

# Attendance Handbook

ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



2016  
2017



Student Attendance Policies and Procedures

# Table of Contents

Compulsory Attendance.....	3
Student Attendance.....	4
Habitual Truancy Case Procedures.....	10
Home Education Portfolio Review.....	14
Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance.....	14
Attendance Requirements for Recording Daily Attendance for Grades K-12.....	15
Attendance for Academic Credit for Grades 9-12.....	16
Suspension of Driver License for Nonattendance.....	16
Learnfare.....	18
Child Labor Laws.....	19
Attendance Training Requirements.....	19
Connect Orange.....	20
Technical Assistance Contacts.....	21
Universally Recognized Religious Holidays.....	22

***All Orange County Public School (OCPS) Policies cited within this handbook are taken from OCPS Board Policy JE unless otherwise noted.***

**OCPS EEO Non-Discrimination Statement**

The School Board of Orange County, Florida, does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other reason prohibited by law. The following individuals at the Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center, 445 W. Amelia Street, Orlando, Florida 32801, attend to compliance matters: ADA Coordinator & Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer: Carianne Reggio; Section 504 Coordinator: Latonia Green; Title IX Coordinator: Doug Patterson. (407.317.3200)

**OCPS EEO Declaración de No Discriminación**

La Junta Escolar del condado de Orange, Florida, no discrimina en la admisión o acceso a, o en el tratamiento o empleo en sus programas y actividades basados en la raza, color, religión, edad, sexo, origen nacional, estado civil, discapacidad, información genética, orientación sexual, identidad de género o expresión, o cualquier otra razón prohibida por la ley. Las siguientes personas, en el Centro de Liderazgo Educativo Ronald Blocker, 445 W Amelia st., Orlando, Florida 32801, Atención a los Asuntos de Cumplimiento: ADA Coordinador & Igualdad de Oportunidades de Empleo (EEO) Oficial: Carianne Reggio; Sección 504 Coordinador: Latonia Green; Título IX Coordinador: Doug Patterson. (407.317.3200)



## Compulsory Attendance

**POLICY:** With respect to compulsory attendance at school, it shall be the policy of The School Board of Orange County, Florida (“Board”) that:

- All children who have attained the age of six (6) years by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six (6) years of age but have not attained the age of sixteen (16) years, shall be required to attend school regularly during the school term. A student shall attend all school sessions unless excused by the proper school authority. This rule does not apply to students who have been granted a Certificate of Exemption.
- Students age sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) are required to attend school regularly unless a formal Declaration of Intent to Terminate School Enrollment (“Declaration”) is filed and signed by the student and the student’s parent/legal guardian. The Declaration must acknowledge the impact that terminating school enrollment is likely to have on the student’s earning potential. The Declaration must also inform the student that withdrawal will result in the loss of his or her driver’s license. Upon receipt of the Declaration, the school must notify the parent/legal guardian of the student’s intent to withdraw from school.  
**OCPS Intent to Terminate School Enrollment** Form link:  
<http://aelformatta1:8080/iFiller/iFiller.jsp?fref=4be139ab368afd6e55cfa5001295983a>
- In the above section, the student’s guidance counselor or other school personnel must 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 must be informed of opportunities to continue his or her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in a format prescribed by the Florida Department of Education to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled. Florida Department of Education Exit Survey link: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5576/urllt/0076246-fldropoutsurvey.pdf>
- Students who attain the age of sixteen (16) years during the school year will not be required to attend school beyond the date that they attain that age only if a Declaration is filed and signed by the student and the student’s parent/legal guardian.

- Each student in grade 12 shall be required to enroll in courses for a full school day. A student's parent/legal guardian may request waiver of this requirement. The principal may grant the waiver after determining the student's attendance for less than a full school day would not prevent the student from achieving the minimum requirements for high school graduation.
- Each parent/legal guardian of a student within compulsory attendance age of six (6) to sixteen (16) is responsible for the student's school attendance.
- The Superintendent or designee, working cooperatively with teachers, parents/legal guardians, and principals, shall take appropriate action, if necessary, to enforce the state compulsory attendance law.
- Policy JF (*Re-Entry of Students Previously Withdrawn*): A student over sixteen (16) years of age who has been withdrawn previously, regardless of reason, may apply to the principal of the school to re-enter at the beginning of the next semester. A student who has been withdrawn twice for nonattendance during a single school year may apply to the principal at the beginning of the next school year. A high school principal shall take into account the previous disciplinary and academic record of the student, post high school plans, and curriculum desired when agreeing to re-enter any student age eighteen (18) or over. Overage students shall be counseled into adult education to facilitate their high school graduation.

## STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.33; 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.53; 1001.54; 1002.20; 1003.01; 1003.21; 1003.24; 1003.26; 1006.08; and 1012.28, Florida Statutes

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- Florida State Statute provides that students under the age of 18 shall have access to education. Therefore, students who are 16 or 17 **must** be allowed to re-enter school upon request. An exception to this practice exists when an administrative action has occurred that restricts enrollment in a standard school setting. Please note that even if a student has filed a formal Declaration of Intent to Terminate School Enrollment form, this **does not** preclude re-entry into school.
- According to Individual Education Program (IEP) team decisions, students with disabilities may remain in school until the semester of their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Because each ESE student's education is individualized, their educational plan (including graduation and transition plans) in school should be discussed in an IEP meeting.

