



ATTENDANCE POLICY

The attendance policy for FAMU DRS is taken very seriously. Attendance is one of the primary determinants of how a student performs in school. Many studies show a direct relationship between attendance and a student's academic achievement. The more students are in the classroom, the more opportunities they have to be successful. Non-attendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early-sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the day.

Section 1003.24 F.S., states that each parent/guardian of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's attendance as required by law.

Students and parents should also understand that poor attendance will affect the student's opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activity or school sponsored event. Any student who is absent from school (three or more periods will not be eligible to participate in any extra-curricular activity or school sponsored activity on that day. If absences become excessive, (ten or more within a nine weeks) the student may be removed from participating in extracurricular activities or school sponsored events.

I. CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students must be physically present in the class for at least half of the class period (25 minutes for HS/50 minutes for MS, 210 minutes for ELM), unless they have been excused by the teacher on a class-related assignment, and/or have been requested by a member of the school staff or administration for an approved school sponsored activity. **A double blocked period constitutes two single class periods.** If a student is absent from a double blocked period, this will constitute as an unexcused absence for each single class in that blocked period. Days when a student is on OSS (Out-of-School Suspension) will count as an unexcused absence(s).

II. TARDY / LATE

Tardy to any class without documentation is considered unexcused. A student is **tardy** if he/she arrives unexcused to class up to **five minutes after** the start time of class. A student is **late** if he/she arrives unexcused to class **more than five minutes after** the start time of class but within 25 minutes for HS/50 minutes for MS/210 minutes for ELM. The teacher or attendance clerk will record each time a student is tardy. **Four (4) unexcused tardies equals one (1) unexcused absence and three (3) lates is equivalent to one (1) unexcused absence.** Parent must follow the same process to excuse a tardy or late as they do to excuse an absence. Excessive tardiness will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance. Unless excused under the provisions of this policy, accumulated tardiness will be recorded as unexcused absences. (F.S. 1003.02 (1) (b))

III. EARLY DISMISSAL

Students shall be in attendance throughout the school day. If a student is to be dismissed before the end of the school day, the parent/guardian must sign the student out in the main office. Failure to sign out/in for the early dismissal or failure to bring in documentation **within three (3) days** of the child returning to school stating the cause for the early dismissal will result in an automatic unexcused absence. A telephone call to the main office will not be an acceptable form of documentation for the early dismissal absence.

IV. REPORTING ABSENCES

Students who have been absent from school will be marked as unexcused absent until the required documentation has been submitted. **Any student who has been absent from school shall bring in documentation within 3 days of returning to school stating the cause of the absence.** Failure to bring in documentation **within 3 days** will result in an automatic unexcused absence. A parent's note/explanation does not guarantee the absence will be excused. If a student is continually ill and repeatedly absent from school due to a specific medical condition, he/she must be under the supervision of a health care provider in order to receive excused absences from school. A doctor's written and signed statement must confirm that the student's condition requires absence for more than **three (3) days**. Parent notes will not be accepted for medical/dental appointments. A parent phone call does not justify an absence or tardy being excused. **A parent/guardian can only provide 8 notes per school year as documentation of an absence.**

a. **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below (F.S. 1003.24(4), 1003.26)

- Illness of student.
- Major illness of an immediate family member. (*parent/guardian, siblings, grandparents in same household*)
- Death in the family of the student. (*provide a copy of obituary*)
- Religious holidays of the specific faith of the student. (*complete a form*)
- Required court appearance, subpoena or forced absence by law enforcement
- Attendance at a center under the Department of Children and Families supervision.
- Military connected.
- Significant community event. Examples of special events include important public functions, conferences, state/national competitions, college/university campus tour/visit as well as exceptional cases of family need. (*complete form 1 week prior to event*)
- Major disaster that would justify absence in the judgment of the administration.
- Medical or dental appointment of the student. (*Documentation from the service provider required*)
- Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. 1003.22).
- School counseling/Drug intervention program
- Participation in a school-sponsored activity

All other absences will be considered unexcused.

*** Unexcused absences do not require that the teacher provide make-up work for the students.**

V. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Unexcused absences are absences which are not excused for the legitimate purposes as described above. Students (grades K-8) who accumulate 15 absences or more are subject to being retained in the same grade for next year. Students (grades 9-12) who accumulate 15 or more absences in any course are subject to lose credit for that course. In addition, **students that accumulate 5 or more unexcused absences without a documented acceptable reason within a nine week grading period or 10 within a 90 day period will receive an "F" grade (attendance failure) for each class in which the student has the unexcused absences.**

VI. Attendance Appeals

In order to appeal an unexcused absence(s) or an attendance failure, the student and/or parent must request an attendance appeal by completing and submitting an "Attendance Appeal Form" which is available in the Main Office. Attendance appeal forms must be submitted to the main office or guidance suite **within five (5) calendar days** of report card distribution. The parent and the student must be present for the attendance appeal. A student can request an attendance appeal **only one (1) time** per school year in an effort to improve school attendance.

VII. COURSE MAKE-UP

When a student has an unexcused absence, it is the responsibility of the student to complete all coursework, test and quizzes and turn them in to the appropriate teacher within a reasonable time as determined by the teacher. Unexcused absences with or without parental knowledge or consent, or absence from class without a written excuse from a teacher or administrator, may result in no credit for coursework, tests and quizzes missed during the absence. Unexcused absences **do not** require that the teacher provide make-up work for the students.

If the absences are excused, all educational requirements for the course shall be met before a passing grade and/or credit is assigned. The students shall have a reasonable amount of time, up to three (3) school days, to submit make-up work for excused absences. Students may have the opportunity to submit assignments in a period of time equal to the number of days absent.

VIII. ATTENDANCE IN GRADES K-12 (F.S.1003.436(1)(a)) (6A-1.045111)

Students in K-3 must be present for a minimum of 720 instructional hours per year. Students in grades 4-5 must be present for a minimum of 900 instructional hours per year. In order to earn one full credit for a class, students in grades 6-8 must be present for a minimum of 120 hours of bona fide instruction per class during the school year if block scheduling is implemented.

In order to earn one full credit for a class, students in grades 9-12 must be present for a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction per class during the school year. Students are allowed to make up their work during excused absences.

IX. DRIVER LICENSE AND ATTENDANCE (F.S. 332.091) (1003.27(2)(b))

Florida Law requires school districts to report to the Division of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) students between 14 and 17 years of age who accumulate 15 unexcused absences in a 90-day-calendar period. When a student requests reinstatement of his or her driver license, the school must undertake an investigation to determine eligibility.

X. TRUANCY AND HABITUAL TRUANCY (F.S. 984.151)

Truant means one who is subject to compulsory school attendance, but who is absent from school with or without a justifiable consent from a parent or legal guardian. Truancy means the student has had at least five **(5) unexcused absences** within a calendar month or ten **(10) unexcused absences**, within a ninety **90-calendar-day period**, or a combination of unexcused absences and tardies. Habitual Truancy means the student has fifteen **(15) unexcused absences** within ninety **(90) calendar days** with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

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