

<b>FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Reg. No. 500-25</b>
<b>Subject: STUDENT ABSENCE: MAKE-UP WORK, GRADING AND EXEMPLARY ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>Issued: 8/25/82</b>
<b>Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent</b>	<b>Amended: 1/6/16</b>

- I. Policy 430
- II. Procedures

Philosophy and Rationale

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

A. General Regulations-Attendance  
Bylaw 13A.08.01.01

- 1. Each child who resides in this state and is five (5) years old or older and under seventeen (17) <sup>1</sup> 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 studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age.
- 2. Students shall be considered in attendance at school when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal, or their designees.

B. Lawful/Unlawful Absences and Tardiness – A note stating the reason for absence or lateness is required within two (2) days of the student’s return to school. Students have the responsibility to request make-up work within two (2) days of their return to school.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: Age for compulsory school attendance will legally change from 16 to 17 for the 2015-2016 school year and from 17 to 18 for the 2017-2018 school year. Board Policy 430 will be modified to reflect the final changes on July 1, 2017.

**Code      Lawful Cause of Absence - Bylaw 13A.08.01.02** (Reg. No. 400-70)

- 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 reported continuously absent for illness.
- 04      Court summons
- 07      **Hazardous weather conditions** – This shall be 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 pupils.
- 09      Observance of religious holiday
- 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** – Used when the school is excluding a student because of health concerns (i.e., lack of immunization, conjunctivitis, lice infestation, etc.).
- 18      **Suspension** – Refer to FCPS Regulation 400-08 *Discipline*
- 19      **Lack of authorized transportation** – Shall not include students denied authorized transportation for disciplinary reasons.

**Code      Other Causes of Absences - Lawful (determined by the principal)**

- 03      Doctor's note
- 14      Illness in family
- 15      Impoverished Condition
- 16      **Vacation** – Students who take trips with approval of their parents may be excused no more than two (2) times during the school year for a combined maximum of five (5) days with prior written notice to the principal.
- 23      **College visits** – Visits by students to prospective colleges are excused up to four (4) days per year. In an unusual circumstance, the principal may allow additional excused days.

**Code      Other Causes of Absence - Unlawful**

- 20    Truancy – A truant is an enrolled student (age 5 through 20) who is absent without lawful cause as defined in COMAR 13A.08.01.03 from attendance for a school day or portion thereof.
  
- 21    Other Unlawful Absence

III.    Standards for Regular Attendance at All Grades 1-12

A.    Unlawful Absences

- 1.    At the elementary level, unlawful absences in excess of five (5) days in any one nine (9)-week grading period may result in an unsatisfactory mark in grades 1-3 and a failing grade in grades 4-5 in the affected class or classes.
  
- 2.    At the secondary level (middle and high school), unlawful absences in excess of five (5) days in any one nine (9)-week grading period shall result in a failing grade in the affected class or classes.
  
- 3.    Students have the right to make up class work missed and to have this work reviewed and evaluated by the teacher. Credit will not be given toward a grade for this work. Students have the responsibility to request make-up work within two (2) days of their return to school.

B.    Standards for All Schools

- 1.    An absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful is presumed to be unlawful and may constitute truancy.
  - a.    Absence from school without the knowledge of the parent/guardian.
  - b.    Involvement in activities or lessons that are not school related.
  
- 2.    Truant - Any student who is absent for a school day or portion thereof without lawful cause. The student shall be classified as "unlawfully absent" and appropriate consequences established by the school and Frederick County Public Schools shall be administered.
  
- 3.    Habitual truant - Any student who has been enrolled in a school for 91 or more days in a school year and is unlawfully absent from school for a number of days or portion of days in **excess of 20%** of the school days within any marking period, semester, or year.

A school system has the prerogative of defining habitual truancy in a more but not less stringent manner (e.g., unlawful absences in excess of 15% of the school days).

