

# **CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS**

## **5.42 DISTRICT STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROVISIONS**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

A. School attendance shall be the direct responsibility of parents and students.

All students are expected to attend school regularly, receive total instructional time, and to be on time for classes to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.

B. Open communication between parents and schools is an integral component of the educational process. Schools and parents shall work together to encourage students to attend school regularly. Regular attendance in each forty-five (45) day grading period is necessary for a student to be successful in school. Missed work shall be made up for all absences, including suspension. Make-up work shall be allowed for each day of absence, when appropriate or as determined by the principal. Each student shall receive full credit for such work.

C. Schools shall track excused and unexcused absences and contact the home in case of unexcused absences or absences for which the reason is unknown.

D. If a student has 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, the student's primary teacher shall report the student's attendance to the principal. The principal shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of non-attendance, refer the case to the school level Attendance Intervention Team (AIT). The AIT will schedule a meeting with the parents or legal guardian and a representative of the district attendance office. If appropriate, a contract will be developed and signed by the participating parties. If the contract is violated, the case may be referred to the State Attorney's office.

### **II. DEFINITION**

A. For the purpose of meeting the state requirement of recording attendance in an attendance register, students shall be counted in attendance if they are actually present at school for any part of the instructional day or are away from school on a school day and are engaged in an educational activity which constitutes a part of the school-approved instructional program for students. However, accumulation of tardiness and early check-outs will result in mandatory interventions are outlined below.

### **III. STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

A. Students returning from an absence shall be required to present a written explanatory excuse from their parent(s) or legal guardian, stating the cause for the absence. The following causes are acceptable excuses for being absent:

1. Illness or injury of the student;
2. Participation in therapy services, to include, without limitation, the treatment of autism spectrum disorder provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to Florida Statutes.
3. Serious illness or death in the student's family;
4. Inclement weather;
5. Official religious holiday of a religious sect or for religious instruction (see below);
6. Insurmountable conditions as determined by the school principal or other designated district or school personnel; and,
7. A bus failure or irregular schedule which causes the absence or tardiness of a student who is eligible for and regularly transported by the District.

B. Students participating in educational activities which constitute a part of the school-approved instructional program shall be deemed in attendance.

C. A student shall be excused from attendance on a particular day or days, or for part of a day, and shall be excused from any examination, study, or work assignment for observation of a religious holiday or because the tenets of his or her religion forbid secular activity at such time. Teachers shall give each student the opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work assignment which has been missed for religious purposes and the student shall receive full credit for such work.

### **IV. ELEMENTARY GRADES (K-5)**

A. Parents shall be notified in writing on or before the fifth absence, within each forty-five (45) day grading period, of the student from any school day to request their cooperation in preventing further absences. Principals may authorize a waiver of notification if school personnel have determined the student has contracted an illness, such as a communicable childhood disease, resulting in an extensive number of absences.

B. Students who are absent shall receive a grade of zero (0) for work missed for the day(s) in which the absence(s) occur. Students shall be responsible for making up missed work for each absence. Students shall receive appropriate grades for the make-up work to replace the zero (0). The school principal shall determine the appropriate length of time for completion of assignments. A student shall be deemed to be in attendance if actually present at school, or away from school on a school day and engaged in an educational activity which constitutes a part of the school-approved instructional program for that student.

C. Each elementary school shall develop a written incentive plan for encouraging and motivating students to attend school. Incentives may include certificates, awards, special events, or participation grades for exemplary attendance.

Each elementary school shall submit its incentive plan for approval to the appropriate Chief Officer, K-5.

D. Nonattendance for instructional activities is established by an accumulation of tardiness, early check outs and absences for all or any part of the school day. For learning activities to be fully effective, it is reasonable to require that each student arrives to class on time and remain for the entire school day. A student who is tardy to class or who is checked out not only places his or her learning in jeopardy but also interrupts the learning of other students.

