy prevention program or to court. Before a principal takes legal action, the principal will notify the parent/guardian and allow that parent/guardian to present information for appeal.

### **HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT COURSES (ENGLISH I, ALGEBRA I, ALGEBRA 2)**

Students taking courses for high school credit can accrue the following number of unexcused absences before losing course credit:

180-day classes - 10 unexcused absences

***REMINDER: This includes absences covered by parent excuses, which means that parent excuses count as unexcused absences in high school credit courses. A parent excuse, however, does enable the student to make up work missed.***

### **TARDINESS**

- A student who is late for school must go to the office for a written admission slip before going to class.
- Teachers will not allow students whose names appear on the absentee list to attend class without an admission slip from the office.
- Three unexcused tardies (three minutes late) to any one class can count as an unexcused absence.
- Students with school choice options or special permission who have excessive tardies or unexcused absences will lose their school choice options if problems continue for two grading periods.

### **LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DISMISSAL**

- Students who report to school late should be accompanied by a doctor's note or signed in by a parent. Remember that doctor's notes guarantee excused absences.
- Students must be in class for at least 30 minutes in order to be counted present in each class. If a student is signed out before 30 minutes have passed, he/she will receive an unexcused absence for that class unless a doctor's note is submitted.

### **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

The district offers homebound instruction for those students of legal school age who, because of accident, illness or other medical condition, cannot attend school even with the aid of transportation.

To be eligible for homebound instruction, a licensed physician must complete the required South Carolina Department of Education form certifying that the student is unable to attend school even with transportation, but that he/she may be expected to benefit from homebound Instruction.

Parents/guardians can get a copy of the South Carolina Department of Education's homebound form from Wanda Smith at the District Office. You may reach her at (803) 821-1134. After a licensed physician completes the form, the parents/guardians should return the form for approval to the Lexington One Special Services Office located at 111 Tarrar Springs Road in Lexington.

When students in grades 6–12 have access to the Internet and can access the general curriculum, Edgenuity, an online content tool, provides services. Personnel at the home school monitor the student's progress. When students do not meet the criteria for Edgenuity, a certified teacher provides instruction. When a teacher is assigned, the student receives a minimum of five hours of instruction per week.