

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENT SERVICES

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

5.04

- I. Regular school attendance is required between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) with certain exceptions outlined under Florida Statutes, Chapter 232.06. Principals in each school center shall determine the daily attendance of that center through an official attendance check taken during the first hour that the school center is in session. Classroom absenteeism shall be reported within the school on PCDSB Form E-10.

Attendance of all students for at least one hundred eighty (180) days is required except for absences due to illness or otherwise as provided by the law.

- II. Parents are responsible for the attendance of students. The absence of a student from school shall be prima facie evidence of a violation with certain exceptions according to Florida Statutes, Chapter 232.09.
- III. Whenever a child of compulsory school attendance age is absent without the permission of the person in charge of the school, the parent of the child shall as soon as practicable after learning of the absence, report and explain the case of such absence to the appropriate school official.
- IV. Student absences must be tracked on a daily basis and parents contacted as required by law.
- V. It shall be the responsibility of each school to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused based on the definition of excused absence in VII.B.
- VI. Schools shall abide by the following policy and procedures for handling non-attendance of students of compulsory age.
 - A. When a student is absent, the school shall contact the parents and as soon as practical after learning of the absence, the parents shall explain the absences. Failure to make valid explanation shall be evidence of consent of the parent. If the absence is an excused absence the school shall provide opportunities for the student to make up assigned work and not receive an academic penalty unless the work is not made up in the time specified by the school.

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENT SERVICES

5.04 (Continued)

- B. If a student has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a ninety (90) calendar-day period, the student's primary 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 non-attendance, refer the case to the school's child study team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the child study 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.
- C. When no valid reason is found for a child's non-enrollment in school, or when a child has five (5) unexcused absences within a calendar month, school personnel shall give written notice either in person or by registered mail, to the parent, guardian or other person having control of the child. Within three (3) days of receiving this notice, the child must be enrolled or in attendance at school, and the parent or guardian of the child must attend the child study team meeting to participate in planning remedial strategies.
- D. If an initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the child study team shall implement interventions that best address the problem.
- E. If the parent, guardian, or other person in charge of the child refuses to participate in the remedial strategies because he or she believes that those strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent, guardian, or other person in charge of the child may appeal to the School Board. The School Board may provide a hearing officer and the hearing officer shall make a recommendation for final action to the Board. If the Board's final determination is that the strategies of the child study team are appropriate, and the parent, guardian, or other person in charge of the child still refuses to participate or cooperate, the Superintendent may seek criminal prosecution for non-compliance with compulsory school attendance.
- F. If a child subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent, the guardian, or the Superintendent or his or her designee shall refer the case to the case staffing committee pursuant to S.984.12 and the Superintendent or his or her designee may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures in S.984.151.
- G. The school representative shall keep accurate records of all notices sent or delivered, visitations made, and all efforts to correct the child's truant behavior.

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENT SERVICES

5.04 (Continued)

- H. If the child repeats a pattern of non-attendance within one (1) school year, the school representative shall resume the escalating activities at the point at which he/she previously ended.
- VII. Absences from School
- A. Absences may be determined by school officials to be "excused" or "unexcused" and such notation shall be entered into the student's computer record within two (2) school days. Excused absences will allow the student to make up any schoolwork missed during the absence. Unexcused absences may give the student a failing grade for all schoolwork missed due to the absence. Excused absences shall include those absences which result from:
1. Illness of the student
 2. Illness in the family requires the student's presence in the home,
 3. Death in the family, or
 4. Court appearances and/or legal matters
 5. Extraordinary circumstances approved by the principal, in advance when possible,
 6. Sickness or injury attested to by a licensed practicing physician, or
 7. Absence for religious instruction or holiday as provided for F.S. 232.0225.
- Parent notes are sufficient documentation for absences due to short-term illness in #1 and #2 above. The principal shall require independent verification of the circumstance or condition resulting in extended, excused absences beyond four (4) days within a thirty (30) day grading period (six weeks), and beyond five (5) days in a forty-five (45) day grading period (nine weeks). The parent/guardian may secure a waiver of this policy by making the condition known to the principal in advance and the principal approving the parent/guardian's request.
- B. Unexcused absences or tardies - Shopping trips, pleasure trips, vacations, appointments, or other avoidable absences shall be deemed to be unexcused absences or tardies. Any suspension from school shall be an unexcused absence unless the suspension was made in error or the principal directs that such absence be excused.
- C. Habitual truancy for any student under compulsory attendance requirements shall be defined as fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences in a period of ninety (90) calendar days (Section, 228.041 Florida Statutes).

