

Attendance Manual

Attendance Procedures and Program

Revised July 2018

**Okeechobee County School District
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Okeechobee, FL 34974**

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Policy Statement

It is the position of the Okeechobee County School Board that students must attend school on a regular and timely basis to maximize educational opportunities offered in Okeechobee County Schools. Recognizing this can be achieved successfully through combined efforts of parents and schools, this policy outlines strategies and interventions to maximize student attendance thereby creating more opportunities for student success.

This policy is applicable for all K-12 students in Okeechobee County. The superintendent may approve exceptions to this policy for special programs for enhancement purposes.

Attendance Terms and Definitions

Absence: Absence is the nonattendance of a student on days school is in session. Any student must be counted absent who is not physically present at school or at a school activity as defined under the compulsory attendance law.

Attendance: Attendance is the presence of a student on days school is in session. The student must be actually at the school to which he or she has been assigned or present at an educational activity (prior principal approval) which constitutes part of the approved school program for that student.

Habitual Truant: A student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences within 90 calendar days, with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of his or her parent or legal guardian, and who is subject to compulsory school attendance laws.

Membership: Membership is the assignment by a school district of a student to a grade or program in which regular attendance is taken.

I. School Attendance

Florida Statute 1003.21 requires that all students between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school regularly. Students who have attained the age of sixteen (16) and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until a formal declaration of intent to withdraw, signed by student and parent/guardian, is filed with the district school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment. The student's certified school counselor or other school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. Students are obligated to attend one hundred eighty (180) days of school each year. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to see that this law is obeyed.

It is important to note that failure to attend school in a regular and timely fashion hinders the educational process. In addition, truancy and poor performance have a direct relationship to juvenile delinquency and destructive behavior, not to mention the disproportionate percentage of juvenile crime that occurs during school hours. Each parent or legal guardian of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law.

Notification of Loco Parentis

In cases in which a student is not residing with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), the parent of the student must designate, in writing, the adult person(s) with whom the pupil resides who stands in loco parentis, so that the pupil may be admitted to or continue in school. This statement must be notarized and presented to the principal for acceptance.

II. Student Absences – Grades K-12

A. Excused Absences

Absences due to the following reasons will be excused:

- Illness or injury of the student
- Illness or injury to the student's immediate family necessitating the student's absence
- Death to a member of the student's family necessitating the student's absence
- Recognized religious holidays of the specific faith of a student
- Doctor and dental appointments of the student
- Pre-arranged absences of educational value and with the principal's approval
- Subpoena or forced absence by any law enforcement agency
- Major disaster that would justify absence in the judgment of the administration
- Head lice, a maximum of two days per incident

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian to provide a written statement or oral notification, (oral notifications are to be documented by the school), indicating the reason for the absences within three (3) days of the student's return to school. Denial of an excused absence based on this time frame will require documentation of parental contact to inform the parent that the absence remains unexcused after the three-day period (Refer to Section V). Parent notes are accepted for nine excused absences per semester for high school students and nine excused absences per year for K-8 students. After nine excused absences by parent notes per semester for high school students and nine days per year for K-8 students, doctor documentation is required for the absence to be marked as an excused absence. Without verification the absences will be unexcused and addressed by the truancy policy.

The written statement must include the following information for each absence:

- Date the excuse is written
- Date(s) of the absence(s)
- Full name of the student
- Reason for the absence
- Daytime telephone number of parent or guardian
- Signature of parent or guardian

An excused absence should be coded as an "E" for reporting purposes.

Final determination on whether an absence is excused or unexcused is the responsibility of the principal. Any planned absences, other than medical appointments, must be approved in advance by the principal.

B. Unexcused Absences

- Any absence which is not justified by the parent or guardian according to allowable excuses (see above) or for which the reason is unknown.
- Any note from a parent after a student has nine excused days per semester for high school students or nine excused days per year for K-8 students.
- Not attending class while on a school campus.

