

Attendance, Membership and Course Credit

Board Policy: A-5
Adopted: February 10, 1992
Revised: December 13, 2010

I. General Policy Statement

Poor attendance has been shown to have a direct correlation with poor performance and a lack of academic success. Regular attendance and participation in the program of studies are prerequisites to the learning process which is the focal point of our educational system. This policy is designed to recognize the necessity for good attendance, to designate actions deemed appropriate to respond to excessive absences, and to promote student success in school.

II. Compulsory Attendance Laws (entry into school until age 16)

In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 115C-378, every parent, guardian, or custodian having charge or control of a student between the ages of seven (7) and 16 years shall cause such student to attend school continuously for a period of 180 days. Every parent, guardian, or custodian having charge or control of a child under the age of seven who is enrolled in a public school in grades Pre-Kindergarten through two shall also cause such child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time school is in session unless the child has withdrawn from school.

- A. The principal or designee shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child's excessive absences after he/she has accumulated three unexcused absences in a school year. After six unexcused absences, the principal shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian by mail that they may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policy of the board of education. In grades K-8 a referral will be submitted by the school social worker to the Coordinator of Student Services. The coordinator will review the referral and then submit it to the Judicial Attendance Council made up of representatives from Juvenile Justice, District Attorney's office, DSS, Sherriff Dept., and Haywood County Schools.
- B. Once the parents are notified, the school social worker or the judicial attendance council shall work with the child and family to analyze the causes of the absences and determine steps, including adjustment of the school program or obtaining supplemental services, to eliminate the problem.
- C. After 10 accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the principal or designee shall notify the district attorney and parent in writing of the Attendance Law violation. Evidence showing that the parent, guardian, or custodian were notified and that the child has accumulated 10 absences which cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the local board shall establish a prima facie case that the child's parent, guardian, or custodian is responsible for the absences.

III. Student Membership

To meet the requirements of membership a student must have a class schedule for a full instructional day. This requirement does not impact exceptional children funding for a student who has an Individualized Education Plan requiring less than a full day of instruction. Reference: *School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual*

IV. Course Credit (High Schools)

- A. North Carolina law requires a minimum of 150 hours of instruction to earn a unit of credit in a traditional schedule (*Tuscola*). Schools operating on a 4-block schedule require a minimum of 135 hours of instruction to earn a unit of credit (*Central Haywood, Haywood Early College and Pisgah*).
- B. When students transfer into Haywood County Schools from high schools recognized by national, regional or state accrediting agencies, credit will be accepted without further validation.

- C. Transfer credit from non-accredited schools shall be reviewed using the following available criteria:
 - 1. An analysis of instructional hours per course
 - 2. An analysis of the previous school's curriculum
 - 3. A review of available student work
 - 4. A review of the student's assessment data and scholastic performance as it relates to the course
 - 5. The results of assessments administered by Haywood County Schools for courses that require End-of-Course test in North Carolina
 - 6. The state or federal "status" (ABC, AYP, etc.) of the previous school
- D. Haywood County Schools will provide prompt and accurate transcripts for students leaving the school district.
- E. A student must be in attendance for at least four full class periods (THS), or two block periods (CHH, PHS, HEC) in order to be counted present for the school day. Types of absences are defined in section V.A.1. Attendance will also be taken by class periods.
- F. A student will not be counted absent for the following reasons:
 - a. Late bus
 - b. In-school suspension
 - c. Administrative proceedings
 - d. Participation in approved school-sponsored activities
- G. Haywood County Schools' policy specifies that a student with more than six (6) absences in a block course during a semester (CHH, HEC, PHS) or (12) absences in a year-long course (THS) will not receive credit for that course. In order to be counted present for a class, the student must meet the attendance requirements established by the school.
- H. Any student absent more than six (6) times in a block course during a semester (CHH, HEC, PHS) or twelve (12) times in a year-long course (THS) will fail that class unless a request for a passing grade is approved by the principal. The principal shall appoint a committee each semester (CHH, HEC, PHS) or at the end of the year (THS) to review the records of students with more than six (6) or (12) twelve absences. The committee shall take into consideration verified absences due to health. It is the teacher's responsibility to notify the student when his/her credit is in jeopardy due to attendance. Teachers will assist students in notifying parents.
- I. Students may attend make-up sessions for time missed due to absences seven (7), eight (8), and nine (9) for each semester (CHH, HEC, PHS), and absences thirteen through eighteen (13-18) for year-long (THS). Make-up sessions shall be scheduled before school, after school and/or Saturday. Make-up time for these absences shall match missed time hour-for-hour. *Students will be charged a fee to participate in these sessions.* The principal/designee may set a new guideline if extenuating circumstances can be proven.
- J. Any out-of-school suspension absence for a period of 10 days or less will not count against course credit. The suspended student shall be provided an opportunity to take textbooks home, to request to makeup daily classroom work, and to take any quarterly, semester or grading period exams missed during the suspension period.
- K. Students who receive a school imposed out-of-school suspension sanction may request to makeup daily classroom work. Grades on make-up work cannot exceed a score of 70 and this work is due according to the make-up guidelines in Section VI of this policy, and scores on quarterly, semester or grading period exams will count as full value.

