



**SEEDS OF FAITH
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

Policy No. 202
Section: Pupils
Title: Attendance
Adopted: May 3, 2016
Revised:

1. Purpose

The Board believes that daily attendance is an integral part of an effective educational environment. Our educational program offered by SFCA is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to derive maximum benefits from their education and reach their fullest potential. Because learning occurs in a sequential order, regular attendance is necessary for students to build upon previous information, to provide understanding, and to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum. Daily attendance contributes to the total development of the student and helps the student develop a sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and good work habits.

2. Definitions

Regular Attendance shall be defined as attending school for the days and hours that the school is in session.

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Sec. 11.13

Compulsory School Age refers to the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school (which may be no later than at the age of 8 years) until the age of seventeen (17) years old or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first.

Excused Absence is defined as non-attendance from school due to any mental or physical illness of a student. Uncontrollable circumstances such as quarantine, impassable roads, death in the immediate family or weather so inclement as to endanger the health or welfare of child or other exceptionally urgent reasons directly affecting the student shall also be excused absences.

Unexcused Absence is defined as non-attendance from school of kindergarten through seventeen (17) years old or older students for unapproved reasons other than those deemed to be excused.

Unexcused Absences shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Going away to visit without prior notification to the school unless for emergency situations.
2. Needed at home with no clarification on the excuse.
3. Missed the bus unless the bus was extremely off schedule or extreme inclement weather conditions existed.
4. Babysitting for reasons other than emergency situations.
5. Shopping, family chores, and domestic activities that are not of an emergency nature and could be scheduled at times when school is not in session.

6. Oversleeping
7. Car failure
8. Missing the bus

3. Authority
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11.25

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in SFCA, except that the Administrator/Principal may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent conditions that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Medical/Sickness – A student may be excused temporarily from school attendance provided that s/he is unable to attend school due to any medical, mental, physical or other good and sufficient reasons as judged by the Administrator/Principal.

Upon return to school following the absence, an excuse with the student's name, reason of absence, date of absence, and parent/guardian signature must accompany the student to school and be presented upon arrival. An absence will be considered unexcused if a student fails to turn in an excuse after being back to school for three (3) days. An absence of three (3) or more days due to illness will necessitate a physician's statement.

The Administrator/Principal may request a physician's statement for any questionable or excessive absenteeism. Excessive absenteeism is defined as absence of 10% or more of the required student days for the school year.

2. Death in the immediate family – Students must present an excuse upon return stating the relation of the immediate family member for the absence taken.
 - a. Parent/Guardian/Step-Parent/Sibling – Five (5) days including day of the funeral
 - b. Grandparent/Step-Grandparent/Resident in house – Three (3) days including day of the funeral
 - c. Aunt/Uncle/First Cousin/Niece/Nephew – Day of the funeral
3. Educational Tours/Mission Trips/Other Tours – A student may be excused from school attendance in order to participate in a nonschool sponsored educational tour or trip if the following conditions are met:

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- a. The request for educational tour/trip approval must be made at least two (2) weeks prior to the tour/trip.
- b. The Student's participation on the tour or trip has been approved by the Administrator/Principal or designee.
- c. There is an adult who is directing and supervising the student during the tour or trip who is acceptable to both the parents/guardians and the Administrator/Principal.
- d. Students will be given the opportunity to complete any class work, projects, assignments or tests missed in the duration of the tour/trip. Upon request, the teacher will provide information of the material covered and assignments for the period of the student's absence. Make-up tests will be administered at the teacher's convenience. All make-up work must be completed within five (5) days after the completion of the educational tour/mission trip/other tours.

The Administrator/Principal has the authority to limit the number and duration of tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted students during the school year. Educational Tours/Trips will not be approved during the formal testing window.