An unexcused absence should be coded as a “U” for reporting purposes

Final determination on whether an absence is excused or unexcused is the responsibility of the principal

C. Accumulated Unexcused Tardies and Early Releases – Grades K-8

Punctuality is necessary for a student to take full advantage of available educational opportunities. If a student is not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings, he/she will be classified tardy. An early release is defined as any release prior to the regular dismissal time. Any student in grade K-8, who accumulates any combination of five unexcused tardies and/or unexcused early releases (not including a documented medical/dental appointments or other authorized reasons that constitute an excused absence), shall be deemed absent (unexcused) for one school day. A parent/guardian request for early release or late arrival shall be considered excused with documentation in accordance with procedures for excused absences. Tardies and early releases that are deemed excused will not accumulate towards an absence. An unexcused tardy or early release will be coded as a “1” for reporting purposes.

D. Suspensions

1. Out-of-School Suspension

- When deemed necessary by the principal, a student may be prohibited from attending their home school.
- To maintain academic progress, students are encouraged to make up work even if full credit will not be awarded.

- All make-up work should be completed within one week following return from absence. This deadline may be extended with the approval of the teacher or principal.
- All students who are suspended from school may take nine week or semester exams for full credit following the period of suspension.
- Florida Law 984.13 provides authority for a law enforcement officer to take into custody a child who is suspended or expelled and not in the presence of the parent or guardian.
- An out-of-school suspension should be coded as an “O” for reporting purposes.

2. In-School Suspension

- Students in In-School Suspension will be allowed to make up work.
- Students will not be counted absent during In-School Suspension.
- An In-School Suspension should be coded as an “I” for reporting purposes.

E. Field Trips

- A student on a field trip will not be marked absent if approved by the principal prior to trip.
- A field trip should be coded as an “F” for reporting purposes.

F. Homebound

- Students who are on permanent Homebound need to be placed in Homebound homeroom with proper withdrawal (W01) and re-entry (R01) codes.
- Hospital/Homebound (H) student scheduled in a hospital program in another district pursuant to the rule regarding alternately- assigned students, 6A-6.03020(6), FAC.
- Students who have been approved to come to school as they are able (intermittent homebound) code all absences once approved (M).

III. Coding for Absences/Tardies

Use the following codes for reporting purposes:

TYPE	CODE
Excused Absence	E
Excused – Head lice	E-H
Excused – Court	E-C
Excused – Medical Appointment	E-M
Excused – Illness	E-I
Excused – Death in Family	E-D
Excused – Bus Issue	E-B
Excused – Justified Disaster	E-J
Excused – Planned Absence	E-P
Excused – Religious Holiday	E-R
Unexcused Absence	U
Out of School Suspension	O
In-School Suspension	I
Field Trip (Not counted as an absence)	F
In School Activity	S
Hospital/Homebound	H M
Permanent Intermittent	
Excused Tardy	T
Excused Early Release (Checkout)	C
Unexcused Tardy/Early Release	1
Unexcused Absence due to accumulated unexcused tardies/early checkouts	2