V. Absences

- A. Daily Absences (Grades K-12)
 A student must be in attendance for at least one-half day in order to be counted present. Individual schools will communicate a procedure for notifying parents regarding student absences. Three (3) types of absence are noted below:
 - 1. Excused Absence (valid/lawful)
 - a. Illness or injury

- b. Quarantine
- c. Death in the immediate family
- d. Medical or dental appointments
- e. Religious observances (prior notice required)
- f. Court or administrative proceedings
- g. Activities in which the educational and instructional value gained outweighs the value of missed instructional time (subject to prior approval by the school principal)
- h. Absence related to deployment activities

2. Unexcused Absence (unlawful)

Any absence not included in (1) above will constitute an unexcused absence.

3. Out-of-school Suspension

Any out-of-school suspension absence for a period of 10 days or less will not count against course credit. The suspended student shall be provided an opportunity to take any quarterly, semester or grading period exams missed during the suspension period, take textbooks home, and may request to make up daily classroom work.

B. Tardies and Early Checkouts

- 1. Grades 6 – 8 - Five (5) tardies and/or early checkouts will equal one (1) lawful absence regardless of the reason. For the tardy or early checkout to count toward the absence, scheduled instructional time must be missed.
- 2. Grades 9 – 12 - Three (3) tardies and/or early checkouts will equal one (1) lawful absence regardless of the reason. For the tardy or early checkout to count toward the absence, scheduled instructional time must be missed. A school may establish a detention-based program instead of charging absences due to tardies.

C. Excessive Absences - Grades K - 8

Students exceeding fifteen (15) absences, or who are absent more than 8 percent (180 days x 8.4 % = 15 days) of the days enrolled in a school year shall not be promoted to the next grade except by a determination of the principal/designee upon review of the student's record. Non-promotion may be required when excessive absences interfere with the student's educational progress. After school remediation and/or summer school may be required for a student with more than the maximum number of absences per year to be promoted. Each school may design its own plan for making up time; programs may include opportunities for making up time before school, after school, on Saturdays or during the summer. Make-up time will be at the parent's expense and parents will provide transportation. If an exceptional student exceeds fifteen (15) absences, promotion and/or summer school attendance shall be determined by the School IEP Team.

D. Appeals Process - K - 8

A school level promotion committee shall be established in each school. The committee shall be comprised of the principal/designee who will act as chairperson, a guidance counselor, the student's teacher and two additional certified staff members. A parent/guardian of the student who is in violation of the absence policy may seek review through the appeals process.

VI. Make Up Work (K - 12)

Students shall have two (2) school days to complete assignments missed from the first absence, four (4) school days to complete assignments missed from two consecutive absences, and one (1) calendar week to complete assignments missed during three (3) to five (5) consecutive days or class periods. A student absent from six (6) to ten (10) consecutive days or class periods shall have two (2) calendar weeks to complete assignments. A maximum of ten (10) school days will be allowed for students to complete all missed work. All make-up work must be completed by the end of the semester unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the principal. Long-term assignments are exempt from make-up consideration and are due as assigned.

The following regulations apply to work missed by pupils as a result of absence:

- A. Work missed because of an absence may be requested and completed with full credit

according to the guidelines listed above.

- B. Work missed because of an educational absence (item V.A.1.f. under absences in this policy) shall have prior approval through the principal's office and must be completed within the guideline previously stated.
- C. Students who receive a school imposed out-of-school suspension sanction may request to makeup daily classroom work, and to take textbooks home. (See IV. H. and V.A.3.)

VII. Students Leaving School During the Day

- A. A student who must leave school during the day, except for school-sponsored activities, shall not be signed out without parent or guardian permission.
- B. A student leaving for a school-sponsored activity is responsible for notifying his/her teacher(s).

VIII. Pregnant Students

Attendance for pregnant students shall be governed by School Board Policy: SA-9, Student Pregnancies.

IX. Medically Fragile Students

Attendance for medically fragile students shall be governed by *Exceptional Children's Program* guidelines.

X. Chronic Illness or Disability

Students with documented disabilities or chronic health problems under IDEIA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 will be exempt from this policy, if the absences are excused and are related to the student's disabilities, or chronic health problems. It is the responsibility of the student's parents or guardians to provide adequate documentation from a licensed medical doctor of the student's condition. Students granted exempt absences are responsible for making up work missed during their absences.

Legal References: GS 115C-378, 381, 391... 397.1