

PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1. Compulsory Attendance - Every parent, guardian or other person in the State of North Carolina having charge or control of a child who is enrolled in the ECU Community School and who is less than 16 years of age shall cause such student to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time that the Community School is in session. No person shall encourage, entice or counsel any such student to be unlawfully absent from school. (NCGS 116-239.8, University of North Carolina Laboratory Schools)
2. Requirements for Entrance
 - a. A child, to be entitled to initial admission in the Community School, must have passed the fifth anniversary of his/her birth on or before August 31 of the year in which the child is presented for enrollment, and must be presented for enrollment during the first month of the school year.
 - b. No child may attend the Community School without presenting a certificate of immunization to the school that indicates the child has received the immunizations required by NCGS 130A-152. The principal has the authority to require the parents of any child presented for admission to the Community School for the first time, to furnish a certified copy of the birth certificate or other satisfactory evidence of date of birth.
 - c. No child, except those hospital/homebound, staggered kindergarten, or medically fragile, may be enrolled in school unless they are present at school on that day.
3. Attendance Requirements
 - a. To be considered in attendance, a student (except for hospital/homebound) must be present in school for the school day, or at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official for the purpose of attending an authorized school activity. Such activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals, or any similar approved activity. Attendance must be taken each day of the school year.

- b. A student must be present at least one-half of the school instructional day in order to be recorded present for that day.
 - c. Community School students are required to be in attendance 160 school days to receive required credit. Any exception to this policy shall be ruled on by the principal. Parents who are denied an exception may appeal the decision to the ECU Community School Advisory Board. Requests for a board hearing must be received in the principal's office no later than the fifth business day after grades are reported.
4. Hospital/Homebound – If a student is confined at home or in a hospital, is unable to attend school, and is receiving homebound instruction from his/her Community School teacher, he/she is to be considered Hospital/Homebound. Once school personnel have made contact (a face-to-face meeting) with the student to provide instruction, the student should be counted PRESENT. Supporting documentation should be maintained at the school.
5. Medically Fragile – Students who are medically fragile are frequently absent from school for reasons directly related to their severe or life-threatening physical condition. Medically fragile students are identified as those students who qualify for special education in one of the existing categories of handicapping condition and for whom a licensed physician has provided documentation that an associated or accompanying chronic illness is so severe as to affect the student's school attendance. Medically fragile students are those whose illness frequently places them in life-threatening situations. In addition, they may be technology-dependent for life support systems, i.e. tracheotomy, gastrostomy, etc.

There may be rare instances when a child does not qualify for special education as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but would unquestionably meet the definition of handicapped under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and thus would also be eligible for consideration as a medically fragile student.

6. Lawful Absences

- a. **LAWFUL ABSENCES ARE ABSENCES AND ARE COUNTED AS SUCH. HOWEVER, STUDENT GRADES MAY NOT BE LOWERED AS A RESULT OF LAWFUL ABSENCES. TESTS AND WORK MISSED MAY BE MADE UP BY THE STUDENT WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME. A REASONABLE PERIOD WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE SCHOOL.**

The valid/lawful excuses for temporary non-attendance of a student at school are as follows:

- (1) Illness or Injury: when the absence results from illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
- (2) Quarantine: when the absence results from the isolation of the student as ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
- (3) Death in the Immediate Family: when the absence results from the death of a

member of the immediate family of the student. For the purpose of this policy, the immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters.

- (4) Medical or Dental Appointments: when the absence results from a medical or dental appointment of a student.
- (5) Court or Administrative Proceedings: when the absence results from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal, if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
- (6) Religious Observance: when the absence results from attendance at a religious observance or service where the tenets of a religion to which the student or his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) adhere require or suggest such attendance.
- (7) Deployment Activities: when the absence results from the student's attendance at official deployment ceremonies or activities when the student's parent is a deploying member of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- (8) Educational Opportunity: when the absence results from a demonstrated purpose of taking advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as travel. Approval for such an absence must be granted prior to the absence.
- (9) Short Term Suspensions: when the absence results from the student's suspension for ten days or less.

When a student is absent for any of the first eight reasons listed above, he or she shall provide appropriate documentation of that absence as lawful, as required by this policy and as made known to parents through the school handbook. Such documentation shall be kept on file. If there is any question regarding lawful absences, a person designated by the principal shall make contact with the parent or guardian of the child.

If a student is to be absent for medical or dental appointments, court or administrative proceedings, religious observances, or educational opportunities, the parent shall, except in emergencies, file the excuse and the dates for absences with the principal ahead of the date that the student is to be absent.

7. Unlawful Absences – For students who attend public school and who have enrolled in a public school, unlawful absence is defined as:

- (1) A student's willful absence from school with or without the knowledge of the parent;
or
- (2) A student's absence from school for any reason other than those listed in Section 6 - "Lawful Absences."

Parents who refuse to comply with the health regulations of a community, such as compulsory vaccination, thereby causing a student to be excluded from the school, or parents who permit a student to stay at home or to be employed in any way contrary to the Child Welfare Law (Chapter 110 of the North Carolina General Statutes), are responsible for the nonattendance of the student.

DECISIONS CONCERNING THE LOWERING OF A GRADE, MAKING UP WORK,

OR TAKING A MAJOR TEST SHALL BE LEFT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE PRINCIPAL IN CASES OF UNLAWFUL ABSENCES.

8. Unlawful Absences – For students who attend public school and who have enrolled in a public school, unlawful absence is defined as:
9. Suspensions and Expulsions – Refer to NCGS 115C-390, Discipline.
10. Tardiness – Refer to the ECU Community School Code of Conduct for specifics.
11. Responsibilities in Enforcing Compulsory Attendance – The parent, guardian, or custodian of the child is required to notify the school of the reason for each known absence of the child, in accordance with school policy. School personnel have additional legal responsibilities for student attendance. The duties of school personnel are outlined in *The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Student Attendance and Student Accounting Manual*.

Responsibilities in Enforcing Compulsory Attendance

12. Truancy – Truancy is defined as unauthorized absence from school. An absence without permission from any scheduled class, study hall, or activity during the day is truancy. Disciplinary action shall be taken when truancy occurs, beginning with notification of parents. Continued truancy may lead to academic failure, suspension, or expulsion from school.
13. Permission to Leave School before Closing Hour – All requests to leave the building while school is in session must be approved by the Principal's Office. Leaving school without permission constitutes truancy. Students shall not be permitted to leave school before the regular closing hour except for extraordinary reasons. A student may be dismissed from school for a medical or dental appointment for the time required by the specific appointment. Such an absence shall be considered excused.

Students shall not be excused for outside activities, such as music lessons, dancing lessons, etc., because of the State's minimum school day requirement.

14. Notification to Parents of Noncompliance with the General Compulsory Attendance Law

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 this policy.

Whenever a student has accumulated three unlawful absences in a school year, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian of the child's absences. After no more than six unlawful absences, the principal shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian by mail that he/she may be in violation of the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and of the ECU Community School.

After ten accumulated unlawful absences in a school year, the principal, or his/her designee, shall review any report or investigation prepared under NCGS 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and, if possible, his/her parent, guardian or custodian, to determine whether the parent, guardian or custodian received notification pursuant to this section and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. Depending on the circumstances, the principal must then notify the district attorney

(accomplished by filing a warrant with a magistrate) or file a complaint with the juvenile intake counselor.