

Policy JH Student Absences and Excuses

Issued 6/19

Purpose: To direct the superintendent or designee on allowing and excusing student absences.

The school year consists of 180 school days. High school students must attend 85 days of each 90-day semester to receive one-half unit of credit or 85 days of a 4x4 course to receive one credit (45 days of a 4x4 course to receive one-half credit). Students must attend 170 days through the course of the school year to receive one unit of credit.

Students in grades K through 12 may not be eligible for promotion if they have more than 10 absences. The superintendent or designee shall approve or disapprove any student's absence in excess of 10 days, whether lawful, unlawful, or a combination thereof, for students in grades K through 12. For the purposes of awarding credit for the year, the superintendent must approve or disapprove absences in excess of 10 days regardless as to whether those absences are lawful, unlawful, or a combination of the two.

Consistent with state regulations, parents/legal guardians have the right to appeal attendance violation decisions and/or question the school records regarding attendance. The appeal should be made in writing to the school principal or designee. The decision of the principal or designee may be appealed to the level leader or designee. The decision of the level leader or designee may be appealed to the superintendent or designee by written request for appeal within ten (10) days of receipt of the decision of the level leader or designee. The decision of the superintendent or designee is final.

The superintendent or designee shall utilize a written intervention plan for improving student attendance. The purpose of the plan shall be to link students with attendance problems and their families to all appropriate school and community resources. The Charleston County School District's Attendance/Tuancy Manual shall act as the administrative regulation for this policy and will provide additional implementation information.

The superintendent or designee shall take all reasonable, educationally sound, and corrective actions prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

All absences require a written explanation from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days of return from the absence. Written explanation of absences must include the student's name, parent/guardian's full name, date(s) of absence(s), documentation of the reason for absence, and a parent/guardian's signature. Per South Carolina Department of Education guidelines, **text messages and emails are not** acceptable documentation for student absences. All documentation required by the school is subject to review and must be approved by the principal.

Absences in excess of ten days per year will not be considered excused with a parent/guardian note unless they are accompanied by official medical or legal documentation.

If a student fails to provide a valid excuse to school, he/she shall automatically receive an unlawful absence. If a student provides a false (or forged) excuse, the student shall be referred to the school administration for appropriate action.

Lawful absences shall include but are not limited to:

- absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his or her health and the health of others; the principal shall require a physician's certificate from the parent/legal guardian of a student reported continuously absent for illness
- absences due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family
- absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith
- absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the principal. Approved activities include the following:
 - state and national competitions
 - ceremonies honoring outstanding students
- work approved or sponsored by the school, the school district, or the state department of education, accepted by the associate superintendent or school principal or their designees as reason for excusing the student
- out-of-school suspension
- in-school suspension
- field trips approved by the principal or designee
- absences for students whose parent/legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, upon presentation of appropriate military orders, be granted up to five days of excused absences to visit with his/her parents/legal guardians upon principal approval

Unlawful Absences include but are not limited to:

- absences of a student without the knowledge of his/her parent/legal guardian
- absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his/her parent/legal guardian
- absences due to out of town trips/vacations will be considered unexcused

Participation in After-School Activities

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 evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored or authorized or related school activity.

Adopted 7/22/81; Revised 9/24/84, 9/9/85, 7/11/88, 10/12/98, 1/23/06, 7/17/17, 6/24/19

Legal References:

United States Code of Laws, as amended:

Every Student Succeeds Act, [Pub. L. No. 114-95](#), 129 Stat. 1802.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, [42 U.S.C.A. Section 11431](#), *et seq.*

S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

[Section 59-38-10](#) - South Carolina Education Bill of Rights for Children in Foster Care.

[Section 59-46-10](#), *et seq.* - Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

[Section 59-65-20](#) - Parents/Legal guardians required to ensure child or ward attends schools.

[Section 59-65-50](#), *et seq.* - Nonattendance reported to court of proper jurisdiction.

S.C. State Board of Education Regulations:

[R43-274](#) - Student attendance.

Charleston County School District

Policy JLIB Student Dismissal Precautions

Issued 1/06

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for the dismissal of students before the end of the school day.

No school employee shall excuse any student from school prior to the end of the school day, or into any person's custody, without the direct prior approval and knowledge of the building principal or his/her designee. The principal shall authorize early or otherwise irregular dismissal only when it is requested in person or in writing by the student's parent/legal guardian. The parent/legal guardian must request all non-emergency early dismissals in writing prior to the time of the requested dismissal.

Students who become ill during the day may not leave before obtaining permission from office personnel.

Release of child to non-custodial parent

For children whose parents are divorced, the school shall dismiss the student only into the custody of the parent with legal custody. The school shall release the child to either parent if the parents are divorced and have joint custody. No child shall be released to a non-custodial parent unless the custodial parent has given written permission.

If possible, the school should obtain a copy of the parent's custody papers to have on file in the event the other parent attempts to remove the child from school. It is incumbent upon the custodial parent to make certain that the school has a copy of the papers showing that custody has been awarded to him/her. Otherwise, the school has no way to determine the identity of the custodial parent.

Adopted 11/28/05; Revised 1/23/06

Charleston County School District

Policy JHC Late In/Early Out Privileges For Students

Issued 1/06

Purpose: To direct the superintendent on late in/early out privileges for students.

Late in and early out privileges for high school students

The first priority given to high school course scheduling is to make certain that all students receive the strongest academic preparation possible. South Carolina State Department of Education regulations require that students must be in membership for a minimum of 200 minutes daily or its equivalency for an annual accumulation of 36,000 minutes.

The superintendent shall provide by regulation for high school students to modify their schedules in the form of late in or early out privileges. No principal may approve a late in or early out request that does not comply with the regulation. The regulation shall include review of the student's transcript and written approval by the parent/legal guardian.

Adopted 6/4/01; Revised 11/28/05, 1/9/06

Charleston County School District
