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5.03 - Student Attendance/Absences

POLICY:

1. It is the position of the Levy County School Board that students must attend school on a regular and timely basis to maximize educational opportunities offered in Levy County Schools. Regular and timely student attendance can be successfully achieved through a strong partnership between the home and school representatives.

Florida Statute 1003.21 requires that all who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, except as otherwise provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. Students who have obtained the age sixteen (16) and have not yet graduated who plan to terminate their school enrollment must complete a formal declaration signed by the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the termination going into effect. The parents or guardians are responsible for their child(ren)'s attendance and to follow compulsory attendance laws. Students are obligated to attend one hundred eighty (180) days of school each year. Regular attendance is a critical component for student success.

- (a) If a student has unexcused absences sufficient enough to jeopardize academic progress and it is determined that the student's parent or legal guardian is at fault for these absences, the appropriate school personnel will adhere to Florida Statutes 1003.24, 1003.26 (Enforcement of School Attendance), and 1003.27 (Court Procedures and Penalties). (reference procedures noted in Student Progression Plan — Appendix D).
 - (b) **Non-enrollment of Compulsory Attendance Age Students.** Written notice shall be given in person or by return-receipt mail to the parent(s) or guardian(s) or other person having control, when no valid reason is found for a child's non-enrollment. If the notice and requirement are ignored, the designated school representative shall report the case to the superintendent and refer the case to the District Truancy Officer for compliance with the Florida Compulsory Attendance Statute (Florida Statute 1003.21).
2. Student Absences, Tardies, Check Out
 - (a) Excused Absences, Tardies, Check Out

Students must be in school unless the absence, tardy, or permission to leave early has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below (F.S. 1003.24(4), 1003.26)

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- (1) Illness of student.
- (2) Major illness of an immediate family member.
- (3) Death in the family of the student
- (4) Religious holidays of the student's own faith. The school principal shall implement this provision on an individual basis pursuant to section 1003.21, Florida Statutes, and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09514. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails himself/herself to the provisions of this rule.
- (5) Subpoena or forced absence by any law enforcement agency to fulfill civic duties (A copy of the subpoena or court summons must be presented to the principal or designee.)
- (6) Scheduled medical or dental appointment of the student.
- (7) Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of three (3) excused absences for each infestation of head lice. Students on field trips are not considered absent.
- (8) Extenuating circumstances that would justify absence in the judgment of the administration.
- (9) A student shall not be considered absent when participating in an instructional activity away from the school site.
 - (a) For average daily attendance documentation, students who are present at any time during the day when official attendance is taken are considered present.
 - (b) All students returning from absences, tardy, or check out will have three (3) days to present proper written verification to receive an excused absence. If the student or parent fails to present such documentation, the absence will be unexcused and the student will receive no credit for the time missed. The written statement must include the following information for each absence:
 1. Date the excuse is written

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2. Date(s) of the absence(s)
3. Full name of the student
4. Reason for the absence
5. Day time telephone number of parent or guardian
6. Signature of the parent or guardian

For every day of excused absence, a student will be given one (1) day to make up the work beginning the day the student returns to school.

3. Unexcused Absences, Tardies, Check Out

- (a) Absences not excused as defined in the previous section, are considered unexcused.
- (b) Tardiness and Unexcused Check Out
 1. A tardy is defined as an arrival to class or school after the designated starting time or the tardy signal has sounded. Reasons for excused tardies are the same as for excused absences.
 2. Parents must follow the same process to excuse a tardy or early check out as they do to excuse an absence
 3. In Grades K – 5, any combination of three (3) unexcused tardies or unexcused dismissals within a nine-week grading period are equivalent to one (1) unexcused absence.
 4. The Principal has the discretion to excuse tardiness/dismissals for extenuating circumstances.
 5. When tardies or check outs become excessive, the problem may be addressed through a required parent conference with the school principal/designee, and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. The disciplinary actions may include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Detention
 - ii. In-School Suspension
 - iii. Saturday School
 - iv. Loss of school privileges including, but not limited to field trips, extra-curricular activities, field days, pep-rallies, non-academic classes, etc.
 6. No students shall be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines it is an emergency.

