The Arts Based School

Student Attendance Policy and Procedures

Procedure for Documenting Absences
Classroom teachers play a pivotal role in notifying students and parents or guardians of the importance of good attendance, and in communicating with parents or guardians when an absence occurs. It is also vital to the success of this program that teachers are accurate when entering attendance in PowerSchool. The Operations Manager is responsible for monitoring the attendance recording process, ensuring that the teachers achieve accuracy, and that all steps are documented and kept in a master file. The Principal is responsible for making sure the policy is enforced and makes the decisions as to whether a good faith effort has been made or Truancy Court will be needed.

1. Teachers shall instruct students to bring a written explanation signed by a parent or guardian upon returning to school after an absence. It is best practice to require a written note but there may be instances where parents or guardians provide notification either in person or over the telephone. Phone or personal notification shall be documented by school personnel and submitted to the teacher, who determines whether the absence is excused or unexcused. School staff will encourage parents to send excuses within a certain time period, but there is no legal or policy requirement.
2. Notes written by parents and guardian, notes from physicians, and other forms of documentation by school personnel regarding absences shall be assessed by the classroom teacher to determine whether they are excused or unexcused and then submitted to the Operations Manager weekly to be maintained in a centralized master file. To determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused the teacher must know the reasons recognized by the State Board of Education. The following are the valid/lawful excuses for temporary nonattendance of a student:
    - Illness or injury
    - Quarantine
    - Death in the immediate family
    - Medical or dental appointment
    - Court or administrative proceedings
    - Religious observances
    - Educational opportunity

0. When a student accumulates **three (3) unexcused absences** in a school year, the parent or guardian must be notified. Documentation of the notification must be dated and kept in a centralized master file. (*See Appendix Notice of 3 Unexcused Absences.)*

0. When a student accumulates **six (6) unexcused absences** in a school year, the parent or legal guardian must be notified through the US Mail by the Principal. Notification must include the warning that the parent or guardian may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may face prosecution if the absences cannot be justified under NC law and ABES Board policies. Notice of 6 Unexcused Absences will serve as a referral to the Operations Manager for monitoring and interventions. (*See Appendix-Notice of 6 Unexcused Absences)*
    0. If a student accumulates **ten (10) unexcused absences** in a year, the Principal shall:
        - Review the information presented by the Operations Manager.
        - Notify the parent or guardian through the US mail of the absences and their liability under the Compulsory Attendance Law (a copy of the student's Attendance Profile shall be included, and a copy of the 10-day Letter shall go to the Operations Manager so she/he will be aware of the conference);
        - Confer with the student and family to determine whether proper notification has been received and whether the family has made a good faith effort to comply with the law. (*See Appendix- Notice of Ten Unexcused Absences and Request for Conference)*
    0. The Principal may determine that appropriate notification has been provided if there is documentation of some form of 3-day notification, and copies of the 6- and 10-day letters, signed by the Principal and mailed to the address provided by the parent or guardian. Any "undeliverable" correspondence returned to the school should be placed in the centralized master file to be used as evidence in the school's efforts. If the Principal determines that the parent or guardian has not been given appropriate letter notification, that the school does not have documentation of notification, or that the number of days between the 6 and 10 notification letters is not appropriate, the letter process should start immediately at the point of omission and proceed from there. Corrections from parents shall be integrated in the count of unexcused absences.
0. Once it is determined that notification to the parent or guardian is in order, the Principal must determine whether the parent or guardian has made a good-faith effort to comply with the compulsory attendance law.
    - If the Principal determines that a good-faith effort has been made to ensure the student attends school, prosecution does not proceed.
    - If the Principal determines that the parent or guardian has not made a good faith effort, a notification letter shall be sent to the District Attorney. Copies of previous letters and the Attendance Profile shall be included in the DA letter and the copy to the parent. The Operations Manager will forward a copy of the DA letter to the Department of Social Services.

This action will be recorded in PowerSchool within "All Student Correspondence" by the Operations Manager. (*See Appendix- Referral to District Attorney)*

0. The Operations Manager will coordinate with the District Attorney and/or Truancy Court System to schedule a conference with Mediation Services, pursue legal action, and/or offer additional interventions.
0. At any point in the year when a student's excused absences are due to illness or injury, the Principal may require a statement from the student's physician to excuse future absences. This action will automatically be recorded in PowerSchool within "All Student Correspondence." (*See Appendix- Notice of Request for Physician's Statement)*
0. At any point in the year, a separate notification may be sent to inform the parent that 10 unexcused tardies will be counted as 1 unexcused absence. (*See Appendix- Notice of Excessive Tardies)*

All copies of attendance notification must be filed in a centralized master file, and letters must be noted in PowerSchool under All Student Correspondence. All documentation regarding absences (notes from parents, notes from physicians, correspondence returned as undeliverable, and other documentation by school personnel) must be kept in a centralized master file.

Attendance Policy from Parent/Student Handbook:

ATTENDANCE

Consistent school attendance is an essential component of each student's growth and progress. As a public school, we are required to record and report excused and unexcused tardies and absences daily. Please notify the office when your child is expected to be absent. When your child returns to school, he/she must bring a note explaining the reason for the absence, dated and signed by a parent or guardian.

TARDINESS-School begins at 8:15 am. Students may arrive at school between 7:45 and 8:10. **Students will be counted as tardy if they're not in their classroom at 8:15am**. The student entrance will be locked at 8:15 a.m. **After 8:15 a.m., parents must park, escort their child(ren) to the Front office entrance, and sign in.** Ten tardies are considered one absence on state attendance records.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

A. When an illness or injury occurs that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school?

B. When quarantine is ordered by the local health officer or the State Board of Health to isolate a student from the general population.

C. When there is a death in the immediate family (including but not limited to the parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters) of the student.
D. When the absence is due to a medical or dental appointment.
E. When the student is a part of a court proceeding or administrative tribunal, if the student is a party to the action or under a subpoena as a witness.
F. When the student participates in a religious observance and has prior approval of the principal/designee.
G. When the student is involved in a valid educational opportunity. The absence and activity must have prior approval of the principal/designee.
H. When a student participates in released-time religious instruction in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes §§ 115C-407.45 and 115C-218.75(p). Students may be excused for up to one hour per calendar week with prior written parental consent and approval from the principal/designee. Parents or guardians are responsible for transportation and must provide written confirmation of the student's participation for each day of absence. Students are responsible for making up any missed assignments.