

## CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

### ABSENCES AND ENFORCEMENT OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

5.042

1. Introduction. The St. Johns County School Board concurs with the legislative finding set forth in Florida Statute 1003.26 that “poor academic performance is associated with non-attendance and that school districts must take an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance.”
2. Definitions. For purpose of this rule, the following definitions apply:
  - a. An “excused absence” includes:
    - i. Personal Illness.
    - ii. Illness of an immediate family member.
    - iii. Death in the family.
    - iv. Religious holidays of the student’s religious faith.
    - v. Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency.
    - vi. Special events, including, but not limited to, important public functions, student conferences, school-sponsored student state/national competitions, administratively approved post-secondary educational institution visitation, as well as exceptional cases of family need. Students must get permission from the principal at least five days in advance.
    - vii. Medical or dental appointments.
    - viii. Students having or suspected of having a communicable disease or infestation that can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (Florida Statute 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of three (3) days excused absence for an infestation of head lice.
  - b. “Unexcused absences” include, but are not limited to:
    - i. Shopping trips.
    - ii. Pleasure trips.
    - iii. Suspension from school.
    - iv. Appointments without prior approval except in case of emergency.

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- v. Truancy.
  - vi. Other avoidable absences.
3. Reporting and Notification. Teachers shall promptly report excused and unexcused absences to the school. Upon each unexcused absence, or absence for which the reason is unknown, the school principal or the principal's designee will attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian to determine the reason for the absence and prevent a pattern of non-attendance from developing.
  4. Make-up Work -Excused Absence. If the absence is an excused absence, the school shall provide opportunities for the student to make up assigned work and not receive an academic penalty unless the work is not made up within a reasonable time.
  5. Make-up Work- Unexcused Absence. With unexcused absences, it is the student's responsibility to complete all coursework, test and quizzes and turn them in to the appropriate teacher. A student shall have one day to complete and turn in the work for each day the student is absent (i.e., in the event of three days unexcused absences, the student has three days to complete and turn in coursework). The student may receive up to 50% credit for made-up coursework and up to 100% credit for tests and quizzes. Coursework, tests, and quizzes not completed and turned in within the allotted time frame will earn no credit. There is no expectation that the student's teacher or teachers recreate lessons, lectures, or labs for unexcused absences.
  6. Pattern of Nonattendance and Referral to Child Study Team. If a student has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period, the student's primary teacher must report to the school principal or his or her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. Unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, the principal shall refer the case to the school's child study team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the child study team finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, whether the absences are excused or not, a meeting with the parent shall be scheduled to identify potential remedies, and the principal shall notify the Superintendent and the District contact for home education programs that the referred student is exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. The child study team may allow the parent to attend the meeting virtually or by telephone if the parent is unable to attend the meeting in person.
  7. Child Study Team Process. If the parent or child fails to attend the child study team meeting, the meeting shall be held in their absence, and the team shall make written recommendations to remediate the truancy based upon the information available to the school. The recommendations shall be provided to the parent within 7 days after the child study team meeting. If the initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the child study team shall implement the following:

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- a. Frequent attempts at communication between the teacher and the family.
  - b. Attempt to determine the reasons the child is truant from school and provide remedies if available or refer the family to services, including referring the family for available scholarship options if the learning environment is an issue of concern.
  - c. Evaluation for alternative education programs.
  - d. Attendance contracts.
  - e. The child study team may, but is not required to, implement other interventions, including referral to the Department of Juvenile Justice's designated provider for voluntary family services, or to other agencies for family services, or recommend filing a truancy petition pursuant to Florida Statute 984.151.
8. Parent's Refusal to Participate in Remedial Strategies. If the parent refuses to participate in remedial strategies because he or she believes that those strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent may appeal to the School Board. If the School Board's final determination is that the strategies of the child study team are appropriate, and the parent still refuses to participate or cooperate, the Superintendent may seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance.
9. Enrollment in Home Education Program. If a parent or guardian of a student who has been identified as exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance enrolls the student in a home education program, the Superintendent and appropriate staff shall proceed in accordance with Florida Statute 1003.26(1)(f).
10. Truancy Petition. If it is determined that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least 5 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period pursuant to Florida Statute 1003.26(1)(b), or has had more than 15 unexcused absences in a 90-calendar-day period, the Superintendent or designated staff may file a truancy petition pursuant to Florida Statute 984.151 seeking early truancy intervention.
11. Non-enrollment. If a student who is subject to compulsory education requirements is not enrolled in school, the Superintendent shall proceed in accordance with Florida Statute 1003.26(2).
12. Procedures and Guidelines. The Superintendent is authorized to adopt procedures and guidelines to interpret and implement the requirements of Florida Statute 1003.26 and this rule.

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**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:**

**1001.41, F.S.**

**LAWS IMPLEMENTED:**

**984.151, 1002.20, 1003.01,  
1003.02, 1003.21, 1003.23,  
1003.24, 1003.26, 1003.27, F.S.**

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES**

**6A-1.044, 6A-1.09512,  
6A-1.09913, 6A-1.09514, F.A.C.**

**HISTORY:**

**Adopted: \_\_/\_\_/26**