



Attendance Policy

Attendance in school and participation in class are an integral part of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop 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 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 to attend school. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain in school daily.

1. Attendance Records

School officials will keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class. Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina. A child shall be present at least one-half (1/2) of the school day to be recorded as present for that day at the elementary and middle school levels.

2. Excused Absences

When a student must miss school, a written excuse signed by the parent and/or guardian must be presented to the student's teacher and/or office on the day the student returns after an absence or an email must be sent to the school. Failure to submit appropriate documentation as to the reason for the absence(s) within three (3) days of returning to school will result in the absence being coded as unexcused. An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons with a written excuse from the parent or guardian:

1. **Personal illness or injury occurs that makes the student physically unable to attend school.** **Absences due to extended illnesses require a statement from the physician.*
2. **Isolation/Quarantine ordered by the State Board of Health and/or school officials.** Voluntary self-quarantining will not be counted as an excused absence.
3. **Death in the immediate family** (including but not limited to grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters) of the student.
4. **Medical or Dental appointment**, appropriate documentation is required. Appropriate documentation can include:
 - a. Dated doctor or dentist statement on letterhead.
 - b. Diagnosis by physician – clarifying whether the illness is a prolonged illness contributing to, or which could contribute to, a pattern of absences requiring a student to be out of school and further clarifying when a student should be able to return to school.
 - c. Dated parent/guardian's note clearly stating the reasoning for the student's absence and/or referencing a previous written diagnosis rendered by a medical professional.
5. **Participation under a subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding.**
6. **Religious observances** – The Director of Education or designee may authorize a maximum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required

by the faith of the student or student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The student's parent/guardian must give the Director of Education or designee a written notice of the request for an excused absence at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled religious observance. The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to such an absence for religious observance.

7. Visitation with the student's parent or legal guardian, at the discretion of the Director of Education, if the parent(s)/guardian(s) (a) is an active-duty member of uniformed services, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

3. School-Related Activities

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed. The Director of Education shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to an absolute minimum. The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. Field trips sponsored by the school;
2. Job shadows and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47 (34a);
3. School-initiated and scheduled activities;
4. Athletic events requiring early dismissal from school;
5. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the Director of Education;
6. In-school suspension

Students will complete assignments missed for these reasons. The teacher will determine when work is to be made up. The student is responsible for finding out which assignments were missed and completing them within the specified time period.

4. Tardies

Students are expected to be at school on time and to be present at the scheduled start time of school each day. Students who are excessively tardy to school miss classroom time. Parents can be helpful by scheduling their child's appointments after school hours when possible, or on days when school is not in session. Tardy students do not have the opportunity to partake in essential beginning of the day instruction that assist students in planning their day.

If a student arrives at school late without a valid reason for an excused tardy, the removal shall be considered an "unexcused early tardy". An accumulation of five (5) unexcused tardies, as defined above, shall be equal to one unexcused absence for the purpose of the compulsory attendance law and the provision of this regulation for addressing a student's excessive absences.

5. Early Dismissal

Students are expected to be at school on time and to be present for the entire school day. Students who are excessively leaving early miss valuable classroom time. Parent(s)/guardian(s) can be helpful by scheduling their child's appointments after school hours when possible, or on days when school is not in session.

If a student is removed without a valid reason for an excused absence, the removal shall be considered an “unexcused early dismissal”. An accumulation of five (5) unexcused early departures, as defined above, shall be equal to one unexcused absence for the purpose of the compulsory attendance law and the provision of this regulation for addressing a student’s excessive absences.

Due to safety concerns, no early dismissals will be accepted after 2:05 pm for K-5th Grade (Elementary) & 2:20 pm for 6th-8th Grade (Middle School); you must pick your child up from the car rider line instead. If it is necessary to pick up your child before the above-mentioned times, please use the following procedures:

1. Please send a note to the teacher that morning including the name of the person that will be picking up the child and the time the child will be picked up.
2. Report to the office, not the classroom. Please be prepared to provide photo identification. Someone from the office will call for your child.
3. Sign the student out and give the reason for early dismissal.

