

SECTION J: STUDENTS
STUDENT ATTENDANCE FILE: JE
TITLE: Student Attendance (Middle School)

Rationale

Regular attendance provides students the opportunity to participate in many integral learning activities, such as class discussions, group experiences, field trips, guest speakers, and direct instruction, which cannot be simulated or replicated with written work. Therefore, with the goal of promoting student achievement and increasing the likelihood of success, the Seminole County Public Schools has adopted a uniform Middle School Attendance Policy that consists of the following components:

I. Compulsory Attendance

A student enrolled in Seminole County Public Schools who is under the age of 16 is required to attend school regularly during the entire school year. It is the legal responsibility of the parent to ensure middle school student attendance, unless the student is 16 years of age or older and has filed a formal declaration to terminate school enrollment with the Board.

II. School Attendance Defined

Students are considered to be in attendance when they are at school or participating in school-sponsored activities (field trips, etc.).

III. Student Attendance Recorded

Teachers are required to maintain an official record of student attendance each day by class period of instruction. Teachers shall notify the administration of a student's absence on the day of nonattendance.

IV. School Notification on Day of Absence

On the day of a student's absence, school personnel will make a good faith effort to notify the parent/guardian of the absence through personal or voice mail or e-mail contact.

V. Parent Verification of Absence

On the day a student returns to school, in compliance with the procedures established at the school, parents/guardians are expected to provide documentation of the reason for a student's absence.

VI. School Notification of Repeated Unexcused Absences

School administrators are encouraged to contact parents/guardians after every unexcused absence to inform the parent of the absence and to discuss strategies for preventing further unexcused absences. When a student accumulates 5 unexcused absences in a grading period the principal or designee is required to contact, via telephone or e-mail, the parent/guardian of the student in order to arrange a conference

to discuss the reasons for the unexcused absences and to initiate school-based truancy interventions. Unsuccessful attempts to make this contact should be documented and a copy sent to the principal or designee.

Upon each subsequent unexcused absence, the parent/guardian will be notified of the student's nonattendance. The parent/guardian will also be informed of the truancy procedures that will be followed if the student persists in being unexcused from school.

VII. Excused Absences Defined

The principal or designee shall determine if a student's absence from school is excused or unexcused. An absence will be recorded as excused for each day a student is not in attendance for any of the following reasons:

1. medical treatment provided by a licensed physician
2. sickness or injury makes attendance inadvisable*
3. observance of religious practices or a religious holiday
4. law enforcement order or court subpoena
5. death of a family member
6. natural disaster
7. traffic accident that directly involved the student
8. extraordinary circumstances or situations approved by the principal

*Short term, non-chronic illnesses may be documented/explained via a signed parent note. A student may be excused for a continued or repeated illness up to 10 attendance days in a span of 90-calendar days. After this period of time, a doctor's verification will be required. If no verification is submitted within 3 student attendance days, a referral to the school board nurse is required. Should the principal or designee reasonably suspect an abuse of this provision, documentation from a "licensed practicing physician" (M.D., O.D., D.D., D.D.S., and/or D.C., etc.) may be required as a condition for declaring the student's absence for illness excused.

VIII. Unexcused Absences Defined

Absence from class for any reason other than those identified in Section VII shall be unexcused. In addition, the following conditions shall result in an absence being recorded as unexcused:

A. No Documentation of Reason for Absence

Student absences that are not verified according to the procedures established at the school for documenting the reasons for a student's absence (Section V).

B. Vacations/Personal Family Time

All absences from school due to vacation or personal family time are unexcused. Parents must submit to the principal, in writing, requests for pre-arranged absences due to vacation or personal family time if they wish to obtain, in advance, the class work that will be missed during the nonattendance. Teachers may, but are not required to, provide class assignments to students in advance. When such arrangements are made in advance, assignments are due on the day the student returns to school.

C. Head Lice (pediculosis) and Immunizations

Absences in excess of 3 days due to head lice (nits) or noncompliance with immunization requirements shall be recorded as unexcused absences. School personnel will notify the school board nurse who will assess the need for forwarding the student to the school social worker.