4. Vacation – Parents/Guardians requesting permission for students to be absent from school for a vacation must complete a vacation approval form. The reason and duration of the absence for the vacation must be stated on the form. Parents/Guardians must request the form from the school or appear in person for the form. Retroactive requests will not be considered. To be approved, vacation requests must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Students must travel with parents/guardians or with the parent's/guardian's permission for travel with a person(s) acceptable to parents/guardians.
 - b. The request for vacation approval must be made at least two (2) weeks prior to the vacation.
 - c. Students with excessive absences (excluding medically excused) will not be granted permission. Requests for exceptions may be reviewed by the Administrator/Principal.
 - d. Requests for vacations of longer than five (5) days must be approved by the Administrator/Principal.
 - e. One (1) vacation may be granted to any student in one (1) school year. Additional vacation requests must be approved by the Administrator/Principal

- f. Absences due to approved vacations will be considered excused.
 - g. Students will be given the opportunity to complete any class work, projects, assignments or tests missed in the duration of the vacation. Upon request, the teacher will provide information of the material covered and assignments for the period of the student's absence. Make-up tests will be administered at the teacher's convenience. All make-up work must be completed within five (5) days after the completion of the vacation.
 - h. If permission for the vacation is refused and the student goes on vacation, the days absent will be unexcused and all make-up privileges will be forfeited. The Administrator/Principal will be presented with an agenda of the participating event in determining duration of a countywide event.
- Title 22
Sec. 11.41
5. Participation in 4-H program – The Board shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H group upon written request prior to the event. The Administrator/Principal must be presented with a request two (2) days prior to the event.
- Title 22
Sec. 11.23
11.25
6. College-related days – The Board shall permit a student to be excused for college related days under the following conditions:
- a. The student is seriously considering the college, trade or business school, military service, etc. that s/he plans to visit.
 - b. Prior notification is made to the Administrator/Principal. This must be in the form of a note from a parent/guardian.
 - c. Confirmation of school visit form must be returned to the office of the Administrator/Principal. This form must be signed by an admissions representative from the school visited.
 - d. College days are limited to a total of four (4). College days may be taken in any combination during the student's junior or senior year. Students with excessive absences will not be granted permission. Requests for exceptions may be reviewed by the Administrator/Principal.
 - e. If a student presents official verification of the need for additional days, the days may be granted at the discretion of the Administrator/Principal.
 - f. Days taken for school visits/interviews will be considered as excused absences for students who meet the criteria.
- Title 22
Sec. 11.34
7. Homebound Instruction – SFCA students who are unable to attend school on the recommendation of a psychologist, psychiatrist or physician may be excused from following the requirements of attendance. Documentation of such

recommendation must be presented to the Administrator/Principal. The duration of homebound instruction must be presented and reviewed by the Administrator/Principal every thirty (30) days for continuation of such instruction.

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include but not be limited to medical or dental appointments, court appearances, and family emergencies. Students who have a justifiable absence for part of the school day must be in attendance for half of the school day session hours.

4. Guidelines

A student must present an excuse for each and every absence immediately upon return to school. This excuse must indicate the student's name, the reason for the absence (reason must be clearly defined and stated), date of the absence, and the parent's/ guardian's signature.

If a signed written excuse is not provided within three (3) school days of the date of the absence, the day(s) will be considered unexcused.

Students will not be permitted to make up class work, assignments, tests or project when an absence is deemed unexcused.

The Administrator/Principal reserves the right to judge each and every excuse in light of the existing circumstances and mark them excused/unexcused accordingly. Excessive absenteeism may be a deciding factor in the consideration of an excuse being excused or unexcused.

SC 1327
1333

Attendance Enforcement

The Board recognizes that a positive correlation exists between regular attendance and academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance shall be required.

Compulsory School Age Children – Excessive Absences

1. After five (5) absences, a letter will be sent home to the parents/guardians emphasizing the importance of regular school attendance.
2. After ten (10) absences, a letter will be sent home informing the parents/guardians that a medical excuse will be required for any days absent beyond fifteen.
3. After fifteen (15) absences, the student and/or parents/guardians will meet with the Administrator/Principal to discuss the excessive absences. A letter will be presented at the meeting or sent home informing the parents/guardians that a medical excuse will be required for any further days missed.
4. Any absences after fifteen (15) not covered by a medical excuse will be considered an unexcused absence.

