

Attendance Policy

Because attendance in school is critical to student achievement and success, the School Board of St. Lucie County recently approved changes to the *Student Progression Plan* that impact whether or not absences and tardies will be excused. Please review those changes below and all of the District's attendance policies by going to the Student Progression Plan at www.stlucie.k12.fl.us. Once on the website, go to *Our District*. You will find *Student Progression* under *Reports*.

- Students who have accumulated a total of 15 excused absences or 8 unexcused absences within the school year will not have subsequent absences of 2 or more days excused unless: (a) the parent has on file with the school a statement from a licensed physician documenting the student's chronic medical condition and a valid release allowing the school to communicate with the physician, and/or (b) documentation is received demonstrating that attendance was impracticable or inadvisable on account of sickness or injury, attested to by a written statement of a physician. The physician's statement must contain the dates of the absences for which excuse is sought and the reason for the absence. In addition, the physician must be licensed under Chapter 458 (medical practice), 459 (osteopathic medicine), 460 (chiropractic medicine) or Chapter 461 (podiatric Medicine), Florida Statutes.
The above language is in addition to the language requiring a physician's authorization for absences of 3 or more days when a student has accumulated 10 excused absence or 5 unexcused absences within a semester.
- For all students in grades K – 12, once a student has accumulated 3 excused tardies or absences in class periods due to leaving school early for medical/dental appointments within a semester, the parent must provide documentation from a physician that the student had a medical/dental appointment for subsequent class absences or tardies to be excused.

We know you want your child to have the best education possible and regular school attendance is an important factor in meeting that goal. However, when your child does have to miss school, it is also very important that those absences are excused. Unexcused absences, for some grade levels, can impact your child's grades on makeup work and can result in a violation on their driving record, even before your child gets a learner's permit. Please ensure that your child is in school daily and send documentation to the school as required by School Board Policies whenever your child does have to miss school due to illness.

- Compulsory School Attendance & Declaration of Intent To Terminate School Enrollment (F.S. 1003.21) - Pursuant to Section (F.S. 1003.21), all children who are either six years of age or who will be six years old by February 1, or who are older than six years of age but who have not attained the age of 18 years, must attend school regularly during the entire school term. A student between 16 and 18 years of age is not subject to compulsory attendance if the student completes a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and that the disenrollment will be reported to the Department of Safety and Motor Vehicles. The declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment must be signed by the student and the student's parent or legal guardian. The school must notify the parent or legal guardian of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment. A student who attains the age of 18 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age.
- Official Attendance - The official daily attendance will be taken during the second-class period for middle and full-time high school students and at the beginning of the day for elementary schools. For part-time high school students the first scheduled period of the day on campus will be used to determine daily attendance. Secondary attendance must also be taken daily by class period.
- Enforcement of Attendance (F.S. 1003.26)

When Parent is Required to be Contacted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After each unexcused absence or absence for which the reason is unknown
Means of Parent Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact can be by phone, auto call system, mail, in-person by school representative
Required Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phone log noting date and time of call, official making call, family member contacted, and outcome of conversation Mail – copy of dated notice or postal service return-receipt Personal Contact – Parent's signature on form(s)/letter or Student Services forms
Referrals to Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to or upon the 10th unexcused absences in any 90-day period and after school efforts to resolve have not been successful. Schools will provide Student Services with documentation of their efforts to resolve the truancy
Truancy Petition	Described herein
Referral to CINS/FINS (Children in Need of Services/Families in need of Services; The CINS/FINS provider is Children's Home Society)	Secondary schools are encouraged to refer habitual truants to the d. CINS/FINS provider.

- Project ROCK - Student's suspended out-of-school who attend Project ROCK (north or south) can be coded as "R" (Project ROCK) for the dates that the school confirms that the student attended the program. Students with a disability may attend Project Rock. Day of attendance at Project Rock will not count as out-of-school suspension.

