

## School Achievement Begins With Regular Attendance

**Parents/guardians** have the responsibility to ensure that all school-age children in their care are in school and on time every day.

**Students** have the responsibility to be on time and attend all classes.

### Lawful Absences (Excused)

- Illness of the student
- Medical or dental appointment
- Court appearance or court ordered activity
- Death in the immediate family
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Activities approved by the administrative team
- Extenuating circumstances as determined by the principal

### Unlawful Absences (Unexcused)

- Absence from school for any portion of the day without the knowledge of their parents/guardians
- Absence from school for any portion of the day without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parents/guardians
- Absence from planned home-bound or homebased sessions

Note: Students are not considered absent when attending approved school field trips, arriving late due to bus problems, or assigned to an in-school suspension program.

### Documentation of Absences

All absences require a written explanation from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days of return from the absence. Written explanation of absences must include the student's name, parent/guardian's full name, address and telephone number(s), dates of absence(s), and documentation of the reason for absence.

Absences in excess of ten days per year will not be considered excused with a parent/guardian (note) unless they are accompanied by official medical or legal documentation.

### Tardiness

It is very important that students be on time at the beginning of the school day. Students are required to follow their school's tardy policy. Excessive tardiness will result in disciplinary action. Schools are required to admit students regardless of their arrival time. Students who arrive late are required to report to the appropriate administrative office before being admitted to any classroom or other school area to assure that the student is recorded as present.

### Early Sign-Outs

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to ensure that children in their care are in school for the full day every day. Signing out of school early on an ongoing basis establishes a pattern of non-attendance and negatively impacts academic performance. Students with excessive early sign-outs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by school administration.



## South Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law

### South Carolina Code of Laws Section 59-65-10 (as amended) reads:

All parents or guardians shall cause their children or wards to attend regularly a public or private school ~ of this State ~ from the school year in which the child or ward is five years of age before Sept first until the child or ward attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school. All children are required to attend a public or private kindergarten beginning at age five. If parents choose not to send their children to kindergarten, they must sign a waiver, which may be obtained at the local school.

### South Carolina Code of Laws of Section 59-65-20

Any parent or guardian who neglects to enroll his child or ward or refuses to make such child or ward attend school shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than fifty dollars or be imprisoned not more than thirty days; each day's absence shall constitute a separate offense; provided, the court may in its discretion suspend the sentence of anyone convicted of the provisions of this article.

### South Carolina Code of Laws of Section 59-65-70

If the court determines that the reported absence occurred without the knowledge, consent, or connivance of the responsible parent or guardian or that a bona fide attempt has been made to control and keep the child in school, the court may declare such a child to be delinquent and subject the provisions of the law in such cases.

### South Carolina Code of Laws of Section 16-17-510

It is unlawful for a person to encourage, entice, or conspire to encourage or entice a child enrolled in any public or private elementary or secondary school of this State from attendance in the school or school program or transport or provide transportation in aid to encourage or entice a child from attendance in any public or private elementary or secondary school or school program. A person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

## Truancy: Three Levels

**Truant:** A child, at least 6 but not yet 17 years old, who has **accumulated three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences**

**Habitual Truant:** A child, at least 12 but not yet 17 years old, who **(1)** fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parents or guardians, **and (2)** accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences

**Chronic Truant:** A child, at least 12 but not yet 17 years old, who **(1)** has been through the school intervention process; **(2)** has reached the level of a habitual truant and **has been referred to family court and placed under an order** to attend school; and **(3)** continues to accumulate unlawful absences

## Truancy Intervention Procedures

1. School personnel must communicate any attendance problems or concerns to parents/guardians in a timely manner. **When a student accumulates three (3) unlawful absences, the school notifies the parent or guardian by telephone or mail.**
2. When a student accumulates three (3) consecutive or a total of five (5) unlawful **absences the principal or designee will complete a truancy investigation.**
3. **A conference is required with student and parent or guardian to develop a truancy intervention plan designed to improve student attendance and eliminate unlawful absences.**
4. **A written truancy intervention and attendance contract** should be signed by all participants with a copy provided to the parent and student.
5. When a student accumulates seven (7) unlawful absences **the school will update the truancy intervention plan**, indicate why the plan was unsuccessful, and make amendments as needed.
6. The student's absences will be monitored. **If a student continues to be unlawfully absent, a truancy referral is made to the CCSD Truancy Prevention Coordinator and a district level conference will be scheduled.**
7. In the event that unlawful absences continue following the district level conference, **the case will be reviewed for additional interventions and/or further action.** The case may be referred to the Department of Social Services, the Ninth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office for participation in Family Court, or other interventions.

Note: Suspensions are not counted as unlawful for truancy purposes. A deadline will be imposed for the work to be made-up and the responsibility for getting and completing assignments will be on the student.

### Attendance Requirement for Promotion and/or Credit

**All students previously enrolled in the District and those residing in the state who are entering for the first time shall be counted unlawfully absent for each day missed due to late enrollment.**

All absences are defined as lawful or unlawful. Students having a lawful absence shall be permitted to make up work missed during the absence. Absences determined as unlawful will not entitle a student to make up work missed during the time of the absence. Principals may use discretion in permitting students to make up work.

**Students in kindergarten through eighth grades** missing more than 50% of the instructional day will be counted as absent for the day. Students in grades K-8 may not be eligible for promotion if they have more than ten absences in one school year.

**High school students** will be counted absent for a full period if they miss more than half of the period. The principal may determine the lawful or unlawful nature of the absences. Students in grades nine through twelve must attend eighty-five (85) days of each ninety (90) day semester to receive a half credit, **OR** Eighty-five (85) days of a four by four course to receive one credit, **OR** One hundred seventy days (170) of a yearly course to receive one credit.

### Appeal Process for Denial of Credit

Consistent with state regulations, parents/guardians have the right to appeal attendance violation decisions and/or to question the school records regarding attendance. The appeal should be made in writing to the school principal. The decision of the principal may be appealed to the Associate Superintendent. The decision of the Associate Superintendent may be appealed to the Constituent Board by written request for appeal within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision of the Associate Superintendent.

The decision of the Constituent Board may be appealed to the CCSD Board of Trustees in writing within ten (10) days following the date of notification.