## Student Attendance

**POLICY:** The Superintendent or designee is responsible for enforcing school attendance of all children subject to the compulsory school age in the Orange County Public Schools ("OCPS") district and supporting enforcement of school attendance by local law enforcement agencies. The responsibility includes recommending policies and procedures to The School Board of Orange County, Florida ("Board") that require schools to respond in a timely manner to every unexcused absence, and every absence for which the reason is unknown, of students enrolled in the schools.

The Superintendent's attendance procedures shall outline the responsibilities within the school system including, but not limited to, the following:

- School attendance is the responsibility of the student and parent/legal guardian.
- Students shall begin each new school year with zero (0) absences.
- All school personnel shall encourage regular attendance.
- Schools shall publish and distribute their attendance procedures to students and parents/legal guardians.
- On a daily basis, student absences will be recorded as unexcused until an acceptable excuse has been provided by the parent/legal guardian indicating the reason for the student's absence. The principal has the ultimate authority to decide whether an absence shall be excused. (*OCPS practice is to encourage all attendance notes to be submitted within 48 hours of the student absence*).
- Early departure of any student during the last hour of the school day is strongly discouraged.
- If a student is repeatedly absent from school due to illness, the school is authorized to require the parent/legal guardian to provide a written physician's statement for each subsequent absence to be considered excused.
- Absences shall be excused for the following:
  - Illness, injury, or other insurmountable condition;
  - Illness or death of a member of the student's immediate family (*OCPS practice has been to define **immediate family** as the student's mother, father, brother, sister, stepmother, stepfather, step-siblings, and other relatives who live in the student's home*);
  - Recognized (or established) religious holidays and/or religious instruction;
  - Medical appointments;
  - Legal appointments;
  - Participation in an approved activity or class of instruction held at another site;
  - Prearranged absences of educational value with the principal's prior approval;
  - Pediculosis (head lice) infestation (up to four (4) days per school year); or
  - Catastrophic disasters that significantly impact the life of the student (e.g. loss of residence from natural disaster).
- Students shall be given a reasonable amount of time to make up any work assignments which were missed during an absence. At least one (1) school day shall be allowed to make up missed work for each day of absence.

- A student who is not in his/her first assigned class at the beginning of each school day shall be considered tardy.
- In cases of truancy and habitual truancy that are referred for Child Study Team action, tardies may be recognized and calculated in the truancy instances. For truancy purposes in Child Study Team documentation that may also be used for court action, five (5) tardies to school or five (5) early departures from school will equal one (1) unexcused absence. The authority to apply accumulated tardies and early departure as unexcused absences is given to the Board pursuant to Section 1003.02, Florida Statutes. The principal has the authority to determine whether an absence is excused.
- Schools may not exempt students from examinations, papers, or other academic performance requirements to encourage student attendance.
- Report cards shall reflect the academic status, attendance, and number of daily tardies for each student. These will be hand-delivered to the parent/legal guardian by the student.
- A student between the ages of six (6) and under sixteen (16) who is absent from school without having an excused absence, with or without the knowledge and/or consent of the parent/legal guardian, will be considered “truant.”
- A student between the ages of six (6) and under sixteen (16) who has fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences within ninety (90) calendar days, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined in the Child Study Team action, will be considered an “habitual truant.” Days when a student is suspended from school are not included in the number of absences when determining “habitual truancy.” Students may make up work missed during a suspension within a time limit established by the principal.
- Each school shall implement the following steps to enforce regular school attendance of the students enrolled in their school:
  - Upon each unexcused absence, or absence for which the reason is unknown, the principal or designee shall contact the parent/legal guardian to determine the reason for the absence. At least one (1) school day shall be allowed to make up missed work for each day of absence.
  - If a student has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences, within a ninety (90) calendar day period, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined in the Child Study Team action, the student's primary teacher shall report to the principal or designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. The principal or designee 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/legal guardian must be scheduled to identify potential remedies.
  - If an initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the Child Study Team shall implement the following:

- Frequent attempts at communication between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian;
    - Evaluation for alternative education programs; and
    - Attendance contracts.
  - The Child Study Team may, but is not required to, implement other interventions, including referral to other agencies for family services or recommendation for filing a truancy petition pursuant to Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.
  - The Child Study Team shall be diligent in facilitating intervention services and shall report the case to the Superintendent or designee only when all reasonable efforts to resolve the nonattendance behavior are exhausted.
  - If the parent/legal guardian refuses to participate in the remedial strategies because he or she believes that those strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent/legal guardian may appeal to the Board. The Board may provide a hearing officer, and the hearing officer shall make a recommendation for final action to the Board. If the Board's final determination is that the strategies of the Child Study Team are appropriate, and the parent/legal guardian still refuses to participate or cooperate, the Superintendent or designee may seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance.
  - If a student subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent/legal guardian or the Superintendent or designee shall refer the case to the case staffing committee and the Superintendent or designee may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.
  - If the Superintendent or designee chooses not to file a truancy petition, the procedures for filing a Child-in-Need-of-Services (“CINS”) petition shall be commenced.
- Orange County Public Schools (“OCPS”) shall implement the following steps to enforce regular school attendance of students of compulsory school age who are not enrolled:
    - Under the direction of the Superintendent or designee, a designated school representative shall give written notice, in person or by return-receipt mail, to the parent/legal guardian when no valid reason is found for a student's non-enrollment in school. The notice shall require enrollment or attendance within three (3) days after the date of notice. If the notice and requirement are ignored, the designated school representative shall report the case to the Superintendent or designee and may refer the case to the Case Staffing Committee. The Superintendent or designee shall take such steps as are necessary to bring criminal prosecution against the parent/legal guardian or other person having control.
    - Subsequent to the activities described above, the Superintendent or designee shall give written notice in person or by return-receipt mail to the parent/legal guardian that criminal prosecution is being sought for nonattendance. The Superintendent or designee may file a truancy petition, as defined in Section 984.03, Florida Statutes, following the procedures outlined in Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.

