



Policy Code: 4400 Attendance

Attendance in school and participation in class 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.

Attendance must be taken each day of the school year for on-site and remote instruction days.

Definitions

- **On-site Instruction Days** - [On-site Instruction Days](#) apply to students attending class at a physical school building.
 - **Absence**: Not present at school for daily or period instruction
 - **Excused Absence**: An absence that meets the criteria outlined in [Section C](#) below
 - **Unexcused Absence**: Any absence that does not satisfy the criteria as outlined in either [Section C](#) or [Section D](#) below
 - **One-half of the school day**: A student must be present at least one-half of the school's instructional day in order to be recorded present for that day.
 - **In-person instruction**: Learning experiences that occur at school with real-time instruction between an instructor and students
 - **Online instruction**: Learning experiences that utilize the internet and a technological device to access and engage in instructional activities. This instruction can be synchronous or asynchronous.



- **Virtual Academy Instruction Days** - [Virtual Academy Attendance Days](#) apply to students enrolled in Virtual Academy
 - **Absence:** Non-attendance during virtual live instruction with no evidence of work completion
 - **Excused Absence:** An absence that meets the criteria outlined in [Section C](#) below
 - **Unexcused Absence:** Any absence that does not satisfy the criteria as outlined in either [Section C](#) or [Section D](#) below
 - **One-half of the school day:** A student must be present at least one-half of the school's instructional day in order to be recorded present for that day.
 - **Online instruction:** Learning experiences that utilize the internet and a technological device to access and engage in instructional activities. This instruction can be synchronous or asynchronous.

- **Remote Instruction Days** - Remote instruction days apply to students in the event that the superintendent directs schools to conduct classes remotely per Policy 3102.
 - **Absence:** Non-attendance during virtual live instruction **AND** no evidence of work completion and two-way communication with teacher.
 - **Excused Absence:** An absence that meets the criteria outlined in [Section C](#) below
 - **Unexcused Absence:** Any absence that does not satisfy the criteria as outlined in either [Section C](#) or [Section D](#) below
 - **One-half of the school day:** A student must be present at least one-half of the school's instructional day in order to be recorded present for that day.
 - **Online instruction:** Learning experiences that utilize the internet and a technological device to access and engage in instructional activities. This instruction can be synchronous or asynchronous.

- **Standard Treatment Protocol:** A standard treatment protocol (STP) is defined as academic and behavior core instruction and interventions (i.e., treatment) that are well specified (i.e., protocol) and have been proven to work for large numbers of students



A. Attendance Status

<u>On-site Instruction Days</u>	<u>Remote Instruction Days</u>	<u>Virtual Academy</u>
<p>Mark the student present if the student is in attendance at least one-half of the school day. This will be based on the student's daily schedule.</p> <p>Includes attendance at official school activities at a place other than school with the approval of the principal</p> <p>Mark the student present if the student is in his/her area at the beginning of school day or the beginning of each class</p> <p>Mark the student tardy if he/she is not present at the beginning of the school day or the beginning of each class</p>	<p>To be counted present during remote instruction days, either of the following two statements must be true:</p> <p>a. student completes their daily assignments, either online or offline; and/or a student is present in synchronous (live, real-time) instruction.</p> <p>b. student has a daily check-in or a two-way communication in a manner acceptable to the school with the appropriate teacher(s) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In grades PreK-5, the homeroom teacher. • In all other grade levels, each course teacher as listed on a student's schedule. <p>A student's failure to log into a particular online program or lesson on a given remote instruction day shall not be grounds to mark the student absent for the day so long as the student meets one of the other attendance requirements described above. A teacher may subsequently change a student's attendance status from absent to present based on evidence of student engagement submitted on a later date.</p>	<p>To be counted present a student must be in attendance at least one-half of the student school day in live, real-time instruction.</p> <p>This will include attendance at official school activities at a place other than school with the approval of the principal.</p> <p>A student will be logged in, present, and responsive in his/her/their assigned virtual space at the beginning of the school day and the beginning of each class or be recorded as tardy.</p> <p>Not having a camera on is not enough to mark a student absent.</p> <p>Teachers will consider any technical issues or reasonable interruptions that may occur.</p>

B. Attendance Records

1. Accurate attendance records must be kept in order to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law in the State of North Carolina. This includes accurate records of classroom attendance.
2. Detailed laws, regulations, and policies concerning compulsory school attendance are found in [School Attendance and Student Accounting](#), North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of School Business Services.




