

The Board of Education believes there is no substitute for the uninterrupted personal contact between students and teachers in the classroom environment where learning experiences are carefully planned by the teachers. Classroom attendance and participation is an integral part of the school experience. Regular attendance also develops patterns of behavior essential to success in later life, both personal and business. Even though students may make up work missed because of absences, they may never be able to replace the educational, cultural and social contacts they would have experienced through face to face instruction and class participation. Accordingly, the Wilkes County Board of Education expects each student to attend every class.

This Policy contains the following four distinct provisions:

- A. Compulsory Attendance Requirements.
- B. Support to Students with Excessive Absences.
- C. Wilkes County Board of Education's Attendance Requirements for Course Credit
- D. High School Attendance Incentive.

A. COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

North Carolina General Statute 115C-378 provides that "Every parent, guardian or other person in the State having charge or control of a child between the ages of seven and sixteen years shall cause such child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in session. No person shall encourage, entice, or counsel any such child to be unlawfully absent from school. The parent, guardian or custodian of a child shall notify the school of the reason for each known absence of the child, in accordance with local school policy..." North Carolina General Statute 115C-380 provides for a criminal penalty for any parent, guardian or other person violating the provisions of the *State Compulsory Attendance Laws*. The *State Compulsory Attendance Laws* shall be strictly observed by the Wilkes County Board of Education.

TERMS

ATTENDANCE - To be considered in attendance, a student must be present in the school for at least one-half of the school day or at a place other than the school with the approval of the [principal](#) to attend an authorized school activity (school related absence).

EXCUSED ABSENCES - The Wilkes County Board of Education shall excuse the temporary absence of a student upon a showing of satisfactory evidence of one of the following bases:

1. Illness or injury prevents the student from being physically able to attend school or the local health officer or the State Board of Health orders the isolation of the student.
2. The student is absent due to the death of a member of the immediate family of the child.
3. The student has medical or dental appointment (doctor notes will be accepted at [principal's](#) discretion).
4. The student is a party to or is under subpoena as a witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal.

5. The student has obtained prior approval by the [principal](#) to be absent due to the observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parents.
6. The student obtains prior approval (by the [principal](#)) to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as travel. Educational Travel is unexcused until all class assignments are made up.

INVOLUNTARY SUSPENSIONS - The absence of a student which results from the suspension, out of school, for misconduct pursuant to the provisions of N.C. General Statute 115C-391, shall not be considered an unexcused absence for the purposes of the *Compulsory Attendance Laws*. However, such an absence shall be treated as an unexcused absence for purposes of makeup work and co-curricular activity eligibility.

SCHOOL RELATED ABSENCES - The Wilkes County Board of Education shall excuse the temporary absence of a student from school when that student is at a place other than the school with the approval of the [principal](#) to attend an authorized school activity to include:

1. Teacher chaperoned field trips sanctioned by the Wilkes County Board of Education.
2. Student counsel and club activities approved first by the teacher or advisor and secondly by the [principal](#).
3. One college day for twelfth grade students only approved by the counselor and [principal](#) and verified by the college.
4. Documented appointments associated with college admissions, scholarship or co-op job interviews.
5. Approved athletic events REQUIRING early dismissal.

It is the intention of the Wilkes County Board of Education that classes missed for authorized school activities as outlined in this policy be kept to an absolute minimum through the close scrutiny by the [principal](#). School related activities shall not be counted or coded as absences from either class or school. However, students shall follow the same procedure for makeup work as they do for other excused absences.

CLASS/PERIOD TARDY – Classroom teachers are responsible for monitoring classroom arrival and attendance. School discipline procedures will be followed when students are present at school but tardy to class.

CONSECUTIVE ABSENCES - After the tenth consecutive absence, any student age 16 or over will be dropped from the school's enrollment unless the school has been notified of student's need to be absent for more than 10 consecutive days.

NOTIFICATION OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

The law requires that the school notify parents of excessive unexcused absences under the conditions that follow:

1. After the third unexcused absence:
 - a. The **principal** or his designee shall notify the parent/guardian by mail.
 - b. If unable to contact the parent/guardian, the **principal** shall refer the matter to a school social worker or his designee for immediate investigation.

2. After six unexcused absences, the **principal** or his designee shall notify the parent/guardian of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences from school.
 - a. Notification of the parent/guardian shall be by mail and shall state that the parent/guardian may be in violation of the *North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Laws* and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under established attendance policies (see G.S. 115C-378).
 - b. A copy of the notice will be directed to the school social worker, or other appropriate school personnel, who will work with the student and family to remedy the problem (see G.S. 115C-378).