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7. In grades 6 – 12, if a student is more than 10 minutes late to a class, the student will be considered absent for that period.
4. Grades K - 5
 - (a) During each nine (9) weeks period, a student will be allowed a maximum of eight (8) days absence. All absences (excused, unexcused, or as a result of unexcused tardies/check out) will be counted.
 - (b) When a student has accumulated five (5) absences within a nine-week period, the principal shall notify the parents by letter that their child is in danger of failing for the grading period. A copy of the attendance policy shall be included in the notification.
 - (c) When a student reaches the ninth (9th) absence, parents shall be notified that:
 1. Because of excessive absences, their child will receive failing grades for the nine-week period. (If the grade has to be reduced, it shall be a 59.)
 2. If the parents feel there are extenuating circumstances because of illness, family illness, injury, other insurmountable conditions, or special circumstances that justify special consideration, they may appeal the case to the principal.
 - (d) When a student is confined to home or in the hospital for an extended period of time, confinement must be verified by a physician.
 - (e) For exceptions to this section, please reference pilot programs noted in the Pupil Progression Plan located in Appendix D.
 5. Grades 6 – 8
 - (a) When a student accumulates any combination of five (5) absences in one (1) or more courses within a nine-week period, the principal shall notify the parents that their child may be in danger of failing that course for that grading period.
 - (b) When a student reaches the ninth (9th) absence, parents shall be notified that:
 1. Because of excessive absences, their child will receive failing grades for the nine-week period. (If the grade has to be reduced, it shall be a 59.)
 2. If the parents feel there are extenuating circumstances

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because of illness, family illness, injury, other insurmountable conditions, or special circumstances that justify special consideration, they may appeal the case to the principal.

- (c) If a student is more than 10 minutes late to a class or checked out more than 10 minutes before the end of a class, the student will be considered absent for that period.
 - (d) When a student is confined to home or in the hospital for an extended period of time, confinement must be verified by a physician.
 - (e) For exceptions to this section, please reference pilot programs noted in the Pupil Progression Plan located in Appendix D.
6. Grades 9 - 12
- (a) A credit for high school graduation is defined as a minimum of 150 hours of instruction in a designated course which contains student performance standards as provided in Florida Statutes. The hourly requirement for one-half credit is defined to be one-half the requirement for full credit.
 - (b) When a student accumulates any combination of five (5) absences in one (1) or more courses within a semester, the principal shall notify the parents that their child may be in danger of losing credit(s). A copy of the attendance policy shall be included in the notification. All absences (excused and unexcused) will be counted.
 - (c) When a student accumulates ten (10) absences in a course within a semester, credit shall be awarded only if the student has demonstrated mastery of the student performance standards for the course on a comprehensive standards based final exam. If the examination is passed with a sixty (60) or above, the examination grade will be averaged with the two (2) nine-week grades to determine the semester average. However, if the student makes a failing grade on the examination [fifty-nine (59) or below], or exceeds fifteen (15) absences per semester the student shall receive an "F" for the semester, and no credit for the semester. This will be a numerical grade of fifty-nine (59) or below, as the average dictates. Extenuating circumstances with appropriate documentation may be considered by the Principal, which would allow students who have exceeded 15 days absences in a semester an opportunity to demonstrate mastery on a comprehensive standards based final exam, and receive credit if they pass with a sixty (60) or above.

Students participating in The Teen Parent Program shall be

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exempted from minimum attendance requirements for absences related to pregnancy or parenting (See Student Progression Plan, Appendix D).

- (d) If the parent feels there are extenuating circumstances because of illness, family illness or injury, or special circumstances that justify special consideration, they may appeal the case to the principal.
 - (e) If a student is more than 10 minutes late to a class or checked out more than 10 minutes before the end of a class, the student will be considered absent for that period.
 - (f) When a student is confined to home or in the hospital for an extended period of time, confinement must be verified by a physician.
 - (g) For exceptions to this section, please reference Pilot Programs noted in the Student Progression Plan located in Appendix D.
7. A student in grades 9 - 12 shall not be considered absent when participating in an instructional activity away from the school site.
8. The recording of pupil attendance for the purpose of administering the full time program and for other state purposes shall be as herein prescribed:
- (a) The presence, absence, or tardiness of each pupil shall be recorded each school day using the Automated Student Attendance Record Keeping System 61-1.044. Data shall not be recorded in temporary records and then transferred at a later date, except for the first (10) days of each school year, when classrooms are staffed by a substitute teacher, field trips, testing, students assigned in-school or out-of-school suspension, tardiness to school, special school events, and other scenarios in which office staff are required to adjust attendance per administrative directive. All such temporary records shall be maintained in a single file at each school site, organized by date, for a period of 5 years. The teacher of record will log in to verify that all records are correct on a daily basis.
 - (b) The principal shall be responsible for the administration of attendance records, for the accurate reporting of attendance records, for the accurate reporting of attendance in the school under his/her direction, and shall assure that all teacher and office staff assigned by administration to assist with attendance recordkeeping are instructed in the proper recording of attendance. The principal or his/her designee shall inspect and determine the accuracy of the records contained in the Automated Student Attendance Record Keeping System for each of the required full-time equivalent student membership periods. At the

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end of each year, the principal or designee shall certify the completeness and accuracy of the automated attendance records.