6. Unexcused Absences

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be considered in assessing academic achievement. Illness, injury, or other medically related absences beyond ten (10) days in a year for elementary and middle school that are not documented by a doctor will be coded as unexcused.

Students are expected to be at school on time and to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class. Students with excused absences due to documented health problems are exempt from this policy. In addition, for students experiencing homelessness, school officials must consider issues related to the student’s homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences, tardies or early dismissals.

The Director of Education or designee shall notify parent(s)/guardian(s) and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences. The following steps apply to students with excessive absences:

1. Once a student has accrued 3 unexcused absences, or 5 absences total, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted, the attendance policy reviewed, and a mandatory attendance improvement plan will be initiated.
2. Once a student has accrued 6 unexcused absences in a semester, or 8 absences total, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of a possible violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and to attend a conference to discuss the importance of regular school attendance and interventions may be provided. The mandatory attendance improvement plan will be reviewed, and administrative and/or disciplinary action may be taken.
3. Once a student has accrued more than 10 absences, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to attend a conference where laws regarding truancy and retention are discussed. The school will follow all state requirements to ensure compliance with state law regarding truancy. In addition, administration will make a referral to the Intervention Team to evaluate the student for additional interventions.

7. Miscellaneous Provisions

1. Pattern of Absences

When a pattern of absences exists (i.e., once a student reaches six (6) daily absences within a semester relating to illnesses), school officials should be alerted to the possibility of a disability and referral is made to the Student Support Team (SST) to gather multiple sources of data for the purpose of determining possible eligibility under Section 504 and/or IDEA. The Student Support Team (SST) would then share this data with the Director of Education, for consideration, should a waiver for such absence be requested.

2. Make-Up Work for Absences

Students are permitted to make up all work missed during an absence. All work must be made up within five (5) calendar days following the student's return to school unless the Director of Education/designee determines that extenuating circumstances might support an extension of this time restriction. Make-up work is the responsibility of the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

3. Maximum Number of Absences

There will be a maximum of sixteen (16) absences allowed for students participating in year long programs and eight (8) absences allowed for students participating in semester long programs. For the purpose of determining athletic/extracurricular eligibility, all middle school students will be allowed a maximum of eight (8) absences per semester. For the purpose of enforcement of this policy in determining athletic/extracurricular eligibility, two school quarters shall equal a semester. If a student accrues more than sixteen (16) absences in one (1) school year, the school reserves the right to retain the student, should their academic progress indicate this necessity.

4. Waiver Procedures

A student may apply to the Director of Education for a waiver for lawful absences due to extenuating circumstances, examples of which may include a chronic medical condition for which previous documentation has been submitted, attendance in a court proceeding, etc. This request shall be submitted in writing on the Davidson Charter Academy Waiver Form and must be submitted to the Director of Education during the same semester in which the absence(s) occurs. In the event the absence(s) occurs at the end of the semester, said waiver request must be submitted within five (5) days of the absence(s).

The Director of Education will review waiver requests and provide written notification to the parent of the decision. Although the Director of Education may appoint a waiver committee to review waiver requests and make recommendations for consideration, the Director of Education will make the final determination as to the appropriateness of the waiver request. The Director of Education will document the rationale for his/her decision as to waiving any such absences.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and student will be informed in writing of the final decision and rationale for waivers that are denied. If the waiver is denied at the school level, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student may appeal to the Board of Directors within three (3) days of receiving notification of the denial. The Director of Education will provide the Board with an annual report on the numbers of attendance waivers approved.

5. Withdrawal

When moving/leaving the school, please notify the office and your child's teacher at least one (1) week in advance of the date of your move and complete a withdrawal form. If possible, provide the name and address of the new school as well as the start date so that your child's records can be transferred. All books and materials must be returned to the school and your child(s) account must be in good standing before your departure.

6. School Calendar

The Davidson Charter Academy school year calendar is established following guidelines for instructional hours set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Changes may be made as deemed necessary due to inclement weather and/or emergencies through email, and/or text service to parents.