

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

As a result of the Education Improvement Act of 1984, guidelines have been established for student attendance and absences. Attendance is a requirement for promotion and/ or credit. Students must attend 85 days of each 90-day term course to receive 1 unit of credit. No student who misses all or any portion of a school day, unless excused by the principal, shall be permitted to participate later that day or that evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored, authorized or related activity or event.

Failure to attend class constitutes an absence. Students previously enrolled in the district and those residing in the state that are entering for the first time shall be counted absent without excuse (for promotion/credit consideration) for each day missed due to late enrollment. All absences are defined as lawful or unlawful. Students are not permitted to make up work for unlawful absences.

LAWFUL ABSENCES

Per state law, lawful absences have been defined as follows:

1. Students who are ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others may be temporarily excused from attendance.
2. Emergency medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Beginning and ending times must be recorded on the appointment slip by the doctor's office and only the appointment time and minimum travel time will be excused.
3. Students in whose immediate family there is serious illness or death.
4. Students may be excused from attendance in school for recognized religious holidays of their faith.
5. Students may be excused from attendance in school if they are required to be present in a court of law. Judge or attorney verification is required in writing.
6. Students who are absent due to suspensions.
7. Students who have prearranged absences for other reasons and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the principal.
8. Students may be excused from attendance in class(es) for participation in activities representing the school if they have a passing average in each class they will miss and have not been excessively absent.

All student absences for such school activities must have prior approval of the principal. Approved activities include state and national competitions and ceremonies honoring outstanding students. Note: Approved field trips, students late due to bus problems, and students assigned to in-school suspension programs are not considered absent.

UNLAWFUL ABSENCES

Per state law, unlawful/unverified absences have been defined as follows:

1. Students absent from school without the prior knowledge of the parent.
2. Students absent from school without acceptable cause with parental knowledge. For example, a family vacation is an unlawful/unverified absence.
3. Students suspended from the school bus and not reporting to school.
4. Parental notes for student illnesses in excess of 10 days which cannot be substantiated by medical statements.
5. Students absent from class as a result of extracurricular activities not approved by school administration.
6. Routine appointments for medical, dental, or counseling services once a student has exceeded 5 absences per term course.

STUDENT ABSENCES

All excuses for absences must be documented in writing in the Attendance Office. It is the responsibility of the student to bring in a note or fax from a parent or physician confirming the reason for the absence. All business with the Attendance Office must be conducted outside of class hours. Taking class time to submit an excuse or obtain an ID card does not exempt a student from the attendance policy.

NOTES FOR STUDENT ABSENCES

All absences will be listed as unverified or unlawful until the student petitions the Attendance Office to change the status of the absence with a written request from a parent or guardian including a verifiable excuse.

If a student is absent for any reason and wishes the day(s) to count as an excused absence, he must turn in his excuse no later than three (3) days after the absence to the Attendance Office (Room F-120) or the absence will remain as recorded, unverified/unlawful. Students with any unverified absences cannot exempt exams. When an excuse requires additional documentation, the three day limitation will be extended to five days. Excuses for absences received after the designated deadlines may not be accepted.

Excuses are valid only for the date(s) of absence and must contain all of the information specified: date, name of student as it appears on the permanent record, reason for absence, date(s) of absence, grade level, legal signature of parent or guardian and a daytime contact phone number.

Excuses must be presented in the Attendance Office before first period to receive verification of the excuse permitting the classroom teacher(s) to provide makeup work and/or tests. These notes are crucial in determining whether credit can be awarded. Physicians' notes and excuses for legal appointments and death in the family are important factors in determining if credit can be awarded.

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Parents of a student with a chronic illness (one which reoccurs and may cause the student to miss excessive days) must contact the school as early as possible in the school year so that a chronic illness form can be secured and filled out by the medical doctor. School officials may contact the doctor concerning the illness. Chronic illness written verification by a doctor must be renewed each school year. Verification will go into effect on the date the doctor verifies the condition. Even when the school has verification of a chronic illness, absences must be excused by the standard procedure. The parent must send a note to the Attendance Office specifying whether the absence is directly related to the chronic illness condition.