3. Suspensions: Out-of-school suspensions are to be mapped as a lawful absence (excused) in PowerSchool.


C. Excused Absences

When a student must miss school, whether in-person or remotely, an excuse must be communicated by a parent or guardian to the student's teacher or attendance office within two days of the student's return after an absence. This communication may include a written or digital note. Absences due to extended illnesses may also require a statement from a physician. Failure to submit an excuse as outlined will result in the absence being coded unexcused.

An absence is excused if the following conditions exist:

1. A student is unable to attend school in-person or remotely due to their, or their child's, illness or injury. The principal shall require written documentation from the parent, guardian, emancipated student, or doctor, of the reason the student was absent. At the principal's discretion, other family illness may be accepted as an excused absence. Emancipated students are those that are eighteen (18), married, or emancipated by court order. A principal may allow students under eighteen (18) who do not live at home, to write their own absence notes if the parent gives written consent.
2. A student is ordered to isolate or quarantine by the State Board of Health or the Wake County Health Department. WCPSS will provide targeted guidance as directed by NCDPI and/or DHHS.
 - a. For students in quarantine or isolation, schools and teachers are expected to provide:
 - i. Daily communication with the student.
 - ii. Access to meaningful and aligned learning resources (in paper or online).
 - iii. Students or families should not go for multiple days without receiving individualized communication from their teacher(s).

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- b. If all requirements are met when the student is quarantined, the student will be held harmless for the purpose of school system defined activities and awards.
 3. A death in the student's immediate family. This includes, but is not limited to, parents, siblings, and grandparents.
 4. A student has a medical or dental appointment. As with illness and injury, the principal shall require written documentation from the parent, guardian, emancipated student, or doctor, of the reason the student was absent. Emancipated students are those that are eighteen (18), married, or emancipated by court order. A principal may allow students under eighteen (18) who do not live at home, to write their own absence notes if the parent gives written consent.
 5. A student is called to court under subpoena or court order. If the student is called to court because they are being charged with an offense, they should receive an excused absence for the time in court.
 6. A religious observance, as suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parents.
 7. A student has received prior approval to be absent in order to participate in an educational opportunity. This includes but is not limited to travel and college visits initiated by the student/family. The parent/guardian must complete the form #1710 "Request for Excused Absence for Educational Reasons." By signing the document, the parent/guardian assures the school that the absence meets the requirements of the law for excused absences. The law provides principals with the latitude to determine when the cumulative effects of such absences are of such duration as to interfere with the education of the student.
 8. A student is pregnant and experiencing related conditions, when medically necessary.
 9. A student has the opportunity to visit with a parent or legal guardian, at the discretion of the superintendent or designee, when the parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, 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.

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10. A student has experienced a natural disaster or catastrophic event (eg, flood, house fire, etc) that prevents them from attending.
 11. A student is suspended.
 12. For students in Virtual Academy or during a Remote Instruction day, a temporary technology issue that prevents the student from logging on and/or accessing instruction. In addition to providing a written excuse following the return from absence:
 - a. If a student has an issue with his/her/their technological device that prevents the student from accessing instruction, the student's parent or guardian must submit a ticket to the WCPSS Help Desk and/or contact the student's teacher or attendance office within 48 hours of the absence in order for the absence to be excused.
 - b. If a student is temporarily unable to access the internet, the student's parent or guardian must communicate that information within 48 hours to the student's teacher or attendance office in order for the absence to be excused.
 13. LEAs may excuse temporary or occasional absences for other reasons in accordance with local school board policies, provided that the student has been in attendance for at least one-half of a school day during the current school year.