- A law enforcement officer may take a student into custody when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the student is absent from school without authorization or is suspended or expelled and is not in the presence of his or her parent/legal guardian. The officer may take the student into custody and deliver the student to the appropriate “school system site”, including but not limited to, a center approved by the Superintendent of schools for the purpose of counseling students and referring them back to the school system or an approved alternative to a suspension or expulsion program. If a student is suspended or expelled from school without assignment to an alternative school placement, the student shall be delivered as follows:
  - To the parent/legal guardian; or
  - To a location determined by the parent/legal guardian, or to the Alternative Center for Truancy until the parent/legal guardian can be located.

## STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 984.03; 984.12; 984.15; 984.151; 1001.41; 1003.02; 1003.21; 1003.24; 1003.26; and 1003.33, Florida Statutes

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- The first day that a student arrives at school to begin their school year, an attendance code of “EN” will be entered into the appropriate student system. This is also the correct code to enter on a student’s first day of attendance if they transfer into a new school mid-year.
- Students who have attended more than half a school day and are released from school prior to the closing of the school day shall be recorded as an early departure for the purposes of attendance. Early departures are either excused or unexcused. Once a student’s attendance has met the truancy threshold, five unexcused early departures will count as one unexcused absence for truancy reporting purposes.
- Students are tardy if they are not in class at the beginning of the school day. All students who are tardy to school must have attendance recorded in the Daily Code Column in SMS by changing the daily code to a “T”. No other code may be used to record a tardy as the computer will not recognize the code, and the entry will be create errors within the system. Please note that classroom teachers can record “Tardy to class” in ProgressBook, but they cannot record “Tardy to school” in SMS. Only the attendance staff can record “Tardy to school” in SMS. The parent may provide a reason for the tardy that will be considered if truancy actions are initiated.
- Secondary students can be marked tardy for each period of attendance. For the purposes of truancy, only tardies to school are considered.
- Students may ***not*** be suspended out of school for excessive tardiness **to school**.
- In the event a student’s attendance has met the definition of truancy, school tardies and early departures will become part of the truancy referral process (five tardies to school or five early departures are equivalent to one unexcused absence). However, this is for referral purposes only, and the student attendance record will not be altered. Actual presence or absence on campus must be accurately reflected in the electronic record. *Schools are encouraged to establish school-based interventions for tardies that do **not** include the use of out-of-school suspensions.*



- Phone calls are not acceptable communications for excusing an absence. E-mails and faxes may be accepted with proper verification by school personnel.
- A student is considered absent for the entire day if more than half of the school day is missed. All absences are recorded as unexcused until the student returns and provides documentation to school personnel that would excuse the absence.
- If a student begins to demonstrate a pattern of absences for medical reasons, the school may require a physician's note for future absences for medical reasons. It is the practice of OCPS to require a doctor's note when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days or requests more than five non-consecutive absences for medical reasons. In addition, a student illness may be verified by the school nurse.
- Any student whose parent/legal guardian is an active member of the United States Armed Forces and is preparing for deployment, on leave, or has returned from deployment may be excused up to five days.
- Excused absences, field trips, and suspension days may **not** count against a student for purposes of credit hours.
- Students must be allowed a reasonable time to make-up any missed work **regardless of the type of absence** (excused or unexcused). A minimum of one day must be allowed for each absence from school.
- Students suspended from school should be treated like an excused absence with regards to make-up work and course attendance hours.
- All students placed in the Hospital Homebound Program are subject to compulsory school attendance laws and are subject to the OCPS Truancy Policy.
- Pregnancy is not an acceptable excuse for non-enrollment. Pregnant students and new parents are mandated to attend school. However, if a student is enrolled in a teenage parent program, then they are exempt from the minimum attendance requirement for absences related to pregnancy or parenting. The student is required to make up work missed as a result of any absences. Pregnant students sometimes require extra excused absences due to medical issues. These additional absences must be documented by a note from the student's doctor where the doctor must determine the amount of time that will be excused. The student is required to make up any work missed during these extended absences.
- When a parent requests in writing that their child be withdrawn from school, the student should be immediately withdrawn.
- The Attendance Clerk should monitor the student's enrollment status. If the child has not enrolled at another school within five school days, non-enrollment procedures should be initiated.
- Non-Enrollment Procedures:
  - A non-enrollment/Three-Day Letter must be sent to the parent/guardian by certified mail with a return receipt or delivered in person with a signature obtained. *All follow-up regarding nonenrollment is the responsibility of the withdrawing school.*
  - If three days have passed and the signed receipt from the certified letter or the signature obtained from the hand-delivered letter is on-file and the student has still not enrolled in another school, the withdrawing school shall immediately send a second letter informing the parent that criminal prosecution may be sought against them for non-enrollment in school. This letter must be sent to

the parent by certified mail with a return receipt or delivered in person with a signature obtained.

