

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Student achievement is directly related to attendance at school. It is essential that students attend school daily, arrive on time and remain throughout the school day, attending every class. Excused absences will be granted for illness, medical appointments, death in family, religious observance, court appearance or prior approved education travel, or any school sponsored activities (including field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals, etc.). All other absences will be unexcused.

## Overhills High School Attendance Procedures:

### Student Attendance

Detailed in the North Carolina General Statutes are guidelines which have been established for student attendance and absences. Attendance is a requirement for promotion and/ or course credit. **Students must attend eighty-three days of each ninety day term course to receive one unit of credit.** No student who misses all or any portion of a school day, unless excused by the principal, shall be permitted to participate later that day or that evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored, authorized or related activity or event.

Failure to attend at least forty-five minutes of a class constitutes an absence. Students previously enrolled in the district and those residing in the state who are entering school for the first time shall be counted absent without excuse (for promotion/credit consideration) for each day missed due to late enrollment. All absences are defined as excused or unexcused. Students are permitted to make up work for unexcused absences with a 20% penalty.

### **I. Excused Absences- (North Carolina General Statutes § 115C-379; Harnett County School Board Policy Code 4400)**

Per state and district law, excused absences have been defined as follows:

1. Personal illness or injury which makes the student physically unable to attend school;
2. Isolation ordered by the State Board of Health;
3. Death in the immediate family;
4. Emergency medical or dental appointment or such an appointment which has been approved by the principal;
5. Participation under subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding or if the student is a party to the action of a court or administrative tribunal;
6. Observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent(s) with prior approval by the principal;
7. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel, with prior approval by the principal;  
or
8. Absence due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary.

All student absences for such school activities must have the prior approval of the principal. Approved activities include state and national competitions and ceremonies honoring outstanding students. **(Note: Approved field trips, students late due to bus problems, and students assigned to in-school suspension programs are not considered absent from school).**

### **II. Unexcused Absences –(North Carolina General Statutes § 115C-379; Harnett County School Board Policy Code 4400)**

**Per state law and HCS district board policy, unexcused/unverified absences are determined per the discretion of the school, and have been defined as follows:**

1. Students absent from school without the prior knowledge of the parent.
2. Students absent from school without acceptable cause with parental knowledge. For example, a family vacation is defined as an unlawful/unverified absence.
3. Students suspended from the school bus and not reporting to school.
4. Parental notes for student illnesses in excess of **five (5)** days which cannot be substantiated by medical statements.
5. Students absent from class as a result of extracurricular activities not approved by school administration.
6. Routine appointments for medical, dental, or counseling services once a student has exceeded **five (5)** absences per term course.

### **Student Absences:**

**All excuses for absences must be documented in writing in the Attendance Office. It is the responsibility of the student to bring in a note from a parent or physician confirming the reason for the absence.** All business with the Attendance Office must be conducted outside of class hours (either before/after school or during the student's lunch time). Taking class time to submit an excuse does not exempt a student from the attendance policy.

### **Submission of Attendance Documentation (Early Dismissal):**

Students are expected to attend all classes each day of the school year except for medical and family emergencies. The parental request for a student's early dismissal is not an excuse for an absence. The student should bring the appropriate documentation back upon his/her return to school. For example; a doctor's appointment should include a note from the doctor's office, or a court appearance should include a court note. In cases where a student must leave before the end of the school day, please adhere to the following procedures:

1. A student should present a note written by a parent/guardian for early dismissal to the Attendance Office (located in guidance) before school begins. Notes presented after the beginning of first period may not be honored.
2. Each note should include the student's full name, signature of a parent/guardian, date, reason for dismissal, and a phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached for verification of the early dismissal request.
3. Dismissal notes for the end of class periods are encouraged to avoid class interruptions.
4. Students who drive to school must sign out at the Main Office before leaving school grounds. Students, who do not drive to school, must have a parent/guardian sign them out in the Main Office before leaving campus. If a student returns the same day from an early dismissal, he/she must sign back in to school through the Main Office immediately upon returning to campus.

**(Please note, once a student arrives on campus, he/she is present for the day and shall not leave unless properly dismissed. The student will be given a pass to leave class at the appropriate time to report to the Main Office to meet his/her parent or guardian).**

5. Students may not leave campus without securing permission and signing out through the Main Office. Failure to follow sign out procedures will result in disciplinary action.
6. Signing out does not account for the absence. You must bring an appropriate note upon returning to school.

