

## 4.2000 ATTENDANCE

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -84.2, -288(a), -378 through -383, -407.5  
16 N.C.A.C. 6E .0101–0103  
State Board of Education Policy TCS-L-001, TCS-L-002

Cross References: 3.8100 PROMOTION AND RETENTION  
3.8105 PROMOTION APPEALS  
3.8110 SUMMER RECOVERY

The Board believes that regular attendance in school and participation in class are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Regular attendance develops patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of seven (or younger if enrolled in school) and sixteen attend school. Parents, legal custodians and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily.

### I. ATTENDANCE RECORDS

School officials shall keep an accurate record of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Specifically, classroom teachers shall keep accurate daily attendance rosters, including providing specific coding instructions for substitute teachers, and report the attendance of each student to the principal or his/her designee each day. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

### II. ATTENDANCE DEFINED / SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES DEFINED

A. Attendance defined: To be considered “in attendance,” a student shall be present at his/her assigned place in the school or at an assigned place other than the school with the approval of the Principal to attend an authorized school-related activity.

B. School-related activities defined. The following are considered school-related activities and shall not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. Field trips sponsored by the school
2. School-initiated and scheduled activities that are approved as school-sponsored activities
3. Athletic and other approved student competition or adjudicated festival-style events
4. Approved job-shadowing opportunities
5. Special educational opportunities approved by the Principal, including (but not limited to) service as a Governor’s or legislative page, scholarship competitions and interviews, individual academically-related invitation and/or competition events, etc.
6. In-school discipline and in-school suspension

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. Principals shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to a reasonable minimum.

### III. EXCUSED vs. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES and TARDIES

Absences from school or from class, as well as tardies to school or to class, fall into two categories: excused or unexcused. All absences from school or from class and all tardies are initially recorded as “unexcused” unless and until the school receives a parent’s note following the absence or tardy indicating the reason for the absence or tardy. The Principal or his/her designee is authorized to approve changing the initial “unexcused” designation for a student’s absence or tardy to “excused” for any of the following reasons:

- a) Personal illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school or class, or to get there on time (\* extended illness)
- b) Quarantine or other isolation ordered by the local health officer or State Board of Health (\*)
- c) Death of a member of the student’s immediate family
- d) Medical or dental appointment (\*)
- e) Subpoena to appear as a witness in the proceedings of a court or administrative proceeding
- f) Religious observance of an event required or suggested by the student's or student's parents' religion (requires signed parent statement affirming religious affiliation)
- g) Participation in a valid educational opportunity with the Principal’s prior approval
- h) Student’s pregnancy-related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary (\*)
- i) Any other absence or tardy specifically approved by the Principal

(\*) Statement from a physician generally required

In addition, a student whose parent, legal custodian, or legal guardian is member of the uniformed armed services on active duty and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the Principal to visit with that parent, legal custodian, or legal guardian.

### IV. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES and TARDIES

Parents shall be informed periodically about the status of their children’s attendance. In addition, the Board reaffirms that class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and will be taken into account in assessing academic achievement and grade promotion. Specifically:

1. Parents shall be informed when their children have accumulated 3, 6, 10, and 15 unexcused absences and/or tardies from school and/or from any individual class.
2. Upon the occasion of a student’s 10<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student will be called in for a conference with the Principal or his/her designee in which the school administration shall seek to establish a plan to eliminate further unexcused absences. Such plans may, at the Principal’s discretion, include the assignment of the student to after-school, Saturday, or other outside-school-hours mandatory “attendance buy-back” opportunities. Eventually, if that plan does not work, and/or not earlier than the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may be referred to the district attorney of the county in which they are domiciled for failure to comply with the NC Compulsory Attendance Law.
3. Students shall be subject to escalating disciplinary actions and penalties, possibly including but not limited to those described in IV2 above, when they exceed 3 unexcused tardies (and thereafter) to school or to any individual class.
4. Students shall be retained in their current grade levels, non-promoted to the next grade, when they exceed 15 unexcused absences from school, regardless of their academic grade.
5. In the case of high school courses, students shall be denied credit for the course when they exceed 8 unexcused absences, regardless of their academic grade.

6. When all other attempts to alleviate a student's chronic unexcused truancy (defined as unexcused absences and/or tardies to class or to school) have failed, the Principal may recommend to the Board the permanent expulsion of the student from Falls Lake Academy on the basis of repeated insubordination and/or non-compliance with the NC Compulsory Attendance Law, which shall be considered a deliberate surrender of the student's enrollment slot by the student's parent(s).

#### V. PROMOTION APPEALS

Students who are non-promoted or who are denied course credit due to excessive absences may appeal their grade retentions and/or denial of course credit by submitting a written appeal including documentation specific to all or some of their absences which indicates that those absences should have been designated "excused" as per item #III above. If the Appeals Committee does not overturn the retention and/or loss of course credit, the student may attend Summer Recovery (with satisfactory academic participation) to make up the lost time toward promotion and/or awarding of course credit. [See Board policies 3.8105 and 3.8110.]