

Attendance**STUDENT ATTENDANCE--SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

There are probably no factors more important to a student's progress in school than regular and punctual attendance. Miami-Dade County Public Schools has a vision whereby each student engages in a rigorous course of study which prepares him/her for a myriad of successful post-secondary options. Students are expected to:

- be present at school each and every day;
- attend class as scheduled;
- arrive to school and class(es) on time; and
- demonstrate appropriate behavior and a readiness to learn.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has the affirmative obligation to increase student attendance through a monitoring process that will classify all absences as excused or unexcused, to inform parent/guardians of student absences, and to see that the compulsory attendance laws are enforced as mandated by Florida Statutes. This obligation will be satisfied through the implementation of an attendance review procedure, which monitors the type and number of student absences as well as the impact of these absences on learning.

I. Attendance Defined

- A. School Attendance - Students are to be counted in attendance only if they are actually present or engaged in a school-approved educational activity which constitutes a part of the instructional program for the student.
- B. Class Attendance - Students are to be counted in attendance if they are physically present in class or have been excused by the teacher on a class-related assignment, or have been requested by a member of the school support staff for an approved school activity.
- C. Tardiness - It is a reasonable expectation that in order for a learning activity to exist, each student must arrive to class on time (punctually). Accumulated unexcused tardies will be counted towards the threshold for initiating attendance review.
- D. Early Sign-outs – The early release of students causes disruption to the academic performance of all students and may create safety and security concerns. No students shall be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless authorized by the principal or principal's designee (i.e., emergency, sickness).

II. Absences Defined

A. Excused School and Class Absences and Tardies

1. Student illness: Students missing 5 or more consecutive days of school due to illness or injury are required to provide a written statement from a health care provider. The written statement must

include all days the student has been absent from school. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school due to a specific medical condition, he or she must be under the supervision of a health care provider in order to receive excused absences from school.

2. Medical appointment: If a student is absent from school due to a medical appointment a written statement from a health care provider indicating the date and time of the appointment must be submitted to the principal.
3. Death in family
4. Observance of a religious holiday or service when it is mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed.
5. School-sponsored event or educational enrichment activity that is not a school-sponsored event, as determined and approved by the principal or principal's designee: The student must receive advance written permission from the principal or the principal's designee. Examples of special events include: public functions, conferences, and regional, state and national competitions.
6. Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance.
7. Outdoor suspensions
8. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent/guardian or student, as determined and approved by the principal or the principal's designee. The principal shall require documentation related to the condition.

B. Unexcused School Absence

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories is to be considered unexcused. Any student who has been absent from school will be marked unexcused absent until he/she submits required documentation as specified above. Failure to provide required documentation within three school days upon the return to school will result in an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences include:

1. Absences due to vacations, personal services, local non-school event, program or sporting activity
2. Absences due to older students providing day care services for siblings
3. Absences due to illness of others
4. Absences due to non-compliance with immunization requirements (unless lawfully exempted)

A student accumulating ten (10) or more class unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) or more class unexcused absences in a designated semester course will have quarterly, semester and final grade(s) withheld pending an administrative screening and completion of assigned interventions by the Attendance Review Committee. Unexcused absences do not require that the teacher provide make-up work for the student. However, the Attendance Review Committee may assign educationally-related activities to mitigate the loss of instructional time.

III. Responsibilities Defined

A. The principal is expected to ensure that:

1. Attendance/tardiness is taken and recorded by duly authorized persons at a designated time(s) every official school day.
2. A review of classes that have excessive absences is made in order to determine if the quality of instruction is a factor in the failure of students to attend class on a regular basis. Should this be the case, he/she will initiate appropriate action to upgrade the quality of instruction in the classroom(s) in question.
3. A duly authorized person(s) determines the status of each absence/tardiness.
4. The steps outlined in Section 1003.26, Florida Statutes to ensure regular school attendance are implemented.
5. An Attendance Review Committee is established and convened a minimum of six (6) times per year.
6. Provide consideration to appeals made by students and/or parents regarding recommendations of the Attendance Review Committee.

B. The classroom teacher is expected to:

1. Encourage good school and class attendance with challenging and rigorous instruction and curriculum and by demonstrating an interest in the welfare of students.
2. Take and record attendance/tardiness for the students enrolled in each class. The record should reflect excused or unexcused absences/tardinesses.
3. Upon request of the student or the parent/guardian, provide make-up assignments for excused absences/tardinesses.
4. Make recommendations to the Attendance Review Committee regarding quarterly, semester and final grades when the student has accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences in an annual course or five (5) unexcused absences in a designated grading period or semester course.

C. The student is expected to:

1. Attend classes one hundred and eighty (180) days each school year.
2. Request the make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardinesses from his/her teachers upon his/her return to school or class. It should be noted that all classwork, due to the nature of instruction, is not readily subject to make-up work.
3. Complete the make-up assignments for classes missed within three days of the return to school. Failure to make up all assignments will result in the lower assessment of the student's academic and/or effort grade.
4. Be reported as present for the school day in order to participate in athletic and extracurricular activities.

D. The parent/guardian is expected to:

1. Be responsible for his/her child's school attendance as required by law and stress the importance of regular and punctual school attendance with his/her child.
2. Report and explain an absence or tardiness to the school.
3. Ensure that the child has requested and completes make-up assignments for all excused absences/tardinesses from his/her teachers upon his/her return to school or class.

4. Appear before the Attendance Review Committee at the scheduled time to provide information relating to his/her child's absences and to support prescribed activities.
- E. The Attendance Review Committee is comprised of a minimum of a student services representative and an administrator or administrative designee and will provide guidance and support to students with significant absences. They are expected to:
1. Provide early intervention by convening when students reach an accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences in a semester or ten (10) unexcused absences in an annual course.
 2. Convene a minimum of six (6) designated times per year.
 3. Give consideration to all extenuating circumstances surrounding student absences. The Attendance Review Committee is charged with the responsibility of prescribing activities designed to mitigate the loss of instructional time and has the authority to recommend the following:
 - a. Issuing of quarterly, semester or final grades.
 - b. Temporary withholding of quarterly, semester or final grades. The following are among possible options:
 - (1) Make-up assignments
 - (2) Attendance probation for the following grading period(s)
 - (3) Completion of a school service project
 - c. Permanent withholding of quarterly, semester or final grades and credit. The student is to be informed of his/her right of final appeal to the regional superintendent or designee.
 4. Review attendance history for student exhibiting patterns of excused and/or unexcused absences and provide appropriate referrals and counseling support.

IV. Appeal Process

The parent or guardian who does not concur with decisions made by the Attendance Review Committee may petition to the principal or principal's designee. The final level of appeal will be processed by the Regional Superintendent or designee.

V. Truancy petition; prosecution; disposition

If a child does not comply with efforts to enforce school attendance, the Superintendent may file a truancy petition pursuant to Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.

Specific Authority: 1001.41(1)(2); 1001.42(23); 1001.43(10) F.S.

Law Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific: 984.151; 1001.51(6) and (26); 1003.21; 1003.23; 1003.24; 1003.26; 1003.27; 1006.07 F.S.

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