	the third day of the student's return to school.	Teacher/Attendance person	
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4 Consecutive Days without school's knowledge of reason	<u>ALL GRADES:</u> Parent/guardian contact will be made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Based Attendance Person • Guidance Counselor • Homeroom Teacher 	
5 Consecutive Days during the first week of school	<u>ALL GRADES:</u> Home visit to inquire of reason for absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Attendance Officer 	
5 Unexcused Days	<u>ALL GRADES:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A computer- generated letter is mailed to parent. • The school may refer to Director of Student Services for a Truancy Staffing if student has previous history of excessive absences and SIT Meeting. • If a district level Truancy Staffing has been held, once the point of a 5-day letter is reached during a new school year, the district may proceed with a truancy court referral. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Based Attendance Person • Guidance Counselor • Guidance Counselor notifies Director of Student Services to file Truancy Procedures. 	Attachment B - 5 Day Letter
9 Excused Parent Notes	<u>ALL GRADES:</u> A computer-generated letter is mailed to parent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-Based Attendance Person 	Attachment C and D - 9 day letter
10 Unexcused Days	<u>ALL GRADES:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A computer- generated letter is mailed to parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Based Attendance Person 	Attachment E, F, and G - 10 day letter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact is made with the parent via personal or telephone conference. • A SIT meeting is scheduled if for the first time. • Referral (mandatory) is made to Director of Student Services for a Truancy Staffing if student has previous history of excessive absences and SIT Meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal or designee • Guidance Counselor • Guidance Counselor 	<p>Attachment J – SIT Meeting</p> <p>Attachment K – Referral for District Truancy Staffing</p>
15 Unexcused Days	<p>ALL GRADES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A District Truancy Staffing is conducted with representation from Law Enforcement, School District Personnel, parent, and student • A decision may be made to file a petition in truancy court. • Procedures for notification to DCF of Learnfare recipients. • Age 14-17: Student information is sent to Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Staff • School Based Staff • School Principal 	<p>Attachment K – Referral for District Truancy Staffing</p> <p>See Learnfare, page 13</p> <p>See DHMV, page 14</p>

Note: This chart is only a guide. The principal, guidance counselor, or district attendance officer, through communication with the student or parent, may schedule a SIT meeting or refer to staffing when current interventions are not improving attendance.

Automated phone system meets the contact requirement ONLY if it results in an actual conversation between parent or guardian and school representative.

VI. Student Information Team (SIT) Meetings

As required by Florida Statute 232, a SIT meeting must be conducted if a student has five (5) unexcused absences within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences within a 90 calendar day period. In addition, a SIT meeting may be called at the principal's discretion.

A. Participants of a SIT Meeting

The meeting should include the student, parents and or guardians, counselor, teachers, and other program specialists if needed.

B. Purpose of a SIT Meeting

The meeting brings together parties that may offer assistance to help improve attendance. The purpose of a SIT meeting is to determine reasons/causes for unexcused absences and to begin interventions to address truancy. School Personnel initiate interventions with the student and the family at the time of the SIT meeting.

Educational interventions resulting from the SIT meeting may include:

- Academic Assessment or Review
- Modification/Change of Curriculum
- Modification/Change of Schedule
- Educational Counseling
- Referral to Service Agencies

Note: Form O-EX-39 should be completed at this meeting

C. Procedures for On-Going Attendance Problems

If a school-level SIT meeting has been held for truancy, once the point of a five-day letter is reached during a new school year or new semester, the school may proceed to a referral for a district-level Truancy Staffing and will not need to repeat the school-based SIT meeting. In an attempt to correct the attendance problem, parent notification is required prior to this referral.

If a district-level Truancy Staffing has been held, once the point of a five-day letter is reached during a new school year or new semester, the district may proceed with a truancy court referral. In an attempt to correct the attendance problem, parent notification is required prior to this referral.

From this point forward, there will be ongoing communication between the Student Services Office and staff at the student's school to review, implement, and revise strategies.

VII. Statute 1003.26 Enforcement of School Attendance Guidelines

It is the policy of the state that each district school superintendent be responsible for enforcing school attendance of all students subject to the compulsory school age in the school district.

If a student subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent or the district school superintendent or his/her designee shall refer the case to the case staffing committee pursuant to s.984.12. and the district school superintendent or his/her designee may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures in s. 984.151.

The judge may:

- Order the parent to participate in parenting classes.
- Order the parent to attend school with the child.
- Order community service hours at the school for child or parent.
- Refer the child/parent for counseling or other services as appropriate.
- Impose fines for each day of school missed in accordance with
- 1003.27(7)(d).

The judge will continue to require the child to be present for hearings periodically until the case is resolved or the child becomes ineligible. Additional sanctions may be ordered for the child or parents if attendance does not improve.