- (c) Attendance may be counted only if the pupil is actually present at school or away from school on a school day under the supervision of a member of the instructional staff and is engaged in an educational activity which constitutes a part of the approved course of study for the pupil. Any such attendance shall be in accordance with the minimum requirements for a school day specified in Section 1000.01, Florida Statutes. Attendance may include educational trips directly related to a regular academic or elective subject for which credit is given. Only hours spent in instruction in an approved course of study may be counted toward the required net hours which make up the school day. Hours spent in non-instructional activities as defined by the State Board of Education are excluded.
 - 1. Where a pupil is granted exemption from examinations and excused from school attendance, he/she shall be reported absent from school.
 - 2. Under no conditions shall a pupil be required or permitted to answer roll call and then be excused from school attendance as a means of circumventing the law and State Board of Education regulations.
 - 3. Any willful or intentional falsification of attendance records by any teacher, principal, or other school employee shall be sufficient grounds for seeking the revocation of the teaching certificate or for dismissal as provided by law.

- (d) Attendance of all pupils must be maintained during the 180-day school year or the equivalent and summer school except for absences due to illness or as otherwise provided by law. (6A-1.044)
 - 1. School attendance shall be required of any pupil who has attained the age of six (6) years or who will have attained the age of six (6) years by February 1 of any school year, and for any pupil who is older than six (6) years, but who has not attained the age of sixteen (16) years except as otherwise provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. Students who have obtained the age sixteen (16) and have not yet graduated who plan to terminate their school enrollment must complete a formal declaration signed by the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the termination going into effect. The parents or guardians are responsible for their child(ren)'s attendance and to follow compulsory attendance laws. (1003.21)

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2. When any pupil enrolls in school, he/she shall be required to be regular in attendance even though, because of age, he/she may not be subject to the compulsory attendance law.
- (e) Pupil attendance shall be reported as follows:
 1. Any pupil who is scheduled at a school center for the minimum school day, as required by law, and who is recorded as being present or tardy, shall be reported as present one (1) day. (6A-1.044(6)(a))
 2. Each pupil who is scheduled at a school center for instructional purposes for a partial day, and at an area vocational/technical center, vocational school, or a community college for a partial day shall be reported as present or absent for the appropriate portion of the day. (6A-1.044(6)(b))
 3. A student assigned to an on-the-job instructional program which does not require his/her presence at a school center for instructional purposes shall be reported in attendance through the use of a time card or work schedule to report actual days in attendance or instructional work hours. Time cards and work schedules shall be signed by the employer or instructional supervisor. (6A-1.044(6)(c))
 4. The attendance of a pupil, who is assigned to an instructional program which does not require his/her regular presence at a school center for instructional purposes, shall be reported as present or absent at the assigned school center. (6A-1.044(6)(d))
- (f) The Board is authorized to destroy the records contained in or produced from the Automated Student Attendance Record-keeping System after three (3) years or the completion of applicable state audits, whichever period is longer, provided the school has complied with the requirements of the General Records Schedule for School Districts. (6A-1.044(8))
9. Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance
 - (a) In cases of excessive absences, tardies, or early dismissals, an attendance officer or school social worker may visit or make other contact with the parent(s) or guardian(s) at the home or other places to discuss the attendance problem for the purpose of returning the student to regular attendance.
 - (b) Legal action against a student and parent(s) or guardian(s) may be

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taken for not complying with the Florida Compulsory School Attendance Statute (Florida Statute 1003.21).

10. Students who fail to comply with attendance requirements will lose their driving privileges. Pursuant to Section 322.091, Florida Statute requires schools to report to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle (DHSMV) the names of minors who attain the age of 14 and above that have accumulated 15 un-excused absences in a period of 90 calendar days. The school principal/designee is the contact for additional information regarding these requirements.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAWS IMPLEMENTED:

322.091, 985.03, 1000.21, 1001.43,
1003.21, 1003.23, 1003.24, 1003.26, F.S.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE:

6A-1.044, 6A-1.09514

HISTORY:

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