

Student Attendance and Truancy

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Student Affairs

Message from Student Affairs:

It is our goal of Horry County Schools that each child succeeds. Regular school attendance gives children a solid foundation for a successful future.

Did you Know?

*Starting in Kindergarten, absences can cause children to fall behind in school.

*By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of 3 signs that a student may drop out of school.

*By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rate than 8th grade test scores.

www.attendanceworks.org



Attendance

Consistent school attendance is critical for student achievement. If students are not present, they cannot benefit from classroom instruction. State attendance laws require student attendance for course credit and grade-level promotion.

School Attendance

Section 59-65-10. All parents or guardians shall cause their children or wards to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten of this State which has been approved by the State Board of Education or a member of the South Carolina Independent Schools' Association or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church-related school, or other programs which have been approved by the State Board of Education from the school year in which the child or ward is five years of age before September first until the child or ward attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school.

Attendance Intervention Plans

When a child is determined to be truant, school officials will make every reasonable effort to meet with the parent(s) or guardian(s) to identify reasons for the student's continued absence. These efforts may include telephone calls and home visits, both during and after normal hours, as well as written messages and emails. School officials must develop a written "intervention plan" to address the student's continued absence in conjunction with the student and the parent(s) or guardian(s). It is the goal of HCS that each child succeeds academically. Regular school attendance gives children a solid foundation for a successful future.

Truancy

Truant: A child ages 6 to 17 years meets the definition of a truant when the child has three (3) consecutive all day absences or five (5) or more total all day absences or 10 unlawful tardies (elementary only) unless the absences or tardies (elementary only) are excused by a medical doctor's written statement, proof of bereavement, or principal's approval.

Habitual Truant: A "habitual" truant is a child, ages 12-17 years who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child and the parent(s) or guardian(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences, days tardy, and/or early releases.

Chronic Truant: A "Chronic" truant is a child ages 12 to 17 years who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a "habitual" truant, has been referred to Family Court and placed on an order to attend school, and continues to accumulate unlawful absences

Definition of Lawful (excused) Absences are defined as:

- *Students who are ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others; illness verified by a statement from a physician turned in to the attendance office within three (3) days of the student's return to school.
 - *Student in which a member of his or her immediate family is seriously ill or passes away documented by a statement from the family member's physician or a copy of the death announcement, obituary, or program of the funeral service.
 - *Students who are absent for recognized major religious holidays of their faith.
 - *Prearranged absences for other reasons and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal; these must be submitted to the attendance office in advance on a completed Request for Principal Approval Form which can be obtained from the attendance office at the school.
- Lawful/Excused Codes in PS:** (SC-BRV) Bereavement; (SC-EX) Excused by Principal; (SC-PA) Principal Approval/Education Trip approved by Principal; (SC-ONST) Guidance; (SC-HMBD) Medical Homebound; (SC-HMSD) Homebased; (SC-LEG) Judicial; (SC-REL) Religious Holiday; (SC-MED) Medical; (SC-EX) Homelessness; approved by Principal; (SC-COL) College Visit, preapproved by principal; (SC-FT) Field Trip school sponsored; (SC-AH) disciplinary hearing; (SC-WTHR) inclement weather, district closing; (SC-BTRD) bus tardy; (SC-EDSM) early sign out but present 50% of the day; (SC-ETRD) tardy with lawful excuse.

Definition of Unlawful absences are defined as:

- *Student who are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parents.
- *Student who are absent from school without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent.
- *Religious-based camps, retreats or conference.

Unlawful Codes in PS: (SC-UNEX) Unexcused/Unverified; (SC-PN) Unexcused parent note; (SC-IMNZ) Immunization; (SC-UTRD) Unexcused tardy; (SC-DSML) early sign out but present less than 50% of the day; (SC-UEDM) early sign out same as unlawful tardy

Promotion/Retention policies are separate from Truancy regulations.

- *To be promoted to the next grade or receive a credit for high school courses, students may not be absent from school or class for more than 10 days for yearlong courses or 5 days for semester courses.
- *Saturday/Make Up school: Allows student to make up seat time /instructional days but does not clear up truancy.

Code in PS: (SC-REC) Saturday Make up School

