**ATTENDANCE** *Policy Code:* **4400**



School attendance and class participation are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily. School administrators shall communicate attendance expectations to parents and guardians and work with students and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.

The principal must assure adherence to attendance policies and regulations and notify parents of their responsibility under the Compulsory Attendance Law (G.S. 115C-378). Teachers must monitor and report student absences on a daily and class period basis and follow all rules and regulations concerning attendance.

The Ten Day Rule states that when a student accumulates more than ten consecutive days of unlawful absences, he or she is to be withdrawn from funded membership as of the first day following his or her last attendance. The absence of a student which results from the suspension or expulsion of that student for misconduct may not be used for compulsory attendance violation action. Absence caused by out of school suspensions are not a factor in the administration of the Ten Day Rule.

1. **Attendance Records**

School officials shall keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class.

Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

1. **Attendance Communication**

Attendance concerns will be communicated in the following ways:

1. 3, 6, and 10 day State Letters

When a student has missed 3, 6, or 10 days (unlawful) the state required notification will be sent. School officials and/or designees in charge of attendance will check these reports and generate and distribute this documentation each day for students reaching the 3, 6, and 10 day absence (unlawful) milestones.

1. School Level Communication

Schools will take an active part in maintaining communication concerning absences.

~~The ability to be promoted (K-8) and/or the ability to receive credit for the course (9-12)~~. Excessive absences may be a reason to deny credit and/or retain a student.

1. **Lawful Absences**

The following are lawful (excused) absences permitted by the North Carolina State Board of Education attendance rules:

* 1. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;
  2. isolation ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health or isolation or quarantine that is a required state or local control measure;
  3. death in the immediate family;
  4. medical or dental appointment;
  5. attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness;
  6. observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student’s parent or legal guardian that was previously communicated to the principal (the principal must authorize a minimum of two such absences for a student per academic year);
  7. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor’s page, with prior approval from the principal;
  8. pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary;
  9. visitation with the student’s parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student’s parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty or inactive member of the uniformed services as defined by policy [4050](https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=randolph&s=175005), Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting (the principal must authorize a minimum of two such absences for a student per academic year): or
  10. any other reason as approved by the board in a board resolution.

Documented lawful absences are the only absences that can be submitted and considered for waiver by the school waiver committee.

1. **Unlawful Absences**

**The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive, unexcused absences.**

Unlawful (unexcused) absences are defined as the student’s willful absences from school without the knowledge of the parents or guardians, or the student’s absences from school without justifiable causes with the knowledge of parents or guardians. All absences not classified above as lawful (excused) are deemed unlawful (unexcused). An absence also will be deemed unlawful unless the student’s parent, guardian or custodian provides written documentation of the reason(s) for the absence to the principal or designee upon the student’s return to school.

1. **Homebound Placements**

Homebound placements are based on medical or exceptional circumstances, and students are credited as in attendance when pre-approved by the appropriate official in the Thomasville City Schools.

1. **Makeup Work**

Whether absences are lawful, unlawful, including absences under [G.S. 130A-440](http://redirector.microscribepub.com/?cat=stat&loc=nc&id=130a&spec=440) (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school) or due to suspension, the student will be permitted to make up his or her work. Students are responsible for all work missed when absent from school. Immediately upon returning to school, students must make arrangements with their teacher(s) to make up all work (assignments, tests, projects, etc.) missed while absent. Work must be made up during the grading period in which it was assigned.

1. **Absence Documentation Requirement**

All absences require a written note from the parent or guardian explaining the absence(s). The student should deliver the note to school authorities (teacher, attendance office official, etc.) as soon as possible upon his or her return to school.

Parents and guardians are requested to contact school officials as soon as possible when unanticipated absences occur. All anticipated periods of absence should be reported to school officials prior to the period of absence. Such absences should receive prior approval by school officials. Prior approval is required for any student departing from campus once he or she has arrived; this approval is required throughout the school day. Students must follow a sign-in / sign-out procedure as established by the school.

1. **Tardies/Early Sign-Outs**

**Students are expected to be at school on time and to remain at school until dismissed. During the school day, students are expected to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class and to remain until the class ends.**

**When a student must be late to school or leave school early, a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian should be presented upon the student’s arrival at school.**

1. **Definition of Being “In Attendance”**

To be considered “in attendance,” a student must be present in the school for at least one-half of the school day. For high school students, this also includes being in attendance for two-thirds of the class period (that would be 60 minutes of a 90-minute block) to be counted “in attendance” for that class period.

To be in attendance during remote instruction days (with the exception of the initial enrollment day), students must: (1) complete their daily assignments, either online or offline; and/or (2) have a daily check-in through two-way communication with (a) the homeroom teacher for grades K-5 or (b) for all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled. School officials shall communicate the attendance procedures to students and their families before the first day remote instruction begins.

Students may, with the approval of the school principal or designees, attend an authorized school activity and be considered “in attendance.” Such activities include, but may not be limited to, job shadowing and other work based learning activities, field trips, athletic contests or other competitions, student conventions, music festivals, concerts or similar activities approved by the school.

1. **Unlawful Absence Disciplinary Actions**

Unlawful absence and/or truancy may lead to disciplinary action to include court proceedings involving parents and/or students if the student is under 16 years of age. G.S. 115C-378 requires attendance until age 16.

1. **Attendance Requirements and Excessive Absences**

The goal of Thomasville City Schools is to have at least 95% attendance. Schools seek to have partnerships with parents to improve attendance and ask that parents commit to this goal.

1. Elementary School and Middle School: Students in grades K-8 who are absent from school more than 10 days per semester/20 days per academic year for any reason may potentially receive no credit for the year of study and may be retained in the same grade for the succeeding year, except by a determination of the principal upon review of the student’s record and waiver requests.

High School: If a student is absent for more than 10 days in a semester course or more than 20 days in a yearlong course, the student may lose the opportunity to receive credit for the course.

1. the student may not receive a passing grade for the semester (FF – no credit awarded);
2. the student may receive the grade otherwise earned; or
3. the student may be given additional time to complete the missed work before a determination of the appropriate grade is made.

At any level, promotion decisions affecting a child in the Exceptional Children’s program will include recommendations of the IEP team.

1. **Special Circumstances**
2. Students with Chronic Health Problems

No penalties will be imposed for absences due to documented chronic health problems.

1. Students Experiencing Homelessness

For students experiencing homelessness (see board policy 4125, Homeless Students), school officials must consider issues related to the student’s homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

1. Attendance Requirements for Extracurricular Activities

Absences may impact eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Principals shall inform students and parents of the applicable attendance standards for the various types of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. See also policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations.

**M. Waivers**

Each school’s principal and attendance/waiver committee will be responsible for waivers in order to address the needs of students whose academic standings are in question because of attendance. Principals and school attendance/waiver committees will meet periodically to discuss students with attendance issues.

Students must make up all missed schoolwork in order to receive credit toward promotion/graduation in addition to seeking waivers of policy for excessive absences. Students whose academic standing is adversely affected by this standard have the right to appeal for a waiver. The appeal must be submitted to the principal in writing along with any appropriate or required documentation. Principal decisions may be appealed to the superintendent. Waiversmay be granted by the principal only when extenuating circumstances exist. Waivers may only be granted for excused/lawful absences.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -375.5, -378 through -383, -390.2(d), -390.2(l), -390.5, -407.5, -407.12; 130A-440; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0102, .0103, .0106; State Board of Education Policies ATND-000, -003

Cross References: Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students (policy 4023), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Homeless Students (policy 4125), Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Short-Term Suspension (policy 4351)

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