

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Code

JH-R

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The board of trustees designates the principal of the school to promptly approve or disapprove any student's absence of more than 10 days in a school year.

Unlawful Absences

A student ages six to 17 years who has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences is considered truant as defined by State Board of Education regulation.

A student ages 12 to 17 years who fails to comply with the school's intervention plan and accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences is considered a habitual truant.

When a student ages 12 to 17 years who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a habitual truant, has been referred to family court, and has been placed on an order to attend school, and continues to accumulate unlawful absences, that student is considered a chronic truant.

Intervention

In order to encourage and assist students in attending school regularly, the administration will administer the following intervention procedures.

Once a student is determined to be truant, school officials will make every reasonable effort to meet with the parent/legal guardian to identify the reasons for the student's continued absence, including telephone calls, home visits, written messages, and emails.

A written intervention plan will be developed by school administrators in conjunction with the student and the parent/legal guardian. The intervention plan must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a designated person to lead the intervention team
- reasons for the unlawful absences
- actions the parent/legal guardian and student will take to resolve the causes of the unlawful absences
- documentation of referrals to appropriate service providers and, if available, alternative school and community-based programs

- actions to be taken by intervention team members
- actions to be taken in the event unlawful absences continue
- signature of parent/legal guardian or evidence that attempts were made to include them
- documentation of involvement of team members
- guidelines for making revisions to the plan

School officials may utilize a team intervention approach to include representatives from social services, community mental health, substance abuse and prevention, and other persons deemed appropriate in formulating the intervention plans.

Referrals and judicial intervention

The district will not refer a child ages six to 17 years to the family court to be placed on an order to attend school prior to the written intervention plan being completed by the school with the

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parent/legal guardian. The district will not use a consent order from any local school or district as an intervention plan.

Refusal by the parent/legal guardian to cooperate with school intervention plans can result in a referral of the student to family court and the filing of a report against the parent/legal guardian with social services in accordance with law.

The district will inform the parent/legal guardian and/or the student of their right to have legal representation and their right to a trial at this time.

If the situation continues to where the student is classified as a habitual truant, school officials may file a petition for a school attendance order. Once a school attendance order has been issued by the family court and the student continues to accumulate absences to the point of becoming a chronic truant, school officials may refer the case back to family court. The school and district will exhaust all reasonable alternatives prior to petitioning the family court to hold the student and/or parent/legal guardian in contempt of court.

Transfer to another school

If a student transfers to another public school in the state, the district will forward the student's intervention plan to the receiving school.

Approval of Absences in Excess of 10 Days

After 10 lawful or unlawful absences, or a combination thereof, the principal of the school will approve or disapprove each succeeding absence.

Furthermore, in order to more fully clarify unusual or unexpected mitigating circumstances, each school principal should evaluate individually and approve the following lawful absence situations:

- family educational trips
- community and church related performing groups
- organized competitive events or related activities

Make-Up Work

In order to receive one Carnegie unit of credit, a student must be in attendance at least 120 hours per unit, regardless of the number of days missed. Therefore, districts should allow students whose excessive absences are approved to make up work missed to satisfy the 120-hour requirement. Examples of make-up work that address both time and academic requirements of a course may include the following:

- after-school and/or weekend make-up programs

- extended-year programs.

All make-up time and work must be completed within 30 days from the last day of the course. The board or its designee may extend the time for completion of the requirements due to extenuating circumstances as prescribed by State Board of Education guidelines. In extreme circumstances, however, such as a lengthy illness or other factors which are beyond the student's control, the teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine the length of time that the student will have to make-up any missed work. In cases of unlawful absences, the student will be responsible for discussing such absences with the teacher and request a convenient time to do make-up work. Students who are suspended from class will be permitted to do make-up work.

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Make-up requirements that extend beyond 30 days due to extenuating circumstances must be completed prior to the beginning of the subsequent new school year.

School principals will exert every realistic effort to provide assurance that this administrative rule is adhered to in a fair and consistent manner. Principals will place special emphasis on coordinating implementation affecting students within the same family.

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Sumter School District