



Attendance Guidelines



South Carolina State Law (R 43-274)

State law requires all children of compulsory attendance age to regularly attend school. Regular attendance is necessary if students are to make the desired and expected academic progress. Dorchester School District Two has implemented procedures to ensure student attendance is maintained during the pandemic (COVID-19), ensuring that absences are recorded, and truancy is reported in accordance with policy JH, *Student Absences and Excuses*.

Virtual Attendance

Attendance is determined by whether a student both submits work and participates in activities assigned by the teacher. Students who submit work on a timely basis and participate as instructed will be considered present. Students who do not turn in assignments and participate in virtual learning activities as set forth in classroom procedures will be considered absent. Such absences will be processed in accordance with policy. Students who are sick due to COVID-19 will be considered lawfully absent in accordance with policy. If the illness is prolonged, such students may be eligible for medical homebound instruction as set forth in policy, *Medical Homebound Instruction*.

Onsite/School-Based Attendance

Attendance is determined by whether a student is physically present in a classroom on school grounds or school property. Teachers will take attendance following the normal procedures set forth in district policy. Students who are not sick, but who are required to quarantine or self-isolate will be provided the opportunity to participate in virtual instruction utilizing various instructional strategies as determined by the district. While under quarantine or self-isolation, such students will be subject to the attendance procedures as set forth for students regularly receiving virtual instruction. Students who are sick due to COVID-19 will be considered lawfully absent in accordance with policy. If the illness is prolonged, such students may be eligible for medical homebound instruction as set forth in policy, *Medical Homebound Instruction*.

Attendance for Hybrid Schedule

Students participating in a combination of onsite/school-based and virtual instruction will be subject to both attendance procedures set forth in this document. Onsite/school-based attendance will be determined by the students' physical presence in the classroom and for virtual attendance, students must both submit work and participate in activities assigned by the teacher to be considered present.

Truancy

State laws and regulations for defining absences and truancy are applicable for both onsite/school-based instruction and virtual instruction. District schools will continue to follow policy regarding continued absences.

Required Excuses

Within three (3) days after returning to class, the student/parent/guardian must submit a written excuse explaining his/her absence. Schools will accept an excuse via email from the parent/guardian. If applicable, the student may also submit an excuse from the doctor. If a student does not submit an excuse, his/her absence will be considered unlawful/unexcused.

Lawful/Excused Absences

- The absence is caused by the student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others.
- The absence is due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- The absence is due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith.
- The absence is due to school activities that are approved in advance by the principal.

Unlawful/Unexcused Absences

- The absence of the student without the knowledge of his/her parent/guardian.
- The absence of the student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his/her parent/ guardian.

The excuse should include the following information: Student's Name, Date the excuse was written, Date(s) of the absence(s), Reason for the absence(s), Signature/Name of the parent/guardian and telephone number.