

The Public School Laws of North Carolina require compulsory attendance for all children between the ages of seven and 16 years. Every parent* or person having control of a child between these ages enrolled in the Union County Public Schools is responsible to make sure the child attends school continuously during the time school is in session.

Class attendance, as well as reporting to school on time, is essential to high student achievement. With this in mind, all students are expected to be in attendance each day school is in session, for the entire school day. Furthermore, it is expected that students report to school on time and not be signed out early unless extenuating circumstances exist. **FOLLOWING ANY ABSENCE(S) OR TARDY(IES), A STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO PRESENT WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION FROM THE PARENT/GUARDIAN/CUSTODIAN STATING THE REASON FOR THE ABSENCE OR TARDY.** Written documentation must be presented within three school days after the student returns to school; otherwise, the absence(s) or tardy(ies) will be recorded as unexcused. Upon review of documentation, the absence or tardy will be coded lawful or unlawful based on the criteria set forth below:

CODE 1-LAWFUL -- See listing below

The following are lawful reasons for school absences:

1. **Illness or Injury**
2. **Death in the Immediate Family**
3. **Medical or Dental Appointments**
4. **Court or Administrative Proceedings**
5. **Religious Observances**
6. **Educational Opportunity with prior approval by Principal**
7. **Quarantine**
8. **Military Deployment – for students attending ceremonies related to military deployment of family members**

CODE 2-UNLAWFUL -- All absences that are not classified as lawful.

CODE 3—OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS)

Absences include those that are lawful, unlawful, and due to suspension. Students will not be counted absent from school when participating in school sponsored functions.

Upon returning from an absence, students will be given two days to make up the work missed for each day absent. When arrangements are not made to make up work, or if the make up work is not completed in time, the student will receive no

credit. Students on out-of-school suspension are expected to complete class work as assigned by the school.

Students in grades K-5 who are absent 20 days, (lawful, unlawful, or OSS) can be retained.

CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

When a student has accumulated three unexcused absences, the principal or designee shall notify the parent/guardian/custodian of the absences. When a student has accumulated six absences for any reason, the principal/designee shall notify the parent/guardian/custodian by mail that the student has accumulated this number of absences, and that the parent/guardian/custodian may need to consult with school personnel pertaining to attendance and possible future consequences. School personnel will be available to assist the student and family in solving any attendance problems. When a student has accumulated ten absences for any reason, the principal/designee shall have a conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian/custodian to discuss the accumulated absences and to develop a plan relative to school attendance for the remainder of the school year.

When a student accumulates three, six, and/or ten unlawful absences in a school year, the principal/designee will follow the procedures required by law. These procedures include the above referenced notification provisions, referral to school personnel to address the underlying causes of the attendance issues and if, after ten unexcused absences, the principal determines that there has not been a good faith effort on the part of the student and/or parent/guardian/custodian to comply with the attendance requirements, a notification to both the district attorney and department of social services shall be made.

TARDIES

All tardies/early leave will be addressed on a school-by-school basis. Attendance in school for all classes the full time allotted for classes is essential for student success. However, at the 10th unexcused tardy or early leave, the student will be referred to the school attendance counselor for discussion with parents. At the 15th unexcused tardy or early leave, the student and his/her parents will be required to meet with the school principal to determine a plan that allows the student to be on time and in school all day. A student who has been tardy/early leave 20 times (unexcused) may be referred to Truancy Court.

RETENTION APPEAL

A parent* may appeal a decision to retain a student to the school level committee according to the following criteria:

- a. The student has passed all academic requirements for promotion but has failed to meet the attendance requirement.
- b. Some absences were due to "special emergencies." (See number 1)

The school principal and/or the student’s parent* may appeal the decision of the school level attendance committee to a district level attendance committee.

Individual schools are required to develop programs to address the academic needs of students who may be failing due to excessive absenteeism. Participation in such programs will be considered by the school level attendance committee. In addition, principals need to take into consideration special emergencies.¹

Principals would be able to promote a student who qualified academically, but has accumulated twenty or more absences during the school year if it serves the best interest of the student.

*Guardians and custodians are also considered parents for purposes of this policy.

LEGAL REF.: G.S. 115C-47, -84, -288(a), -378 to -383

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

- APPROVED:** 9/7/93
- REVISED:** 12/6/94
- REVISED:** 4/2/96
- REVISED:** 4/8/97
- REVISED:** 3/31/98
- REVISED:** 10/5/99
- REVISED:** 6/15/01
- REVISED:** 4/23/02
- REVISED:** 3/04/03
- REVISED:** 9/21/04
- REVISED:** 5/05/09

¹ “Special emergencies” are situations causing a student to be absent which are beyond the student’s control.