**Note: Classes will not be interrupted to call a student for early dismissal unless the situation is an emergency. No student who misses all or any portion of a school day, unless excused by the principal, shall be permitted to participate later that day or that evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored, authorized or related activity or event. Finally, remember that our school day ends at 2:25 p.m.; schedule appointments so that your student does not have to leave school prior to end of day dismissal.**

**\*\*Early checkout of students is not allowed between 1:40 p.m. and 2:25 p.m. \*\***

### **Notes for Student Absences- North Carolina General Statute § 1215c-378**

All absences will be listed as unexcused until the student petitions the Attendance Office to change the status of the absence by bringing a written note from a parent or guardian including a verifiable excuse. All students should accept responsibility for submitting a note for any absence promptly. Students must bring a note from their parent or guardian with a written explanation for the absence within **three (3)** school days of the return from an absence. After the third day with no note, the absence code will be finalized as unexcused. Students who have unexcused absences may be subject to the denial of credit depending on the total number of absences in that class, and will be considered by administration to be skipping school.

**Excuses are valid only for the date(s) of absence(s) and must contain all of the information specified: student's name, parent/guardian's full name, address, telephone numbers where parent/guardian may be reached, date(s) of the absence(s), and an explanation or reason for the absence.**

**All students who were previously absent, arrived late, or left early from school must be processed by the Attendance Clerk in the Main Office. Notes for absences should be delivered to the Main Office either before school, during lunch, or immediately after the school day ends.** Students will receive a re-admit slip which documents the reason for the student's absence. Re-admit slips should be submitted to the student's teacher upon their return to class.

### **Chronic Illness:**

Parents of a student with a chronic illness (one which reoccurs and may cause the student to miss excessive days) must contact the school as early as possible in the school year so that a medical duress form can be secured and filled out by the medical doctor. School officials may contact the doctor concerning the illness. The written verification of a student's chronic illness by a doctor must be renewed each school year. Verification will go into effect on the date the doctor verifies the condition. Even when the school has verification of a chronic illness, absences must be excused using the standard procedure. The parent must send a note to the Attendance Office specifying whether the absence is directly related to the student's chronic illness.

### **Credit Denial:**

Credit for any course may be denied if a student does not meet attendance requirements. Credit will be denied regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused. **Exceptions** for Denial of Credit are limited to:

1. Court intervention with appropriate documentation
2. Serious illness (chronic or long term) or a disabling injury with medical documentation
3. Death in the immediate family with appropriate documentation
4. Other extraordinary hardships with appropriate documentation

### Class Makeup Time:

Class makeup days for absences will be scheduled each semester. Students may check with their assigned assistant principal or the Overhills High School Website for the Class Makeup schedule. Each of these days will allow a student to make up time for missed class periods and avoid the risk of being denied credit due to excessive absences. The student must be engaged in class work during the entire makeup period. The student is responsible for obtaining appropriate class work from his/her assigned teacher. Any student may be dismissed for not following the directions of the assigned teacher and/or class proctor. **Any student who is dismissed will not receive credit for the time made up.** Students will not be allowed to “bank” days prior to absences.

### College Visits:

Overhills seniors and juniors are permitted two college visit days with official documentation and prior approval from the principal. Official college visit forms are available in the Guidance Office or from the student’s selected college. These forms should be completed, stamped and signed by college officials. Catalogs, brochures, and parent notes are not sufficient to document an official college visit. **Please note, students are strongly discouraged from planning and/or visiting prospective colleges and universities during established, mandatory testing periods.**

### Early Dismissal:

Students are expected to attend all classes each day of the school year except for medical and family emergencies. The parental request for a student’s early dismissal is not an excuse for an absence. The student should bring the appropriate documentation back upon his/her return to school. For example: A doctor’s appointment should include a note from the doctor’s office, or a court appearance should include a court note. In cases where a student must leave school before the end of the school day, please adhere to the following procedures:

1. **A student should present a note written by a parent/guardian for early dismissal to the Main Office before school begins. Notes presented after the beginning of first period may not be honored.**
2. Each note should include the student’s full name, date, signature of parent/guardian, reason for the dismissal, and a phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached for verification of the early dismissal request.
3. Dismissal notes for the end of class periods are encouraged to avoid class interruptions.
4. Students who drive to school must sign out at the Main Office before leaving school grounds. Students who do not drive to school must have a parent sign in at the front office and report to the attendance office to sign out their student. If a student returns the same day from an early dismissal, he/she must sign back in to school through the Attendance Office immediately upon returning to campus.

**Please note---Once a student arrives on campus he is present for the day and shall not leave unless properly dismissed. The student will be given a pass to leave class at the appropriate time to report to the Main Office to meet his parent.**

5. Students may not leave campus without securing permission and signing out through the Attendance Office. Failure to follow sign out procedures will result in disciplinary action.
6. Signing out does not account for the absence. You must bring an appropriate note upon returning to school.

**Note: Classes will not be interrupted to call a student for early dismissal unless the situation is an emergency. No student who misses all or any portion of a school day, unless excused by the principal, shall be permitted to participate later that day or that evening in any extracurricular or school-sponsored, authorized or related activity or event.**

### **Homebound Instruction:**

North Carolina, through the Harnett County School District provides a minimum of one hour of homebound instruction for each day on homebound status for students who cannot attend classes due to illness, injuries, or pregnancy. Any deviation from this policy or change in student schedule will be determined during the initial homebound placement.