3. If a student has six (6) accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the student's parent/guardian shall be notified by mail of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences. The **principal** shall also review any reports or investigations prepared pursuant to G.S. 115C-378 through G.S. 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and his parent/guardian if possible to determine whether the parent/guardian received notification pursuant to the requirements of the *Compulsory Attendance Law* and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the **principal** determines that the parent/guardian has not, he shall notify the district attorney's office and/or the Department of Juvenile Services and/or the Director of Social Services.

B. PROVIDING SUPPORT TO STUDENT WITH EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

The **principal** and his staff shall take appropriate action to help prevent excessive absences. Parents shall be notified of their child's absences, as above outlined. Where appropriate, the **principal** and/or his staff shall provide counseling for students with a history of excessive absences and shall work with the student's family in an attempt to eliminate the problem.

C. THE WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION'S ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSE CREDIT

EXCUSED ABSENCES - While attendance is required, there shall be no penalty for six (6) excused absences per course per semester*, provided that all class work is made up to the satisfaction of the teacher of each class missed.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES - For every unexcused absence, the student shall immediately meet with each teacher of every class missed and shall, to the satisfaction of the teacher of the class missed, make up all work missed.

LOSS OF OPPORTUNITY TO EARN CREDIT DUE TO INADEQUATE ATTENDANCE IN GRADES 9-12

A student shall lose credit for absences beyond six (6) unless the student makes up all work required by the teacher, completes the semester with a passing average (not counting the final exam grade), and makes a grade of 70 or higher on the final exam.

APPEAL PROCESS - Any student who is denied the opportunity to earn credit for any course shall have a right to appeal to the school's attendance committee. The procedure for appeal shall be as follows:

1. Each school shall have an attendance committee which shall include an administrator, a teacher, the social worker, the school counselor and such additional members as may be appointed at the sole and complete discretion of the school [principal](#).
2. The attendance committee shall meet as needed.
3. When a student has accumulated six (6) absences in a semester, the student and his parent/guardian shall be notified; in writing, that the student may be denied the opportunity to earn credit for the course for the semester, unless the student makes up all missed work, completes the semester with a passing grade, and makes a grade of 70 or higher on the final exam. The written notice shall advise the student and his parent/guardian that he may appeal the denial of the opportunity to earn course credit to the school's attendance committee at the end of the semester if requirements are not met by submitting a request for appeal to the [principal](#). The failure of the school to provide this notification shall not negate the policy.

*A semester is now eighteen (18) weeks in length.

4. Any appeal to the attendance committee must be submitted, in writing, to the [principal](#). The notice of and request for appeal must state the reason the student believes he should be allowed the opportunity to earn credit for the course. Written documents in support of the student's statement must be attached to the notice of request for appeal.

5. Prior to the review of the attendance committee, the student shall make up all work for all absences.
6. Upon receiving an appeal from the student and/or parent/guardian, the attendance committee shall meet and review the written records submitted by the school and by the student and his parent/guardian. If the committee's decision is in favor of the student, the student and his parent/guardian shall be so notified. If the committee determines that it cannot decide the matter in the student's favor based upon the written records, the committee shall arrange a time for a hearing at the convenience of the committee members and the student; this hearing shall be held no more than ten (10) school days after the committee makes their determination. (this is consistent with the grievance policy-should be left in)
7. The attendance committee can decide to:
 - a. allow the student the opportunity to earn credit for the course for the semester by meeting the requirements or presenting documentation that supports excusing the absences, or
 - b. deny the student the opportunity to earn credit for the course for the semester
8. If the decision of the attendance committee is adverse to the student, the student and his parent/guardian shall have five (5) days from the date of notification of the committee's decision to appeal the decision to the superintendent or his designee.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN - Those students identified and classified as Exceptional Children who appeal their loss of opportunity to earn credit for a course for failure to comply with this Policy shall first have their appeal data reviewed by their school's Exceptional Children School Based Committee.

D. HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE INCENTIVE

Each principal should develop for his/her school an incentive program for those students having no more than one absence per semester.

ADDENDUM - The [principal](#) will have the option to require a doctor's excuse when a student has had excessive absences. Doctor notes will be accepted at the [principal's](#) discretion.

DRIVERS LICENSE ELIGIBILITY

See Drivers Education Eligibility Policy to see how student attendance can affect driving eligibility.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-378, 380, 391

Cross References: Graduation Requirements (Policy 3460)

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