VIII. Learnfare/Habitually Truant

The School Board of Okeechobee County and the Department of Children and Families have a cooperative agreement in place that addresses statutory responsibilities and implements procedures regarding the Learnfare Program. Learnfare allows the sanctioning of parents who receive cash assistance for children if those children are school age and are excessively absent from school.

Section 414.1251(1), Florida Statutes, requires DCF to reduce the temporary cash assistance for an eligible parent's dependent child or for an eligible teenage participant who is not exempt from school attendance requirements and who has been identified as a habitual truant or as a dropout.

Pursuant to section 1003.27 (2) (b), Florida Statutes, a habitual truant is defined as a student who has accumulated 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the student's parent or legal guardian.

School districts will notify DCF when a Learnfare eligible child is either a habitual truant or a dropout. At that time, DCF staff will review the case record to determine if good cause exists for failure to participate. If good cause does not exist, the sanction will be imposed and the parent will receive a notice of case action to reflect that the child's needs have been removed from the benefit amount. If the parent does not agree, DCF procedures allow the parent or guardian of a habitually truant or dropout child to request a fair hearing. The child may be reinstated or added back to the case under the following circumstances: (1) following the truant child's substantially improved attendance during a subsequent grading period; or (2) after the dropout child enrolls in a public school, receives a high school diploma or its equivalent, enrolls in preparation for General Educational Development Tests, or enrolls in other educational activities approved by the district school board.

IX. Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Notification Procedures

Section 1003.27 (b) Florida Statutes – The district school superintendent must report to the DHSMV habitual truants and dropouts. A truant or dropout may have their driver's license privilege taken away. In addition, the DHSMV may withhold issuing a permit. The following procedures should be followed according to law in referring students to DHSMV for missing 15 unexcused days of school:

1. The Administrative Assistant of I.T. will forward the information on students 14 to 17 years old missing 15 unexcused days of school.
2. DHSMV will mail an Intent to Suspend letter to the student.
3. The student then has 15 calendar days to schedule a hearing to document hardship. The hearing, which will be heard and processed by the principal, must take place within 30 days. The school principal must immediately notify the district contact of a student's request for a waiver. This urgency stems from Florida law stating that the district contact must notify the DHSMV within 24 hours after a student's request for a hearing.
4. The hearing must be conducted within 30 days. The principal must notify the district contact of the outcome of the hearing as notification must be given to DHSMV within 24 hours.
5. If no response and/or no improvement in attendance have been made, the DHSMV will send an Order of Suspension letter to the truant student.

Students must attend school for 30 consecutive days without an unexcused absence to have their license reinstated. The principal of the school will provide students with a paper document certifying no unexcused absences within the past 30 days. The signature on this document must be notarized or accompanied by the official school seal.

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment A
Sample Letter Requesting Parent Note
Grades K-8**

Dear Parent:

Florida Statute 1003.26 states, “each parent or guardian must justify each absence and the school must evaluate each justification based upon policies that define an excused and unexcused absence.”

According to our records your child, _____ was absent _____, and no record of a phone call or note by you was received. Please complete the following and return it to school.

Student’s Name: _____

Date of Absence: _____

Reason for Absence: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

To avoid this extra paperwork, we ask that you please call the school the day your child is absent. If a telephone is unavailable to you please write a note.

Sincerely,

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment B
Sample 5-Day Letter
All Grades**

**To the Parent or Guardian of: (Name)
(Address)
(Date)**

Our records indicate that your son/daughter has been absent from school excessively. Five (5) or more of the absences are unexcused. Our records indicate that the school attendance clerk, and/or automated phone service has contacted your home.

Florida Statute 1003.21 mandates compulsory attendance between the ages of 6 and 16. Florida Statute 1003.24 mandates that parents are responsible for the attendance of their school-age children. The superintendent of schools is required by law, F S 1001.53, to enforce the compulsory school attendance laws.

Learnfare: Important notice for parents who are recipients of cash assistance from DCF. If your child is a habitual truant or dropout, DCF may reduce the cash assistance received for that child.