The instruction application may be obtained from the Guidance Office. It must be signed by a medical doctor only and returned to school immediately. Applications signed by a psychologist or midwife will not be approved. Homebound instruction is not retroactive. When the student receives instruction, he/she is counted as present in school; and, hopefully, will not be behind in his/her studies upon return to school. Homebound instruction does not guarantee that the student will pass courses or advance to the next grade. Seniors on homebound status who plan to participate in the graduation ceremony and/or be listed in the graduation program must complete all requirements for graduation by the time senior grades are finalized. Homebound students must adhere to Harnett County School's attendance policies or homebound services may be terminated. Questions regarding homebound instruction should be referred to the administrator in charge.

### **Attendance Committee:**

An attendance committee will be created to monitor student absences and offer interventions that may reduce risk of credit denial due to excessive absences. The role of the attendance committee will be to meet periodically to track attendance trends of individual students which may place the students at risk of not receiving credit for a course. Early interventions will include; counseling, attendance contracts with the student, and offers of tracking time made up either through Saturday Academy attendance or by staying after school with a teacher. In each case it is the responsibility and obligation of the student to collect verification of time recuperated and provide the attendance committee or the appropriate administrator with documentation of time made up. Failure to do so will result in the attendance committee's recommendation of credit denial.

The attendance committee is also responsible for hearing the appeals of students who have exceeded the limitations of the state mandated seat time requirements, yet have an average in the class that would allow passing credit. Those students who are at risk of failing due to excessive absences may appeal to the attendance committee in writing to express their interest in a hearing.

### **The attendance committee will then:**

1. Make a recommendation to the principal that the student receive passing credit without meeting with the committee
2. Notify the student/parent of the date/time to meet with the committee for a closer review of the student's case.
3. Make a recommendation to the principal that the student's appeal be denied; and therefore, the student would receive no credit for the course or courses in question with no further investigation or discussion.

**The principal will make the final decision in any attendance appeal process as only he can grant credit for a course.**

### **Make-up Work:**

It is crucial that students perform all academic work that is required to achieve proficiency in a subject. It is the policy of the school that students make up all work. Students who show patterns of poor attendance may be subject to failure when grades suffer from a lack of quality work habits or time being spent on assignments. Poor attendance, for whatever reason, does not excuse a student from meeting academic expectations for any course.

In the event of an absence, a student must make up academic work. Work should be made up in timely manner. Academic work that is not made up in a timely manner may receive less than full credit. Assignments are designed to measure a student's proficiency on a set of objectives. Suggested time to make up assignments is as follows: (1) One school day for each day absent, for absences of one to three consecutive days and (2) Two school days for each day absent, for absences exceeding three consecutive days. **Please note that the times above are suggestions, but extenuating circumstances may dictate otherwise.** However, students who do not submit work by the established deadline will incur a 20% penalty on the grade.

The responsibility for securing and arranging for make-up work rests with the student. The responsibility for developing a make-up work system within the classroom rests with the teacher. Make-up work shall be assigned at the discretion of the teacher, and may be specific material missed by the student, or may be of a reinforcement or enrichment nature. All work assigned to students will be graded so students receive timely feedback and appropriate credit for their academic performance.

#### **Extended Illness/Injury:**

Homebound instruction may be provided in cases of prolonged illness/injury. Please contact the school nurse or your assigned guidance counselor for more information.

#### **Final Exams & Absences:**

It is the policy of the school that there be no early final/state mandated exams unless as a result of a scheduled school activity. Those students who receive permission to miss exams will have to take them at a later date. Students who fail to show up for exams may receive a zero. Teacher exams missed at the end of the second semester will be scheduled for completion during the summer vacation.

#### **Tardy Policy:**

A student is considered to have an unexcused tardy if he/she is not in the classroom and/or designated area when class begins and does not have an excuse deemed valid by the teacher. **After forty-five unexcused minutes, the tardy will become an unexcused absence.** Students who are not in class on time will be documented and will receive consequences for their tardiness per school policy. Students may be excused from tardy consequences if they provide documentation from their parent or guardian of a valid reason for their tardiness. Specific situations that constitute tardiness are determined at the discretion of the classroom teacher, and should be specified at the beginning of the school year for clarity. Consequences for tardies are as follows per class period:

1. The first tardy violation will result in the student being warned.
2. The second and third tardy will result in the assignment of the student to after-school detention.
3. The fourth tardy will result in a mandatory parent conference.
4. The fifth tardy violation will result in out of school suspension and a possible referral to the Academic Support Center. A mandatory meeting is required between the student's parent/guardian and a school administrator.

5. All subsequent tardy violations may result in out-of-school suspension and a referral to the Academic Support Center. Lengths of suspensions and assigned days at Academic Support will increase as incidents of tardiness violations increase.
- 6. Student tardy violations are cumulative per each semester.**