- Attendance Codes, Excused Absences, Unexcused Absences (F.S.1003.26)

Attendance Codes	<p>Excused Absences - Absences are excused when an appropriate explanation is provided by the parent within 3-days of the student's return or by the parent's physician, when the physician authorization threshold has been reached.</p> <p>The written explanation must include the dates of the absences which are sought to be excused and the reason for the absence. (F.S. 1003.26)</p>	<p>Unexcused Absences - Unexcused absences are all failures to attend school other than those specifically excused by the principal or designees. (F.S. 100 3.26)</p>
------------------	--	--

<p>C – Clinic E – Excused G – Guidance I – BIC (not an absence) O – Out of School Suspension R – Project ROCK (not an absence) Students suspended out of school who attend Project ROCK can be coded as “R” for the dates the program verifies. S – School Activity/ Field Trip (not an absence) In cases where there is a question about the validity of the activity, the Zone Assistant Superintendent shall make the determination. T – Excused Tardy U – Unexcused Tardy 1 – Unexcused Tardy 2 – Absence due to excessive tardies (K-5 only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness of the student • Major illness in the student’s immediate family • Medical appointment of the student • Death of family member or friend • Required Court Appearance • Religious holiday of the student or student’s family’s faith • Subpoena or forced absence by any law enforcement agency to fulfill civic duties; a copy of the subpoena or court summons is required • Major disaster that justifies the absence that has been approved by the principal • Head lice: maximum of 2 days per incident and a maximum of 2 incidents per semester • Missing the school bus if the bus is more than 5 minutes early or more than 15 minutes late or is not able to make the route • Other planned absences approved in advance by the principal • Vacation travel or family outing/activity where the student has accumulated fewer than 10 excused or 5 unexcused absences. The principal can excuse vacation travel that exceeds the threshold after considering the student’s attendance history, academic performance, mastery of the curriculum, and reason for the travel. Absences for this reason cannot exceed 5-days annually. Schools have the authority to withdraw students whose absences for this reason exceed this provision. Such students will be withdrawn for non-attendance • <u>Out of school suspensions</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truancy • Vacation travel where the student has accumulated more than 10 excused or 5 unexcused absences within a semester and the travel has not been approved in advance by the principal. Absences for this reason cannot exceed 5-days annually and cannot be excused without advance written approval of the principal. Schools have the authority to withdraw students whose absences for this reason exceed this provision. Such students will be withdrawn for non-attendance. • Take Your Son or Daughter to Work Day • Failure to provide an explanation of the absence to the school within 3 days of the student’s return to school – • Student Services staff can, after investigation advise the school to excuse absence documentation received after the expiration of the 3-day period. Physician explanations received after the 3-day period will also authorize the school to excuse the absence(s). • Failure to provide a Physician’s Authorization when required • Missing the school bus if the bus is less than 5 minutes early or less than 15 minutes late • Immunization non-compliance • Non-Attendance due to head lice that exceeds two days per incident and/or exceeds 2-days per semester; students who return to school with lice or nits and who are sent home the same day or who remain in the office /clinic will not be counted as “in-attendance” and will have the absence unexcused
---	--	--

Reporting Attendance Cases to PST/Attendance Committee (F.S. 1003.26)	Truancy Petition
<p>When: Student has accumulated 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 90 calendar days</p> <p>By Whom: Teacher or any school staff with knowledge of the student’s attendance</p> <p>Required Participants: School Social Worker or contracted caseworker; school attendance officer; parent shall be invited and encouraged to attend</p> <p>Purpose of Meeting: To determine if a pattern of non-attendance is developing or exists and to develop interventions that shall be implemented</p> <p>Interventions: Interventions may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *frequent communication between school and family *mentoring *counseling *evaluation for alternative education program *attendance contracts *agency referral(s) *other interventions, including but not limited to a Truancy Petition pursuant to (F.S. 984.151) <p>Non-Compliant Students: When students subject to compulsory attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent, guardian, superintendent or designee may refer the case to the case staffing committee pursuant to F.S. 984.12 and the superintendent may file a truancy petition pursuant to F.S. 984.151.</p>	<p>The Superintendent may file a truancy petition pursuant to procedures in F.S. 984.151 when:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A student has 5 unexcused absences in a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences in a 90 calendar-day-period The PST/SST has met and efforts to correct the attendance has been unsuccessful The parent has been notified as to the unexcused absences or absences for which reasons are unknown <u>and that a Truancy Petition is being filed.</u> <p>School’s Responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Student Services to prepare the Petition • Provide Student Services will all verifications of notification to and conferences with the parent to inform and discuss attendance • Copies of all parent and physician excuses and phone logs • Verification that the recorded attendance is true and correct according to School Board policy <p>Filing of Truancy Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filed in Circuit Court in the 19th Judicial Circuit • All supportive documentation becomes part of the Court file • Parent(s) named in the Petition will receive a copy of the Petition when the Petition is served