Please contact _____ at (863-462-5 __) to justify these absences so that no further action is necessary.

Sincerely,

Principal

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment C
Sample 9-Day Letter
Grades K-8**

**To the Parent or Guardian of: (Name)
(Address)
(Date)**

School board policy states that more than nine days of excused absences by a parent note in a school year are considered excessive, and a doctor note or court document must be provided after that point. This policy is based upon the belief that we cannot provide the best education possible for children who are excessively absent from school.

Our records indicate that your child accumulated nine days of excused absences by a parent note in this school year. Therefore, any further absences will require that you provide the school with a doctor's note, attorney or professional for each absence. Failure to provide medical verification will result in the absence being unexcused.

Please contact me at (863-462-5) to schedule an appointment concerning your child's attendance or the attendance policy.

Sincerely,

Principal

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment D
Sample 9-Day Letter
Grades 9-12**

**To the Parent or Guardian of: (Name)
(Address)
(Date)**

School board policy states that more than nine days of excused absences by a parent note in a semester are considered excessive, and a doctor note or document from the court must be provided after that point. This policy is based upon the belief that we cannot provide the best education possible for children who are excessively absent from school.

Our records indicate that your child accumulated nine days of excused absences by a parent note in this semester. Therefore, any further absences will require that you provide the school with a doctor note, attorney or professional for each absence. Failure to provide medical verification will result in the absence being unexcused.

Please contact me at (863-462-5) to schedule an appointment concerning your child's attendance or the attendance policy.

Sincerely,

Principal

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment E
Sample 10-Day Letter
Grades K-5**

**To the Parent or Guardian of: (Name)
(Address) (Date)**

Our records indicate your son/daughter has ten (10) unexcused absences. Regular attendance is an essential factor in succeeding at school. Please be advised that your child’s unexcused absences will impact his/her grades through a reduction in credit earned for missed assignments.

Florida Statute 1003.21 mandates compulsory attendance between the ages of 6 and 16. Florida statute 1003.24 mandates that parents are responsible for the attendance of their school-age children. The superintendent of schools is required by law, FS 1001.53, to enforce the compulsory school attendance laws.

Learnfare: Important notice for parents who are recipients of cash assistance from DCF. If your child is a habitual truant or dropout, DCF may reduce the cash assistance received for that child.

Please contact _____ at (863-462-5 __) to justify these absences so that no further action is necessary.

Sincerely,

Principal

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment F
Sample 10-Day Letter
Grades 6-8**

To the Parent or Guardian of: (Name)

(Address)

(Date)

Our records indicate your son/daughter has ten (10) unexcused absences. Regular attendance is an essential factor in succeeding at school. Please be advised that your child's unexcused absences will impact his/her grades through a reduction in credit earned for missed assignments.

Florida Statute 1003.21(c) requires a student who attains the age of sixteen (16) be subject to compulsory attendance unless he/she files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. This must be signed by the student's parent. In addition to impacting the student's future earning potential, the Department of Highway and Motor Vehicles may withhold the issuance of or suspend your child's driver's license for non-attendance.

Learnfare: Important notice for parents who are recipients of cash assistance from DCF. If your child is a habitual truant or dropout, DCF may reduce the cash assistance received for that child.

Please contact _____ at (863-462-5) to justify these absences so that no further action is necessary.

Sincerely,

Principal

Insert School Letterhead

**Attachment G
Sample 10-Day Letter
Grades 9-12**

To the Parent or Guardian of: (Name)
(Address)
(Date)

Our records indicate your son/daughter has ten (10) unexcused absences. Regular attendance is an essential factor in succeeding at school. Please be advised that your child's unexcused absences will impact his/her grades through a reduction in credit earned for missed assignments and, therefore, may result in failure to earn credit for a course.