- If parent/guardian still does not enroll their child in school, please forward the case to the School Social Worker for further investigation.

## **Habitual Truancy Case Procedures**

### **POLICY**

- For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:
  - “Habitual truant” means that:
    - The student has fifteen (15) unexcused absences within ninety (90) calendar days, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined by the Orange County Public Schools (“OCPS”) Child Study Team, with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the parent/legal guardian. Said student is subject to compulsory school attendance and is not exempt.
    - Activities to determine the cause and to attempt the remediation of the student’s truant behavior have been completed.
  - A “truancy petition” means a petition filed by the Superintendent or designee alleging that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or five (5) absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or ten (10) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a ninety (90) day calendar period, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies or early departures as determined by the OCPS Child Study Team.
- Procedures for filing a “truancy petition” by the Superintendent or designee.
  - If the school determines that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or five (5) absences for which the reasons are unknown within a calendar month, or ten (10) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a ninety (90) day calendar period, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined in the OCPS Child Study Team action, the Superintendent or designee may file a truancy petition.
  - The petition shall be filed in the Circuit Court of Orange County, Florida, as that is where the student is enrolled in school.
  - Original jurisdiction to hear a truancy petition shall be in the Circuit Court; however, the Circuit Court may use a general or special master pursuant to the applicable Florida Supreme Court rules.
  - The petition must contain the following: the name, age, and address of the student; the name and address of the student’s parent/legal guardian; the school where the student is enrolled; the efforts the school has made to get the student to attend school; the number of out-of-school contacts between the school system and student’s parent/legal guardian; and the number of days and dates of days the

student has missed school. The petition shall be sworn to by the Superintendent or designee.

- Once the petition is filed, the court shall hear the petition within thirty (30) days.
- The student and the student's parent/legal guardian shall attend the hearing.
- If the court determines that the student missed the alleged days, the court shall order the student to attend school and the parent to ensure that the student attends school, and may order any of the following: the student to participate in alternative sanctions to include mandatory attendance at alternative classes to be followed by mandatory community services hours for a period up to six (6) months; the student and the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in homemaker or parent aide services; the student or the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in intensive crisis counseling; the student or the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in community mental health services, if available and applicable; the student and the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in service provided by voluntary or community agencies as available; the student or the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in vocational, job training, or employment services; and any other appropriate action the court deems necessary.
- If the student does not successfully complete the sanctions ordered in section (g) above, the case shall be referred to the OCPS Case Staffing Committee with a recommendation to file a Child-in-Need-of-Services ("CINS") petition.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

Sections 984.03; 984.151; 1001.41; 1003.02; 1003.24; and 1003.26, Florida Statutes