4. Coding Absence and Tardiness

a. Students scheduled for a full day

A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance four (4) hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for a ½ day if in attendance for at least two (2) hours of the school day, but less than four (4) hours.

b. Students scheduled for a partial day

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 (2) hour block of time will be counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for that entire block of time. If the student is absent for that entire block of time, the student will be counted absent for a full day. A student scheduled for a two (2) hour block of time will be counted present for ½ day if the student is in attendance for one (1) hour.

5. Beginning with the fifth absence, a conference may be scheduled at the school with the parent(s), student, and appropriate school personnel.

6. A note from a doctor, dentist, court official or counselor may be required for all absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days within a school year.

7. The principal or designee should initiate one or more of the following actions to promote exemplary attendance by all students:

- a. Teacher Contact
- b. School Counselor/Student Support Contact
- c. Administrative Contact
- d. Home Visit by School
- e. Referral to Student Services Team
- f. Parent Conference
- g. Referral to Pupil Personnel Worker

C. Elementary Schools

Students who have been absent twenty-seven (27) days by the end of the third quarter may be considered for possible retention during promotion/non-promotion conferences.

D. Middle/High Schools

1. All school absences are absences regardless of the reason. If the school is knowledgeable of acceptable reasons for absences, the sending of letters will be at the discretion of the principal.
2. A student who is unlawfully absent more than five (5) days in any one nine (9)-week grading period, ten (10) days for a semester course or more than twenty (20) days for a yearlong course shall fail/lose credit.
3. Parents may appeal the failure/loss of credit decision to the principal.
4. Students in danger of or who have failed/lost credit may earn days back through the following methods, as approved by the principal:
  - a. Attend school twenty (20) consecutive days within one (1) nine (9)-week grading period.
  - b. Attend Saturday session(s).
  - c. Meet the requirements of a special program approved by the principal. When a student has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences per term (nine 9-week grading period), ten (10) unlawful absences per semester or twenty (20) unlawful absences per year, the school officials may develop an attendance make-up plan with the student and parents. The student who successfully completes the plan, as determined by the principal, will receive earned credit.
5. Procedures for implementing the middle/high school attendance regulations
  - a. The school administration will review each case in which the student has reached more than five (5) unlawful absences during a nine (9)-week grading period, ten (10) unlawful absences during a semester-long course or twenty (20) unlawful absences during a year-long course. The administration will evaluate the legitimacy of all absences and remove those days where lawful absences can be documented.
  - b. When a student has reached three (3) days or classes of unlawful absence in any marking period, the principal must notify parents/guardians, either by mail or electronically, of a possible loss of credit due to unexcused absence. This letter should include an explanation of the attendance policy and procedures. On the fifth day of unlawful absence, the parent/guardian will again be notified by mail or electronically 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. A parent conference should be requested by the school and the case should be referred to the pupil personnel worker at this time. The appeal process will also be outlined in this notification. Half-day absences become part of the student's total accumulated absences. The half-day absences are determined per Regulation 400-70.

c. Make-up Days - Saturday school, after school, etc.

Students who are failing because they are over the ten (10) day limit for the semester, twenty (20) day limit for the year or over the five (5) day limit for the marking period, may be allowed to make up the time missed. Schools may not go back and remove a day of absence from the books. The schools may change the code from an unlawful absence to a lawful absence after the student has made up a day.

d. When a student has been unlawfully absent more than five (5) days per term (nine (9)-week marking period), ten (10) days per semester or twenty (20) days during the school year and it has been determined he/she will fail/lose credit, the failure/loss of credit will be indicated on the student's report card. An "F" (Failure) will be marked on the student's report card for the term in which the eleventh (11) unlawful absence for a semester-long course or twenty-first (21) unlawful absence for a year-long course is reached. This F will be recorded every term thereafter and as a final grade unless the student chooses options to make up the missed time.

E. Exemplary Attendance - Frederick County

The only system-wide recognition of student attendance is that of exemplary attendance. All students with three (3) or fewer days of legal absences shall be recognized as attaining exemplary attendance at the end of each school year prior to July 1.

Approved:

*original signed by*

---

Theresa R. Alban  
Superintendent