Florida Statute 1003.21 (C) requires a student who attains the age of sixteen (16) be subject to compulsory attendance unless he/she files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. This must be signed by the student's parent. In addition to impacting the student's future earning potential, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles may withhold the issuance of or suspend your child's driver's license for non-attendance.

In order for a student to earn credit in a course, a student must not be absent more than nine unexcused days per semester. A student who exceeds nine unexcused absences in a course may earn credit in that class by earning a passing grade in at least one of the two nine weeks grading periods, pass a comprehensive semester exam, and earn a passing semester grade for that course.

Learnfare: Important notice for parents who are recipients of cash assistance from DCF. If your child is a habitual truant or dropout, DCF may reduce the cash assistance received for that child.

Please contact _____ at (863-462-5) to justify these absences so that no further action is necessary.

Sincerely,

Principal

Attachment H Compulsory School Attendance Law

Compulsory School Attendance Law

Florida Statute Chapter 1003.27 (7) (1-2)

A parent who refuses or fails to have a child who is under his or her control attend school regularly, or who refuses or fails to comply with the requirements in subsection (3), is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided by law. The continued or habitual absence of a child without the consent of the principal or teacher in charge of the school he or she attends or should attend, or of the tutor who instructs or should instruct him or her, is prima facie evidence of a violation of this chapter; however, the court of the appropriate jurisdiction, upon finding that the parent has made a bona fide and diligent effort to control and keep the child in school, shall excuse the parent from any criminal liability prescribed herein and shall refer the parent and child for counseling, guidance, or other needed services.

Delivered to the parent/guardian

By: _____ School Attendance Officer Date: _____

(Parent Copy)

Insert School Letterhead

Attachment I

Student's Intent to Withdraw from Secondary School

I, _____, age _____
(Student Name)

file this as a formal intent to withdraw from school as of _____.

I acknowledge that I have been provided information of the impact of this action:

- Terminating school enrollment prior to graduation will likely reduce my potential earnings and negatively affect my career options.
- Terminating school enrollment will result in the revocation/denial of my driving privileges until age 18.

(Signature of Student)

(Date of Birth)

(Signature of Parent)

(Mailing Address)

(Signature of School Official)

(Date)

Attachment K
Referral for District Truancy Staffing
Okeechobee County School Board/Student Services Department

ESE Program

Regular Program

Truancy Referral
(Student Attendance Record Must Be Attached)

Student ID # _____ School _____ Grade _____ Referral Date _____

Student Name _____ DOB _____ Race _____ Sex _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Phone# _____ Work # _____

Address _____

Step 1: School Contact:

Telephone _____

(Dates)

Letters: _____ Conferences: _____

(Dates)

(Dates)

Comments/Results:

Step 2: School Attendance Assistant Contact: _____

(Dates)

Comments/Results _____

Step 3: School Counselor Conference: Dates _____

Curriculum Changes yes/no If yes, has truancy been resolved? Yes/no

Comments/Results:

Step 4: Educational Review Date _____ Psychological Evaluation? Yes/no

Comments/Recommendations: _____

Step 5: Joint Staffing Date: _____

Comments/Recommendation: _____

Principal/Designee Signature Date

School Attendance Assistant Date

Parent/Guardian Date

Counselor Date

Attachment L
Referral for Court Truancy Staffing
The School District of Okeechobee County/Student Services Department
Truancy Referral
(Student Attendance Record Must Be Attached)

Student ID # _____ School _____ Grade _____ Referral Date _____
Student Name _____ DOB _____ Race _____
Sex _____
Parent/Guardian _____ Phone # _____ Work # _____
Address: _____

Date of District Truancy Meeting: _____
Number of Unexcused Absences after meeting:

Date of Parent Conference referring to Truancy Court: _____
Outcome of conference: _____

This form should be filed out and submitted to the Director of Student Services. A petition with the courts will be filed on receipt of this referral.

FLORIDA STATUES

1003.21 All children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, except as otherwise provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term.