### **Important Notes**

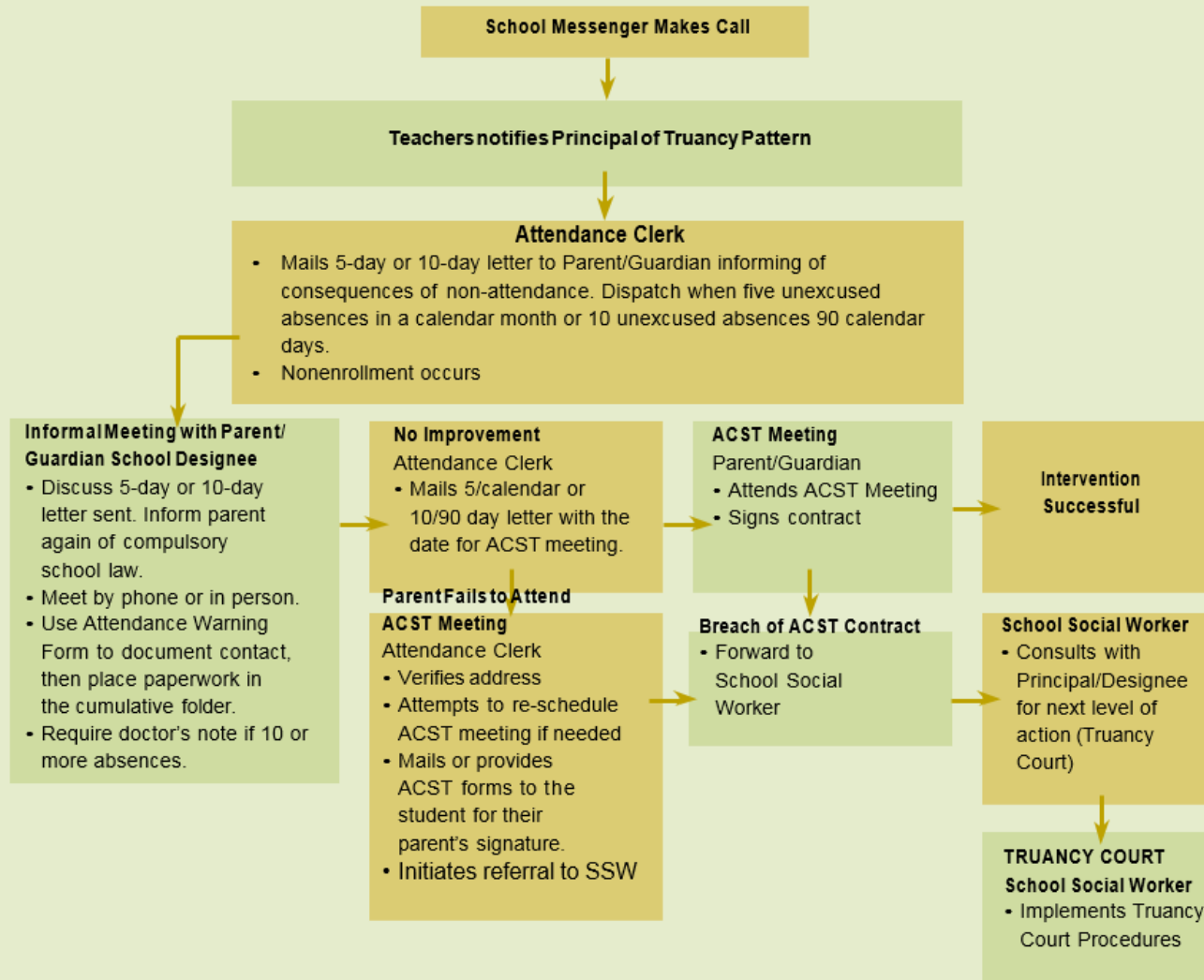
- Each school must have an Attendance Child Study Team (ACST) Committee consisting of a minimum of three staff members which can include, but is not limited to, the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Attendance Clerk, Teacher, and/or any other interested party. A chairperson must be named to lead the ACST meetings. The School Social Worker (SSW) may participate in the ACST meeting if available.
- For each unexcused absence, a parent or guardian shall be contacted. (Connect Orange)
- Five-Day or Ten-Day Letter: Prior to a student accumulating five unexcused absences, interventions may be put in place to address the attendance concerns. OCPS may initiate truancy procedures at either the five or ten day thresholds for unexcused absences.
  - Once a student accumulates five unexcused absences within a calendar month, the Attendance Clerk mails the five-day warning letter. If the pattern of non-attendance continues, a meeting addressing the attendance concerns must be held with the parent and documented on the Attendance Warning/Parent Conference Meeting Form. This meeting may be held as part of a MTSS meeting or parent-teacher conference where the parent may participate in person or via phone. A reasonable effort must be made to contact the parent.
  - Once a student accumulates ten unexcused absences within a 90 calendar day

period, the Attendance Clerk mails the ten-day warning letter. If the pattern of non-attendance continues, a meeting addressing the attendance concerns must be held with the parent and documented on the Attendance Warning/Parent Conference Meeting Form. This meeting may be held as part of a MTSS meeting or parent-teacher conference where the parent may participate in person or via phone. A reasonable effort must be made to contact the parent.

- ACST Committee Meeting (Attendance Clerk or designee prepares the ACST forms)
  - The parent or guardian is notified by mail and given a reasonable time to respond.
  - The Attendance Clerk notifies all ACST Committee members of meeting date and time.
  - The student's teacher(s) completes a Teacher Input form documenting academic/behavioral concerns before the meeting, if unable to attend.
  - The ACST is held whether or not the parent/guardian attends the meeting. If a parent or guardian is not in attendance, record non-attendance on the appropriate forms and mail or send home the ACST paperwork with a request for their signature on the Attendance Contract created during the ACST committee meeting.
    - Forms to be completed:
      - Attendance Child Study form
      - School Attendance Contract
      - Truancy Court/Parent ID Form
- *All original ACST forms completed at the meeting should be kept by the Attendance Clerk or designee. ACST forms are only good for the school year in which they are held.*
- If the pattern of non-attendance continues, forward the information to School Social Worker for further investigation of the case.
- The warning letter, meetings, and truancy status must be documented on the student's SMS attendance screen.

**Schools must submit the ACST Meeting form monthly to [ACST\\_MeetingData@ocps.net](mailto:ACST_MeetingData@ocps.net).**

# School-based Truancy Interventions



## Home Education Portfolio Review

### POLICY

- If the parent/legal guardian of a student who has been identified as exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance enrolls the student in a home education program (“Home Education Program”), the Superintendent or designee shall provide the parent/legal guardian a copy of Section 1002.41, Florida Statutes; together with the accountability requirements of this section. The Superintendent or designee shall also refer the parent/legal guardian to a Home Education Review Committee (“Committee”), composed of the Orange County Public Schools’ (“OCPS”) contact for the Home Education Program and at least two (2) home educators selected by the parent/legal guardian from an OCPS list of all home educators who have conducted a Home Education Program for at least three (3) years and who have indicated a willingness to serve on the Committee. The Committee shall review the portfolio of the student every thirty (30) days during the OCPS regular school term until the Committee is satisfied that the home education program is in compliance. The first portfolio review must occur within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the establishment of the Home Education Program.
- If the parent/legal guardian fails to provide the portfolio to the Committee, the Committee shall notify the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall then terminate the Home Education Program and require the parent/legal guardian to enroll the student in a public school supported by public funds; a parochial, religious, or denominational school; or a private school supported in whole or in part by tuition charges or by endowments or gifts within three (3) days. Upon termination of the Home Education Program, the parent/legal guardian shall not be eligible to reenroll the student in the Home Education Program for 180 calendar days. Failure of the parent/legal guardian to enroll the student in one (1) of the attendance options previously listed after termination of the Home Education Program shall constitute noncompliance with the compulsory attendance requirements and may result in criminal prosecution.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.41; 1001.42; 1002.01; 1003.02; and 1003.26, Florida Statutes

## Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance

### POLICY

Recording of student attendance for the purpose of administering the full-time equivalent program and other State programs shall be pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.044. The principal or designee shall be responsible for compliance with all Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, The School Board of Orange County, Florida (“Board”) policies, and the Orange County Public Schools (“OCPS”) attendance procedures pertaining to student attendance. The principal or designee shall assure that all teachers and clerks are instructed in the proper recording of attendance and may periodically determine whether instructions are being followed.

- Each principal shall devise a system of student monitoring and accounting which determines the presence or absence of any student during the school day. This monitoring is in addition to the regular daily check of student attendance. If a discrepancy of the presence or absence of a student is noted during the school day, the fact shall be reported immediately to the principal or designee who shall take such action as deemed proper.

## STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.54; 1003.02; 1003.23; 1003.25; 1006.07; and 1012.28, Florida Statutes Rule 6A-1.044, Florida Administrative Code

## Attendance Requirements for Recording Daily Presence/Absence for Grades K-12

### POLICY

- A student shall be deemed to be in attendance if actually present at school or away from school on a school day engaged in an educational activity which constitutes a part of the school-approved instructional program for at least one-half of the student's instructional day.
- In grades K-5, a school shall record student attendance daily.
- In grades 6-12, a school shall record period-by-period attendance.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.53; 1001.54; 1003.21; and 1003.23, Florida Statutes

### PROCEDURES

- Attendance must be recorded daily in a timely manner (at the beginning of each class and/or upon entry/departure to/from school). Attendance Clerks and Front Office Staff will record attendance in SMS. Teachers will record attendance in ProgressBook.
- Attendance must be recorded by 3:15 p.m. to ensure that the parents of students absent from school receive a Connect Orange attendance message.
- Tardies **to school** must be recorded in SMS by the attendance clerk or other designated front office personnel. Teachers may only record tardies TO CLASS in Progressbook.
- Tardies **to school** must be entered manually in the daily column of SMS each day.
- Early Departures **from school** for secondary students are to be entered manually in the period of departure within SMS upon each occurrence. If the student is absent less than half of the day, you must manually type the EDU code in the appropriate column.
- Early departures **from school** for elementary students are to be entered into SMS where the attendance code will be based on the time of departure. For example, if a student misses more than half the school day, they would be considered "absent" and the AU code should be entered in the daily column within SMS until a proper excuse is presented to school personnel.
- Indicate time of departure in the "**Comments**" section, and write EDU next to the time as well. If the early departure is excused, then the code entered into SMS is EDE.
- If a substitute teacher cannot input attendance data into ProgressBook, the principal is responsible for ensuring that the substitute teacher provides this attendance data at the beginning of each period to the school's attendance clerk for entry into SMS.

## Attendance for Academic Credit for Grades 9-12

### POLICY

- No student shall be awarded a credit unless the student has been in attendance for instruction for a minimum of 135 hours. The 135 hours required for attendance for instruction corresponds to twenty (20) absences in a school year or ten (10) absences for each semester. The principal or designee may provide a student who has been in attendance less than 135 hours an opportunity to receive credit by demonstrating mastery of the student performance standards in that course of study.
- Excused absences shall be considered, on an hour per hour basis, as a part of the 135 minimum hours of classroom instruction. The principal or designee is authorized to accept the following reasons for absence(s) of a student:
  - Illness, injury, or other insurmountable condition;
  - Illness or death of a member of the student's immediate family;
  - Recognized (or established) religious holidays and religious instruction;
  - Medical appointments;
  - Legal appointments;
  - Participation in an approved activity or class of instruction held at another school site;
  - Prearranged absences of educational value with the principal's prior approval;
  - Pediculosis (head lice) infestation (up to four (4) days per school year); or
  - Catastrophic disasters that significantly impact the life of the student (e.g. loss of residence from natural disaster).
- Academic instruction missed by the student shall be made up in an acceptable manner in accordance with the Orange County Public Schools ("OCPS") student progression plan.
- Suspended students are allowed to make up missed school work according to guidelines of this policy for absences.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.41; 1001.42; 1003.21; 1003.23; 1003.24; and 1003.436, Florida Statutes

### Suspension of Driver's License for Nonattendance

#### POLICY:

- Orientation of Students
  - The principal or designee shall assure that all students are informed of the possible effects of truancy upon their driver's licenses.