In the case of excused absences, short-term out-of-school suspensions (See Policy 4300 Due Process), and absences under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school) the student will be permitted to make up his or her work. The teacher will determine when work is to be made up. The student or parent is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

D. School-Related Activities




All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. Principals shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to an absolute minimum.

1. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:
 - a. field trips sponsored by the school;
 - b. job shadows and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a);
 - c. school-initiated and -scheduled activities;
 - d. school related athletic events that require early dismissal from school;
 - e. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal; and
 - f. in-school suspensions.
 - g. college visits initiated by the school.

Assignments missed for these reasons are eligible for makeup by the student. The teacher will determine when work is to be made up. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

E. Excessive Absences

1. Any combination of excused and/or unexcused absences above 20 or 10% of school days are excessive. Students who exceed 20 absences or 10% of school days during the year will be referred to the school-based attendance team.
2. All schools will utilize Student Support Services (SSS) PLT or Attendance Committees to develop a plan to improve attendance. As part of this plan, each school will establish procedures to develop and implement interventions for excessive absences and a process for dealing with students who fail to meet previously determined expectations. The interventions will involve parents/guardians and incorporate tiered interventions as outlined in the Pre K-12 Attendance Standard Treatment Protocol.

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3. The principal or the principal's designee shall notify parents and take all other steps required by [G.S. 115C-378](#) for excessive absences.
 4. The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his or her child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated (3) unexcused absences in a school year. [G.S. 115C-378](#)
 5. The principal or the principal's designee shall send a written notice ([Letter 1700](#)) by mail to the parent, guardian, or custodian when a child has six (6) unexcused absences that he or she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and local boards of education. [G.S. 115C-378](#).
 6. After (10) accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the principal or the principal's designee shall review any report or investigation prepared under [G.S. 115C-381](#) and shall confer with the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. [G.S. 115C-378](#)
 7. Students with excused absences due to documented chronic health problems are exempt from this policy.
 8. Excessive absences may impact eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics. See policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
 9. In situations where absences are considered excessive, a principal may require certification from a physician to verify absences.
 10. The principal shall have the authority to waive the school-based attendance team decisions regarding excessive absences.

F. [No Show - Due Diligence Process](#)



1. The district will follow the specific guidance on enrolling students and taking attendance as provided by NCDPI guidance for enrollment and attendance during online instruction.
2. Due Diligence is the process to locate No Show students with documentation of the efforts captured on the [Due Diligence Checklist](#).
3. Schools will use the [Dropout Data Collecting and Reporting Procedures Manual April 2020](#) to ensure consistency in collecting and reporting procedures.

G. District Remote Instruction Days

1. Remote instruction days shall only occur when required by law or when the superintendent directs schools, in full or in part, to conduct classes remotely in the limited circumstances described in Policy 3102 Online Instruction:
 - a. When warranted by an emergency situation and where authorized by law, the superintendent may temporarily direct schools, in full or in part, to conduct classes remotely, with the understanding that ongoing remote instruction requires Board approval.
 - b. For purposes of this policy, an “emergency situation” includes a natural disaster, inclement weather, public health emergency, or other situation that threatens the health and safety of employees, students, or the community. Remote instruction days take place entirely in the virtual learning environment and may or may not include attendance in live, real-time instruction.
2. Schools should not schedule their own individual remote instruction days.
3. Students without access to a device should be able to complete work with the resources made available by the school.

H. Standard Treatment Protocol



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.

To this end, WCPSS remains committed to removing barriers and facilitating interventions to support students' regular school attendance using the district's Standard Treatment Protocol for Attendance.

School-based faculty and staff deemed integral to the processes of collecting and reporting attendance data and supporting daily student attendance, whether in person or virtual, will engage in professional development aligned with the WCPSS Standard Treatment Protocol for Attendance to promote common language and understanding of supports and interventions that facilitate equitable practices for all students.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -375.5, -378 to -383, -390.2(d), -390.2(l), -390.5, -407.5; 130A-440; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0102, .0103; State Board of Education Policies TCS-L-000, -002, -003

Adopted: September 5, 2017

Revised: August 18, 2020

Wake County Board of Education