Non-Compulsory Age Children

1. After five (5) absences, a letter will be sent home to the parents/guardians emphasizing the importance of regular school attendance.
2. After ten days (10) absences, a letter will be sent home informing the parents/guardians that a medical excuse will be required for any days absent beyond fifteen.
3. After fifteen (15) absences, the student and/or parents/guardians will meet with the Administrator/Principal to discuss the excessive absences. A letter will be presented at the meeting or sent home informing the parents/guardians that a medical excuse will be required for any further days missed.
4. Any absences after fifteen (15) not covered by a medical excuse will be considered unexcused absences.
5. After ten (10) consecutive days of absence, the school may remove the student from the school's enrollment.

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Sec. 11.24

The Board recognizes that certain conditions occur that preclude absences from being considered cumulative. The following four (4) conditions will be considered noncumulative:

1. Any absence due to the death in the immediate family.
2. Any absence due to a subpoenaed court appearance.
3. Any absence verified as an acute or chronic medical condition as documented by the parents/guardians and physician and medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than during school hours. A physician's note related to a chronic condition must state that the severity of the condition will prohibit the student from attending school as specified by the physician. Verification of a student's chronic condition must be documented each school year.
4. Any preapproved absence from school stipulated in Board policy

Withholding of Course Credit or Promotion Due To Absence

When a student accumulates twenty (20) absences not attributed to the aforementioned conditions, the Administrator/Principal shall schedule an attendance review meeting. This meeting will consist of the Administrator/Principal, parents/guardians and student. The Administrator/Principal may deem the presence of other staff members necessary at the meeting. At the attendance review meeting, the student and/or parents/guardians may present appropriate evidence related to the student's attendance.

The Administrator/Principal shall present appropriate attendance information and shall recommend that the student not be eligible for course credit (secondary students) or withholding of promotion to the next grade level (elementary or junior high students). An alternative education plan will be developed at the meeting. The plan may include disciplinary options such as detention hours to offset the maximum or exceeded twenty (20) days of absence not attributed to the aforementioned conditions. Repetition of required courses (in part or in whole) may also be considered for inclusion in an alternative education plan. Participation in the graduation ceremony will not be permitted for seniors who have accumulated absences that require make up time beyond the last instructional day. Seniors will be required to make time up during the summer in order to receive their diploma.

Early Dismissals

As with absenteeism and tardiness, it is desirable from an educational standpoint to limit the number of early dismissals from school. Early dismissals should only be requested for doctor, dental or legal appointments and emergency situations. The following is the procedure for obtaining an early dismissal:

1. Written request by parents/guardians should be given to the student to be brought to the office. It is recommended that requests for early dismissals be submitted the day before the dismissal is requested.
2. Requests shall be submitted to the office prior to the start of the homeroom period for approval by the Administrator/Principal.
3. Requests should include the date, time, reason for the dismissal and with whom the student will be leaving. The parents/guardians must phone the school office or put in writing the person with whom the student is leaving with when other than the parents/guardians.
4. Students who are excused for early morning appointments are expected to return to school following the appointment.

Late Arrival/Tardiness

Any student arriving late to school must bring an excuse that is signed by their parents/guardians. A statement for the reason of the late arrival must be included on the excuse. Students arriving late to school are considered tardy.

Any student not present for half of the school day will not participate in extracurricular activities for that day unless prior approval has been arranged for and given by the Administrator/Principal.

If a bus arrives late, all students on the bus will be counted present for the full day. If a bus does not make its run during inclement weather or for some other unforeseen emergency, all students who ride the bus will be legally absent for the day but will be responsible for an excuse stating the situation.

Students who are not in their assigned area at the expected time of presence will be considered tardy.

Tardies are cumulative throughout the school day and school year. Discipline will result after the student accumulates three (3) tardies. All tardies thereafter will continue to accumulate and result in disciplinary action.

The Administrator/Principal will determine tardiness and disciplinary action.

The Administrator/Principal shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which ensures a school session that conforms with requirements of state law, state regulations and board policy; governs the keeping of attendance records; ensures that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work; and issues written notice to any parents/guardians who fail to comply with the compulsory attendance statute.

5. Delegation
of
Responsibility

Title 22
SC 1333
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