- This information shall be included in student handbooks and announced at school assemblies.
- Verification of Attendance
  - The Superintendent or designee shall submit to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (“DHSMV”) the names of students, attaining ages fourteen (14) to seventeen (17) within the current school fiscal year (July 1-June 30), who have accumulated fifteen (15) unexcused absences in a period of ninety (90) calendar days. The date of birth, sex, and social security number of each student shall be included in the report.
  - Students who are not enrolled in Orange County Public Schools (“OCPS”) shall be referred to the administrator of the program in which they are enrolled for attendance verification.
- Hardship Waiver
  - Within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of notice of intent to suspend, a student may request, in writing, that the principal or designee waive the attendance requirement based on a personal or family hardship.
  - The principal or designee is authorized to grant a ninety (90) day hardship waiver to a sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) year old student if the evidence satisfies the principal or designee that the student meets criteria suggested by the Florida Department of Education and that the waiver would be reasonable under the circumstances. The Florida Department of Education suggests that consideration be given to any minor under the school’s jurisdiction for whom a personal or family hardship requires that the minor has a driver’s license for his or her own, or his or her family’s, employment or medical care. The ninety (90) day hardship waiver should be reviewed every ninety (90) days to determine the feasibility of continuance. Further, the principal or designee shall take into consideration the recommendations of teachers, other school officials, and guidance counselors.
  - A hardship waiver shall not be available to fifteen (15) year-old students. Unlicensed students are not eligible for a hardship waiver.
  - The principal or designee shall notify the DHSMV via electronic transmission of a student’s request for waiver within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the request. The hearing must be conducted by the principal or designee within thirty (30) calendar days of the request. The decision of the principal or designee must be conveyed electronically to DHSMV within twenty-four (24) hours after conducting the hearing. The principal or designee shall also notify The School Board of Orange County, Florida (“Board”) of his/her decision.
  - Any student denied a hardship waiver may appeal that decision to the Board. The Board shall notify the DHSMV if the hardship waiver is subsequently granted.
- Notification of Intent to Suspend the Driver’s License for Nonattendance
  - The DHSMV shall notify each minor for whom the DHSMV has received notification of noncompliance upon the occurrence of fifteen (15) unexcused absences in a

ninety (90) calendar day period and the minor's parent/ legal guardian of its intent to suspend driving privileges.

- The minor, or the parent/legal guardian, has fifteen (15) calendar days after written notification of intent to suspend, to provide proof of compliance with the attendance requirements or to request a hardship waiver.
  - Twenty (20) days after the date of issuance of DHSMV's notice, the DHSMV shall suspend the minor's driver's license or learner's license or record the legal name, sex, date of birth, and social security number of each minor who does not possess a driver's license or learner's license, unless the minor has provided the DHSMV verification of compliance with the attendance requirement, or the appropriate school official has provided the DHSMV with verification of a request for a waiver hearing.
- Verification of Compliance and Reinstatement of Driver's License
    - Reinstatement shall be initiated by the student by submission of written verification that he or she has been in compliance for thirty (30) consecutive school days prior to the request for verification of compliance. Compliance starts on the first day after the student's last unexcused absence. The student must attend school, without any unexcused absences, for thirty (30) consecutive school days. If the student has any excused absence during that time, an extra day is added to the end of the thirty (30) day compliance period to adjust for each absence.
    - A compliance form, the HSMV 72870, shall be signed by the designated administrator and executed either by a notary seal or embossed school seal attesting that the student has met the requirements of Section 322.091, Florida Statutes. (This form shall be provided to the student no more than five (5) school days after the request has been made.)
    - When a student has previously had a license suspended and cannot meet the thirty (30) consecutive school days required for reinstatement within the current attendance year, the balance of the days required shall be carried forward for completion in the next ensuing attendance year or summer session.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

Sections 322.091; 322.1615; 1001.41; 1001.53; 1003.25; and 1003.27, Florida Statutes

## **Learnfare**

**POLICY:** Students whose parents/legal guardians receive cash assistance (formerly Aid to Families with Dependent Children/AFDC) are required to attend school regularly.

- If excessive unexcused absenteeism is determined to sufficiently jeopardize academic progress, the school shall report the student to the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") for non-compliance.
- Each parent/legal guardian with a student aged six (6) to eighteen (18) years who is a recipient of cash assistance is required to have a school conference during each semester consisting of the following:

- The conference must address acceptable attendance, grades, and behavior;
- The conference must be documented and reported to DCF;
- Verification of the conference is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian or DCF; verification may be by telephone contact with a school official or by a written statement from a school official; and
- The conference may be held at the school or by telephone. The parent/legal guardian is responsible for initiating and scheduling the conference.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

Sections 414.1251 and 1003.01, Florida Statutes

### **Child Labor Laws**

#### **POLICY**

- The Superintendent or designee shall implement the following steps when necessary in compliance with applicable State child labor laws:
  - A designated school representative shall report to the Division of Jobs and Benefits of the Department of Labor and Employment Security or to any person acting in similar capacity who may be designated by law to receive such notices, all violations of the child labor laws that may come to his or her knowledge.
  - A designated school representative shall have the same right of access to, and inspection of, establishments where minors may be employed or detained as is given by law to the Division of Jobs and Benefits only for the purpose of ascertaining whether children of compulsory school age are actually employed there and are actually working there regularly. The designated school representative shall, if he or she finds unsatisfactory working conditions or violations of the child labor law, report his or her findings to the Division of Jobs and Benefits or its agents.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

Sections 450.121 and 1003.26, Florida Statutes

### **Attendance Training Requirement**

**POLICY:** The Superintendent or designee will provide a minimum of four (4) training opportunities per school year for OCPS attendance clerks and/or other school personnel responsible for maintaining school attendance records. In addition, appropriate online training, as determined by the Superintendent or designee, will be provided for those attendance clerks and/or other school personnel unable to attend the provided face-to-face training. The training shall include requirements for attendance reporting by substitute teachers.