A student who attains the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. Public school students who have attained the age of 16 years and who have not graduated are subject to compulsory school attendance until the formal declaration of intent is filed with the district school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The school district shall notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment. The student's certified school counselor or other school personnel shall conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. The student's certified school counselor or other school personnel shall inform the student of opportunities to continue his or her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and high school equivalency examination preparation. Additionally, the student shall complete a survey in a format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

1003.24 Parents responsible for attendance of children; attendance policy.—Each parent of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for the child's school attendance as required by law. The absence of a student from school is prima facie evidence of a violation of this section; however, criminal prosecution under this chapter may not be brought against a parent until the provisions of s. [1003.26](#) have been complied with.

1003.26 Upon each unexcused absence, or absence for which the reason is unknown, the school principal or his or her designee shall contact the student's parent to determine the reason for the absence. If the absence is an excused absence, as defined by district school board policy, 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.

(b) 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 shall report to the school principal or his or her designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. The principal shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, 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 must be scheduled to identify potential remedies, and the principal shall notify the district school superintendent and the school district contact for home education programs that the referred student is exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance.

1003.27 In each case of non-enrollment or of nonattendance upon the part of a student who is required to attend some school, when no valid reason for such non-enrollment or nonattendance is found, the district school superintendent shall institute a criminal prosecution against the student's parent.

(b) Each public school principal or the principal's designee shall notify the district school board of each minor student under its jurisdiction who accumulates 15 unexcused absences in a period of 90 calendar days. Each designee of the governing body of each private school, and each parent whose child is enrolled in a home education program, may provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles with the legal name, sex, date of birth, and social security number of each minor student under his or her jurisdiction who fails to satisfy relevant attendance requirements and who fails to otherwise satisfy the requirements of s. [322.091](#).

The district school superintendent must provide the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles the legal name, sex, date of birth, and social security number of each minor student who has been reported under this paragraph and who fails to otherwise satisfy the requirements of s. 322.091. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles may not issue a driver license or learner's driver license to, and shall suspend any previously issued driver license or learner's driver license of, any such minor student, pursuant to the provisions of s. 322.091.

1001.53 District school superintendent responsible for enforcement of attendance.—The district school superintendent shall be responsible for the enforcement of the attendance provisions of chapters 1003 and 1006. In a district in which no attendance assistant is employed, the district school superintendent shall have those duties and responsibilities and exercise those powers assigned by law to attendance assistants.

5.30 Student Attendance

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Chapter 5.00: Students

5.30*

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policies and procedures regarding student attendance and truancy enforcement are located in the Okeechobee County Schools Attendance Procedures and Programs Manual, the Code of Student Conduct, and the Student Progression Plan. The Attendance Procedures and Programs Manual shall be approved by the Board. The Superintendent will recommend changes in the Attendance Procedures and Programs Manual and other policies for Board approval, as necessary, due to changes in Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rules and to provide a more effective program.

I. A student who is absent without the principal's approval shall have his/her parent(s), as defined by Florida Statutes, report such absences to the school center in the manner prescribed by the Code of Student Conduct.

A. The Code of Student Conduct shall prescribe attendance requirements including, but not limited to, provisions for excused and unexcused absences, opportunities to make up work assignments, and reporting absences.

B. Students shall be excused from any examination, study or work assignments for observance of a religious holiday or because the tenets of his/her religion forbid secular activity at such time. The school principal shall implement this provision on an individual basis pursuant to Florida Statutes and State Board of Education rule.

C. Students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder may be excused from school to attend medical appointments necessary to receive therapy for autism spectrum disorder, including, but not limited to, applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy and occupational therapy.

D. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who exercises their right to observe religious holidays or attend medical appointments.

II. Student absences must be tracked on a daily basis and parents contacted as required by law.

III. A person designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate truancy problems.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAWS IMPLEMENTED: 1001.43, 1003.21, 1003.23, 1003.24, 1003.26

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RULES: 6A-1.044, 6A-1.09514

HISTORY: Adopted: 07/14/1998