

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Reg. No. 400-98
Subject: STUDENT ATTENDANCE	Issued: 7/24/19
Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent	Amended: 3/16/22

I. Policy 430

II. Philosophy and Rationale

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) recognizes that regular school attendance is vital for meeting the educational needs of all students. The responsibility for regular, daily punctual attendance is shared by the community, the home, students, and school personnel. Furthermore, consistent attendance leads to quality learning for all students.

III. General Procedures

General Regulations Attendance

COMAR 13A.08.01.01

Each child who resides in this state and is 5 years old or older and under 18 years of age shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction, during the school year, in the curriculum usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age.

IV. Definitions

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – A law governed by the U.S. Department of Education that mandates all states to develop educational accountability measurements for all public K-12 schools.

Present – A student is considered in attendance at school when participating in approved school-sponsored activities, on or off campus, during the school day.

Present / Full Day - A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for greater than half of the school day.

Present / Partial Day - A student is counted present for a partial day of attendance if the student is attending for 10% (42 minutes) to 50% (3.5 hours) of the school day.

Absent - A student is considered absent when not physically present on school grounds and/or not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for the school day.

Lawful Absence - Students shall be considered lawfully absent when absent from school with proper documentation approved by the principal/designee.

Unlawful Absence - Students shall be considered unlawfully absent when absent from school without proper documentation approved by the principal/designee.

Chronic Absenteeism - ESSA defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10 percent or more of the school year for any reason. All absences, lawful and unlawful, are factored into attendance percentages.

Truant - A student is truant when unlawfully absent for a portion of or the entire school day.

Habitual Truant - A student is habitually truant if the student is unlawfully absent from school in excess of 20 percent of the school days within any marking period, semester or year.

Exemplary Attendance - All students with 3 or fewer lawful absences throughout the school year shall be recognized as attaining exemplary attendance.

V. Attendance Codes

A student is coded as present if at school or at a school activity, at a different location, personally supervised by a member(s) of the school staff. This may include authorized independent study, work study programs, field trips, athletic events, contests, music festivals, student conventions, instruction for home bound students, and similar activities officially authorized under policies of the local school board.

A student scheduled for less than a full day is to be counted present based on the amount of time he/she is scheduled.

Example: A student scheduled for a two-hour block of time will be counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for that entire block of time. A student scheduled for a two-hour block of time will be counted present for one-half day if the student is in attendance for one hour.

When recording an absence, the appropriate code regarding the cause of the student’s absence shall be designated as indicated below:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Lawful Cause of Absence - COMAR 13A.08.01.03</u>
01	Death in the immediate family
02	Illness of the child - The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent or guardian of a child continuously absent for illness.
04	Court summons
07	Hazardous weather conditions - Interpreted to mean weather conditions, which endanger the health or safety of the students when in transition to and from school.

- 08 Work or activity approved or sponsored by the school, the local school system, or the state education agency, accepted by the local Superintendent of Schools or the school principal, or any persons duly authorized by the Superintendent or principal, as reason for excusing the students.
- 09 Observance of religious holiday (up to 3 per school year)
- 10 State emergency
- 13 Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school.
- 17 Health Exclusion - The school is excluding a student because of health concerns (i.e., lack of immunization, conjunctivitis, etc.).
- 18 Suspension – (Reference FCPS Regulation 400-04: In-School Suspension, Short-Term Suspension, Extended Suspension, Expulsion)
- 19 Lack of authorized transportation – Shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.

Code **Lawful Cause of Absence – Principal/Designee**

- 03 Doctor’s note – After 10 absences, for any reason, schools may require documentation from a doctor or other medical professional.
- 14 Illness in family
- 15 Hardship - Lack of housing, clothing, or other personal items, or any other barrier that impacts attendance. This also includes situations related to McKinney-Vento.
- 16 Vacation – Students who take trips with approval of their parent/guardian may be excused for a maximum of 5 days, per school year, with prior written notice to the principal or designee.
- 23 College Visits – Visits by students to prospective colleges are excused up to 4 days per year for students who provide the principal or designee with prior written notice.

Code **Unlawful Causes of Absences**

- 20 Truancy
- 21 Other - Documentation not provided to the school

VI. Standards for Regular Attendance

An absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful is presumed to be unlawful unless a note stating the reason is submitted and approved by the principal/designee within the same term of the absence.

A. Monitoring Attendance

Procedures for monitoring attendance:

School staff will review each case in which the student has reached more than 5 unlawful absences during a 9-week grading period, 10 unlawful absences during a semester or 20 unlawful absences during the year. School staff will also review, at least quarterly, the attendance of students who are in danger of being chronically absent. Concerns will be communicated to parents/guardians.

1. Parent Notification - 3 days

When a student has accumulated 3 days of unlawful absence in any marking period, administration must notify parents/guardians, either by mail or electronically. This letter will include an explanation of the attendance policy and procedures. The secondary letter will also include an explanation of the educational impact of being absent from school. Students need to be present to learn.

2. Parent Notification - 5 days

When a student has accumulated 5 days of unlawful absence in any marking period, administration must notify parents/guardians, either by mail or electronically. This letter will include an explanation of the attendance policy and procedures. The secondary letter will also include an explanation of the educational impact of being absent from school. Students need to be present to learn.