#### **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

Sections 1001.42; 1001.54, and 1003.02, Florida Statutes

## Connect Orange

“**Connect Orange**” is the name that our district uses for the telephone parent notification system. While we use the name Connect Orange, the actual name of the system is School Messenger. Please note that you will see both names in this section.

### Daily Responsibilities:

- The main responsibility regarding the Connect Orange attendance notification messages is to enter the school’s attendance (absences, tardies, early departures) into SMS on a daily basis. **The district will schedule and launch the messages to only the students marked as having an unexcused absence.**
- Absences must be entered daily into SMS by 3:15 p.m. for the attendance notification messages to be sent home. If the absence has not been entered into SMS by 3:15 p.m., the attendance notification message will not be sent. Connect Orange attendance messages are delivered beginning at 6:00 p.m. each school day.
- Attendance messages are delivered in six languages (English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Vietnamese, Portuguese and French). The language of the message that is delivered via Connect Orange is dependent upon the language the parents/guardian selected as their preference for home communication at the time of student registration. If the parent did not indicate a preference, the default language is English.
- Although it is possible to change the content of the attendance message, all parents should receive a standard message in one of six languages as specified by the parents/guardian.

### Bad Phone Numbers:

Connect Orange is an automated system where data from SMS is imported each evening into the School Messenger Connect Orange System. As a result, it is imperative that all phone numbers associated with a student in SMS be correct. You will receive a daily email from School Messenger with a report that includes the number of telephones contacted as well as a list of “unknown” or “disconnected” numbers. The School Messenger system considers a number “unknown” if there is a long lead-in before a message can be left at the number dialed. For example, some individuals have a minute’s worth of music before you can leave a voice message. In that case, School Messenger would not recognize if this was a working number. The “disconnected” numbers that must be corrected in SMS are listed in the daily e-mail along with the corresponding student name and ID number.

If the school’s attendance personnel is not receiving a daily attendance report via e-mail, please notify the OCPS Public Information Office (contact names are listed at the end of this section).

### Connect Orange Attendance Message Content:

Hello. This is a message from the attendance office at <<School Name>>, calling to inform you that your student, <<First Name>>, was absent today. Please send a signed note to the attendance office when your student returns to school. If you would like to hear this message again, please press the star key. Thank you.

## Technical Assistance Information

### OCPS Attendance Forms

To be consistent with OCPS goal of “One Vision One Voice”, attendance forms have been standardized and are to serve as the sole source for attendance forms. OCPS Attendance Forms

Link: <https://www.ocps.net/intranet/op/mmb/DM/FM/Pages/StudentForms.aspx>

### Connect Orange Assistance

If you need help with the Connect Orange system, please contact one of the following:

- Pam Maisel ([pamela.maisel@ocps.net](mailto:pamela.maisel@ocps.net)) – 407.317.3200, ext. 2002122
- Kathy Marsh ([Katherine.Marsh@ocps.net](mailto:Katherine.Marsh@ocps.net)) – 407.317.3458
- Carol Gay ([carol.gay@ocps.net](mailto:carol.gay@ocps.net)) – 407.317.3368

### SMS Assistance

SMS Attendance by Office documentation can be found on the Customer Care website (<http://cc.ocps.net/>) using the following search path: > Student Systems Training and Support > SMS > SMS Documentation link > Support > Attendance.

For additional assistance with SMS, please contact Student Systems Training and Support:

**Customer Care website:** Phone: 407-317-3375

**Submit an Online Service Request at:** <http://osr.ocps.net>

### Student Enrollment Policy/Procedure Assistance

**Student Enrollment Handbook:**

[https://www.ocps.net/intranet/es/pupilassignment/Documents/PA%20Handbook%2014-15%2010\\_14\\_14.pdf](https://www.ocps.net/intranet/es/pupilassignment/Documents/PA%20Handbook%2014-15%2010_14_14.pdf)

For assistance with registration and enrollment policy and procedures, please contact **Student Enrollment at 407-317-3342.**

**For questions on Attendance Policy and Procedures, please contact:**

Richard Moore  
Richard.Moore@ocps.net  
407.836.9502

Or

Shirley Johnson-Delgado  
Shirley.Johnson-Delgado@ocps.net  
407.836.6578

## **Universally Recognized Religious Holidays**

*The holidays listed on this page conflict with scheduled school days.*

### **Jewish**

Rosh Hashanah (October 3, 2016 – October 4, 2016)

Yom Kippur (October 12, 2016)

Sukkot (October 17, 2016)

Simchat Torah (October 25, 2016)

Passover (April 11, 2017 – April 18, 2017)

Shavout (May 31, 2017)

### **Muslim**

Eid al-Adha (September 11, 2016)

Eid al-Fitr (June 25, 2017)

### **Christian**

Holy Epiphany (January 6, 2017)

Good Friday (April 14, 2017)