1. Tardiness is defined as the physical absence of a student in the classroom at the beginning of a regularly scheduled session at which he or she is scheduled to be present when the school tardy bell rings.
2. Early check out is defined as a parent or guardian signing out a child before the end of the school day.
3. A parent shall notify the school as to the reason for the tardiness or early check out. Justifiable reasons shall be determined by the principal.
4. Schools shall establish procedures for early check outs that ensure students are treated consistently. A student should not be released within the final forty-five minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines it is an emergency or an excused event.
5. The School will provide written notice to parents after three tardies or three early check outs within thirty days. Additional tardies or early check outs will result in the following interventions:
  - a. A mandatory parent conference with the guidance counselor.
  - b. A mandatory conference with the principal.
  - c. In accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, other appropriable penalties such as detention beyond the regular school schedule or appropriate counseling for programs for students and parents may be administered at the school principals or designee's discretion.
6. Students will not be recognized by the School for perfect attendance when they have three or more unexcused tardies or three or more unexcused early check outs.
7. Six unexcused tardies or six early check outs in any forty-five day grading period will result in the student and their parents being referred for the following interventions:
  - a. Referral to the Attendance Intervention Team
  - b. At the principal's discretion, assignment to Saturday School as detailed in the Student Code of Conduct.
8. If it is determined that the parent is the cause of the chronic tardiness or early check out without an acceptable excuse, then a referral shall be made to the State Attorney's Office. For the purpose of this policy, tardiness and early check out without an acceptable excuse are seen as violation of 1003.21, F.S. (compulsory attendance).

9. A parent or guardian may appeal an unexcused tardy or unexcused early check out if the parent or guardian has proof of a student's chronic documented illness by a medical professional as a reason for the tardiness or early check out.

#### **V. MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES (6-8) AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADES (9-12)**

A. During each grading period, the principal or designee shall notify parents by phone or in writing on or before the third absence of the student from any class period or school day. Within each grading period parents shall be notified in writing upon the fifth absence of the student from any class period or school day to request their cooperation in preventing further absences.

B. Students who are absent shall receive a grade of zero (0) for work missed for the day(s) or class periods(s) in which the absence(s) occur. Students shall be responsible for making up missed work for each absence. Students shall receive 100% credit for the make-up work for all absences completed within the allotted time. The school principal shall determine the appropriate length of time for completion of assignments. A student shall be deemed to be in attendance if actually present at school, or away from school on a school day and engaged in an educational activity which constitutes a part of the school- approved instructional program for that student.

C. Students with unexcused absences shall be held accountable through provisions of the Codes of Student Conduct. Other appropriate penalties, such as detention beyond the regular school schedule or appropriate counseling programs for students and parents, may be administered at the school principal's or designee's discretion.

D. Any student who misses more than eight (8) days of a course or four (4) days on a block schedule during one grading period must meet both criteria below to be eligible for a passing grade (A-D) in that course:

1. The Student passes the required comprehensive quarter exam or the

required comprehensive project in the course. A comprehensive exam or comprehensive project will be given to all student's in courses for each grading period; and

2. The student has an overall passing grade in the course for the grading period.

E. Schools shall establish procedures for early check outs that ensure students are treated consistently. A student should not be released within the final forty- five minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines it is an emergency or an excused event.

F. The School will provide written notice to parents after three tardies or three

early check outs within thirty days. Additional tardies or early check outs will result in the following interventions:

1. A mandatory parent conference with the guidance counselor.

2. A mandatory conference with the principal.

3. In accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, other appropriate penalties such as detention beyond the regular school schedule or appropriate counseling for programs for G. Students will not be recognized by the School for perfect attendance when they have three or more unexcused tardies or three or more unexcused early check outs.

H. Six unexcused tardies or six early check outs in any forty-five day grading period will result in the student and their parents being referred for the following interventions:

1. Referral to the Attendance Intervention Team
2. At the Principals discretion, assignment to Saturday School as detailed in the student Code of Conduct.

I. A parent or guardian may appeal an unexcused tardy or unexcused early check out if the parent or guardian has proof of a student's chronic documented illness by a medical professional, as a reason for the tardiness or early check out.

## **VI. ATTENDANCE AT AN ALTERNATIVE CENTER**

A. Students who are enrolled in an alternative center at the end of the school year shall return to the center for the following school year unless otherwise determined by the School Board Hearing Officer.

B. Students who are assigned to an alternative center may attend summer school provided they meet criteria for attendance.

1. Designated personnel in the centers shall notify the principal of the school where the student is regularly assigned of the student's current enrollment and attendance in the center's summer school program.

2. In no case may a student attend summer school at his/her regularly assigned school.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED: 1001.51,1003.01,1003.21,1003.23,  
1003.24, F.S.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE(S): 6A-1.044, 6A-1.09514, 6A-1.09515

HISTORY: ADOPTED: APRIL 1, 1997

REVISION DATE(S): MAY 7, 2002

NOVEMBER 10, 2008

JUNE 8, 2009

JULY 2, 2019

MARCH 3, 2020

FORMERLY: JE