3. Parent Notification - 10 days

When a student accumulates 10 absences, lawful or unlawful, administration must notify parents, either by mail or electronically. This letter will include an explanation of the attendance policy and procedures. The secondary letter will also include an explanation of the educational impact of being absent from school. Students need to be present to learn.

4. Parent Notification - 20 days

When a student accumulates 20 absences, lawful or unlawful, administration will notify parents, either by mail or electronically. Parents of secondary students shall be informed that the student may fail or lose credit if unlawful absences exceed 10 days in a semester or 20 days in the entire school year.

5. Parent Notification – Chronic Absence

Following the quarterly review, administration will notify parents/guardians, either by mail or electronically, when students have missed 10% of school days completed.

B. Tiers of Intervention to Address Attendance

1. **Tier 1 (Universal)** - All students receive prevention-oriented supports that promote and maintain good attendance.
2. **Tier 2 (Supplemental)** - Individual, targeted support, in addition to Universal supports, for students who have a history of moderate chronic absence (less than 9 days) during the past school year or face a hardship -that makes attendance difficult.

3. **Tier 3 (Intensive)** --Students receive intensive, individualized support, in addition to Supplemental and Universal supports, for students with chronic absence (9+ days) and/or face a hardship that makes attendance more difficult.

C. Educational Impact of Absences

When absent, students are missing important instruction which may impact academic achievement.

1. Unsatisfactory academic progress may result in non-promotion of a student.
2. Students who were absent have the right to make up class work missed and to have this work reviewed and evaluated by the teacher to be included in the grade. Students have the responsibility to request and complete missed work.

D. Options for Secondary Students

Students at risk, or who have failed/lost credit required for high school graduation due to poor attendance, will be offered the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course content, as approved by the principal/designee:

Meet the requirements of an attendance contract approved by the principal/designee. When a student has accumulated 5 unlawful absences per term (9-week grading period), 10 unlawful absences per semester or 20 unlawful absences per year, the principal/designee may develop an attendance contract with the student and parents. The student who successfully meets the requirements of the contract, as determined by the principal/designee, will receive earned credit.

The goal of an attendance contract is to target essential learning missed due to student absences and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of required content and performance standards.

VII. Procedures - Recording Absences

The absentee report/attendance register is maintained to meet the needs of the local school system and the requirements established by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). MSDE sets forth the rationale and guidelines for the implementation of a continuous student accounting system. It allows for flexibility in the manner in which records are maintained in the schools by providing a means for centralizing the function in the school. Attendance should be recorded daily by the teacher. Schools are accountable for accurate reporting by creating an original source document, which is maintained in the school office for a period of 3 years.

VIII. Attendance for Virtual Learning

The MSDE requires that all school systems track student attendance. Students will be required to attend all synchronous learning sessions, and attendance will be taken each day and each period to determine daily attendance. Students who miss a class or a full

day will be required to follow the same required processes for documentation of excused and unexcused absences. Student attendance is not indicative of the degree to which the student understands the content nor their grade in class, rather it is documentation of a student's engagement in the learning process.

A. Definitions

Present - A student will be marked as present when they attend a synchronous session.

Absent – A student will be marked as absent when they do not attend a synchronous session.

Present / Full Day - A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for synchronous instruction for greater than half of the school day.

Present / Partial Day - A student is counted present for a partial day of attendance if the student is attending synchronous instruction for 10% (42 minutes) to 50% (3.5 hours) of the school day.

Lawful Absence - Students shall be considered lawfully absent when absent from instruction with proper documentation approved by the principal/designee.

Unlawful Absence - Students shall be considered unlawfully absent when absent from instruction without submitting an absence note to the principal/designee.

B. Attendance Codes

Codes have been added to reflect student attendance during virtual learning, especially those absences related to COVID-19.

Absence Codes

02C Student illness due to COVID-19 related symptoms

03C Medical validation of COVID-19 diagnosis

13C Student is not ill or quarantined, but is not attending due to circumstances related to COVID-19

14C Exclusion due to non-school-connected COVID-19 quarantine

17C Exclusion due to school-connected COVID-19 quarantine

IX. Attendance Procedures for Pregnant and Parenting Students

A. A student's absence due to a student's pregnancy or parenting needs is a lawful absence as provided in Maryland law and acknowledged in Board of Education (Board) Policy 430 *Attendance at Schools*.

B. Pregnant or parenting student absences due to pregnancy, or pregnancy-related conditions, shall be lawful (e.g. labor, delivery, recovery, prenatal and postnatal medical appointments). Home and hospital instruction (400-37), recommended by a medical professional, may be an option for pregnant students.

C. At least 10 days of excused absences will be provided for a parenting student after the birth of the student's child.

- D. Parenting related absences due to an illness or medical appointment of the student's child, including up to 4 days of absences per school year for which the school may not require a note from a physician, shall be excused.
- E. Any absence due to a legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student that is related to family law proceedings, including adoption, custody and visitation shall be excused.
- F. Any parenting-related absence from a class due to use of a lactation space to nurse or express breast milk shall be excused.
- G. In addition to home and hospital services, a school may allow the pregnant or parenting student to make up the work that the student missed in a time period that equals at least as many days that the student was absent, and allow the student to choose one of the following alternatives to make up work that the student missed:
 - 1. Retake a semester;
 - 2. Participate in an online course credit recovery program; or
 - 3. Allow the student 6 weeks to continue at the same pace and finish at a later date.

References: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-301
Cross reference Board Policy 430

Approved:

Original signed by

Michael Markoe
Interim Superintendent