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENT SERVICES

5.04 (Continued)

- D. For purposes of this policy, three (3) tardies to school or class shall equal one (1) absence. Tardies shall be determined to be excused or unexcused.
- E. "Regular Attendance" is defined as attendance each class or subject at least twenty seven (27) days of each thirty (30) day grading period and forty (40) days in a forty-five (45) day grading period. Attendance shall be the actual presence of a student in the class or subject or away from the class or subject or school on an educational activity that is part of the approved school program.
- F. Schools will give the students the number of days missed, but not the dates. It is the students and parents' responsibility to keep accurate records of absences.
- G. Exceptions to the attendance policy may be made due to extenuating circumstances. Parents must contact the principal who will make a decision.
- H. Each school will develop an attendance plan for reinforcing exemplary attendance. This plan will be developed by a committee which consists of a school based administrator, a district level administrator, parents, community representatives, teachers, students and the School Advisory Committee.
- I. Suspension days, which occur during six (6) weeks/nine (9) weeks' tests and/or semester/final examinations or other major tests, will not prohibit the student from taking those exams or making them up upon return to school.

VIII. Driver's License

In accordance with State Law, the school principal or designee shall notify the superintendent or designee of any minor student who accumulates fifteen (15) unexcused absences in a period of ninety (90) calendar days or any student withdrawn from school under a dropout code. The Superintendent or designee shall so notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) so they may not issue and shall suspend any previously issued driver's license or learner driver's license for any such minor student.

- 1. For purposes of this policy, the term "minor student" shall include any student attaining the age of fourteen (14) years within the current fiscal year though the age of seventeen (17) years.
- 2. A minor student or the parent/guardian may request a hardship waiver hearing before the Principal or designee.

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENT SERVICES

5.04 (Continued)

- The request for hearing shall be in writing, signed by the student or parent/guardian and delivered to the school office within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of notice from the DHSMV of intent to suspend. The school will notify the DHSMV within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the request for a waiver hearing.
3. The Principal or designee will conduct the hearing within thirty (30) calendar days after the school receives the request for a waiver hearing. The attendance requirements will be waived for any minor student with a personal or family hardship, which requires that the minor have a driver's license. The following criteria will be used to determine the existence of a hardship:
 - A. The minor whose sibling, parent or guardian is disabled and needs to receive medical treatment at a location other than their home.
 - B. The minor who's driving is essential for the primary financial support of the family.
 - C. An extraordinary circumstance which creates a serious personal or family hardship.
 4. The Principal or designee will render a decision and report the outcome to the DHSMV within twenty-four (24) hours.
 5. Any student or parent/guardian denied a hardship waiver by the Principal or designee may appeal the decision to the Director of Student Services or designee who will serve as the designee of the district School Board to consider such cases. Requests for appeal shall be in writing, signed by the student or parent/guardian and delivered to the Director of Student Services or designee within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Principal's decision.
 6. The Director of Student Services or designee will review the student's waiver request and the Principal's decision in making his/her determination. The decision of the Director of Student Services or designee will constitute final action for the School Board. The Director of Student Services or designee will notify the DHSMV if the hardship waiver is granted.
 7. Once suspended or denied, a minor's driving privilege may be reinstated if the minor submits to the DHSMV written verification of thirty (30) days of attendance without any unexcused absences. The school will, upon request, provide the minor student with verification of compliance with attendance requirements for reinstatement of the minor's driving privilege.

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENT SERVICES

5.04 (Continued)

ELEMENTARY GUIDELINES

If the student misses 20 days of school or more they are deemed truant by law and may be at risk of being retained. If a student is checked out of school and misses 50% of the school day or more, he/she will be deemed as absent on that day.

**** The Principal will review all cases where a loss of credit may result and will make the final decision whether to award or deny the credit. ****

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Students who earn 1 credit for a full year class, must have been in that class for at least 135 hours of instruction. Students will be allowed to miss 18 days of class with excused or unexcused absences (school sponsored trips are not counted as an absence). Failure to meet this requirement may result in the loss of the credit.

Students who earn a half credit for a semester class, must have been in that class for at least 68 hours of instruction. Students will be allowed to miss 8 days of class with excused or unexcused absences (school sponsored trips are not counted as an absence).

Failure to meet this requirement may result in a loss of credit.

**** The Principal will review all cases where a loss of credit may result and will make the final decision whether to award or deny the credit. ****

- Once a student has exceeded the maximum amount of absences allowed, the school shall administer a test for mastery at the end of the current grading period.
- This may be the nine (9) weeks exam, final exam or a separate test designed by the school utilizing the Florida Sunshine State Standards and benchmarks, 70% will be the minimum allowable passing score.
- The Principal shall determine what is excused and unexcused, (see page 59 of the attendance policy). The Principal's decision will be final. There is no appeal process for documented attendance that supports the decision of the Principal.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

230.22, 230.33, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:

**6A-1.44, S.B.E.R.; 230.23(6)(b); 230.33(8)(b);
232.01; 232.09; 232.022; 232.10; 232.17(2)(b); 232.17(2)(c);
232.17(20)(c); 232.19, F.S.**

HISTORY:

ADOPTED: June 16, 1997

REVISION DATE(S):

**10-27-97; 2-9-98; 8-24-98; 12-13-99; 05-08-00;
04-23-01; 11-07-06; 01-16-07**

FORMERLY: 5.23