IX. Academic Consequences for Unexcused Absences

If the absence is an excused absence, as defined in Section VII, the teacher shall provide opportunities for the student to make up assigned work and not receive an academic penalty. If the absence is unexcused, the following academic penalties shall be imposed:

A. Daily Class Participation Points

Daily class participation points shall be deducted for each unexcused absence.

B. Daily Class Work

A grade of zero shall be assigned for class work assigned and completed on the day of an unexcused absence.

X. Make-Up Assignments and Assessments

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are required to make-up all coursework and assessments missed during the period of nonattendance.

Immediately upon returning to class, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain missed coursework, confirm corresponding dates for completion, and schedule missed assessments.

Students shall earn full credit for all short-term assignments, long-term assignments, tests, and quizzes made-up within the reasonable time limits established by the teacher.

Partial credit shall be assigned for assignments not completed within the time limits established by the teacher.

A. Short-Term Assignments

Short-term assignments are those assignments given less than 10 school days in advance of a student's absence.

Full credit will be given for those short-term assignments turned in within the reasonable time limits set by the teacher, which shall be no less than the number of days the student was absent, plus 1 additional day.

Partial credit will be given for those short-term assignments turned in after the due date. The teacher will grade short-term assignments turned in late. After the letter grade for the assignment has been determined, the teacher may reduce it by no more than 1 letter grade for every day the assignment was turned in late.

No credit will be given for short-term assignments not turned in by the student.

B. Long-Term Assignments

Long-term assignments are those assignments given 10 or more school days in advance of a student's absence. Unless exempted from this requirement by the principal or the principal's designee, in consultation with the teacher, long-term assignments shall be due on the

assigned
date for full-credit.

Partial credit will be given for those long-term assignments turned in after the due date. The teacher will grade long-term assignments turned in late. After the letter grade for the assignment has been determined, the teacher may reduce it by no more than 1 letter grade for every day the assignment was turned in late. No credit will be given for long-term assignments not turned in by the student.

C. Tests and Quizzes

Students are required to make-up tests and quizzes missed during an absence. At a minimum, students have no less than the number of days they were absent, plus 1 additional day, to make-up tests and quizzes missed during an absence. The time and place for the make up is the decision of the teacher. The teacher's decision on make-up schedules shall be final.

The teacher may administer an alternate form of a test or quiz to assess competency or mastery of subject matter. There shall be no academic penalty imposed for tests and quizzes completed within the reasonable time period set by the teacher.

However, if a student fails to make up the test or quiz within the reasonable time period, then the teacher may impose a reasonable academic penalty, such as assigning a zero or a failing grade for the test or quiz, or the teacher may give the student another opportunity to make-up the test or quiz.

If the teacher schedules another make-up test or quiz but the student fails to take the make-up, then the teacher may impose a reasonable academic penalty, such as assigning a zero or a failing grade for the test or quiz.

D. Exams

All nine-week, semester, and final exams must be made up within the reasonable time limits established by the teacher, at minimum, the number of days absent plus 1 additional day. The teacher may administer an alternate exam to assess competency or mastery of subject matter. The teacher's decision on make up schedules shall be final.

XI. Out-of-School Suspensions

Absences due to out-of-school suspension are not recorded as excused or unexcused absences. Students are permitted to make-up, for full credit, any academic assignment missed during the term of a student's first and second out-of-school suspension. Missed class assignments, homework, quizzes, tests, and exams shall be made up in a timely manner for the student to receive full credit.

XII. Truancy

After a student has accumulated 10 unexcused absences in 90 calendar days, the principal or designee will refer the student as outlined in the Truancy Procedures Manual, to the school social worker for processing as a truant.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Statutory Authority: §230.22, Fla. Stat. (1998); § 230.23005,
Fla. Stat. (1998) and Art. IX, § 4, Fla. Const.

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: §§230.23(6)(b), 232.01, 232.0225, 232.09, 232.17, F.S. 232.19,
414.125, Fla. Stat. (1998) FS 1003.21,FS 1003.23FS 1003.24FS;
1003.26FS 1003.33

BOARD HISTORY:

Revised 9/8/98 (while combined with elementary rules)
Revised 1/26/99 (while combined with elementary rules)
Revised 1/12/99 (while combined with elementary rules)
Revised 4/8/03