CREDIT DENIAL

Credit for any course may be denied if a student does not meet attendance requirements. Credit will be denied regardless of whether absences are lawful: excused (exc), unexcused (unx) or unlawful: unverified (unv), cut (cut) or truant (tru).

Exceptions for Denial of Credit are limited to:

- a. Court intervention with appropriate documentation
- b. Serious illness (chronic or long term) or a disabling injury with medical documentation
- c. Death in the immediate family with appropriate documentation
- d. Other extraordinary hardships with appropriate documentation

CLASS MAKEUP TIME

Class makeup days for absences will be scheduled each semester. Students may check in the Attendance Office for the Class Makeup schedule. Each of these days will allow a student to make up time for missed class periods and avoid the risk of being denied credit due to excessive absences. The student must be engaged in class work the entire makeup period. The student is responsible for obtaining appropriate class work from his/her teacher. Any student may be dismissed for not following the directions of the proctor. Any student who is dismissed will not receive credit for the makeup.

The student must make an appointment for the make-up session through the Attendance Office (Room F-120). No student will be admitted to the makeup session without an appointment and their Wando ID. A student will not be allowed to "bank" days.

COLLEGE VISITS

Wando seniors and juniors are permitted two college visit days with official documentation. Official college visit forms are available in the Guidance Office or from the college. These forms should be completed, stamped and signed by college officials. Catalogs, brochures, and parent notes are not sufficient to document an official college visit.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students are expected to attend all classes each day of the school year except for medical and family emergencies. The parental request for a student's early dismissal is not an excuse for an absence. The student should bring the appropriate excuse back upon his/her return to school. Example: A doctor's appointment followed by a doctor's excuse or a court appearance followed by a court note. In cases where a student must leave school before the end of the school day, please adhere to the following procedures:

1. A student should present a note written by a parent/guardian for early dismissal to the Attendance Office before first period. Notes presented after first period may not be honored.
2. Each note should include the student's full name, signature of parent/guardian, reason for dismissal, and a phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached for verification of the early dismissal.
3. Dismissal notes for the end of class periods are encouraged to avoid class interruptions.
4. Students who drive to school must sign out at the Attendance Office before leaving school grounds. Students who do not drive to school must have a parent sign in at the front office and report to the attendance office to sign out their student. If a student returns the same day from an early dismissal, he/she must sign back in to school through the Attendance Office immediately upon returning to campus.

Please note---Once a student arrives on campus he is present for the day and shall not leave unless properly dismissed. The student will be given a pass to leave class at the appropriate time to report to the Attendance Office to meet his parent. Only students with verifiable medical or judicial appointments will be excused on pep rally days.

Remember:

1. Students may not leave campus without securing permission and signing out through the Attendance Office or Clinic. Failure to follow sign out procedures will result in disciplinary action.
2. Signing out does not account for the absence. You must bring an appropriate note upon returning to school.
3. Classes will not be interrupted to call a student for early dismissal unless the situation is an emergency.

Note: No student who misses all or any portion of a school day, unless excused by the principal, shall be permitted to participate later that day or that evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored, authorized or related activity or event.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

South Carolina, through the Charleston County School District, provides a minimum of one hour of homebound instruction for each day on homebound status for students who cannot attend classes due to illness, injuries, or pregnancy. Any deviation from this policy or change in student schedule will be determined during the initial homebound placement.

The instruction application may be obtained from the Attendance Office. It must be signed by a medical doctor only and returned to school immediately. Applications signed by a psychologist or midwife will not be approved. Homebound instruction is not retroactive. When the student receives instruction, he/she is counted as present in school and, hopefully, will not be behind in his/her studies when able to return to school. Homebound instruction does not guarantee that the students will pass courses or advance to the next grade. Seniors on homebound status who plan to participate in the graduation ceremony and/or be listed in the graduation program must complete all requirements for graduation by the time senior grades are finalized. Homebound students must adhere to CCSD attendance policies or homebound services may be terminated. Questions regarding homebound should be referred to the administrator in charge.