

SCHOOL CONTACTS

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE 2021-2022 What Parents Need to Know

DORCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT 4

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STUDENT ABSENCES & EXCUSES (Continued)

A student is considered unlawfully absent under the following circumstances. They are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parents or guardians or they are absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent or guardian. Parents are allowed to write 7 excuses per school year. There is no limit on the number of medical excuses the school will accept. However, please note that the student is responsible for making up any school work that is missed due to any excused absence.

The Dangers of Truancy

An unlawful absence from school is called truancy. This includes skipping classes or the entire days of school.

Truancy puts students at risk for many problems, including poor grades, involvement in gangs, teen pregnancy, alcohol or other drug use, and criminal behavior. In Dorchester County, parents will face legal action if their child is truant. They will be summoned to appear in Family Court before a Family Court Judge. The parent may be fined or the child may be sent to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

Parents are required to attend a Truancy Intervention meeting once their child reaches 3 consecutive or a total of 5 unlawful absences.

Tardy to School

It is important that students be punctual to school. The day is planned for the student's academic growth. School begins between 7:40 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. therefore, the students should be at school by 7:40 to avoid tardiness. Please review the school schedule for details.

In the district's elementary schools, when a child reaches four tardies, a notice will be sent to the parent. At six tardies a parent conference is required to address the student's continued tardiness.

In middle school, any student arriving late must report to the main office with a parent for sign in. Excessive tardies will result in a mandatory parent conference.

At the high school level, students arriving **after** 8:00 a.m. are tardy and must sign in at the In School Suspension Room. Five tardies will result in out of school suspension and a required parent conference to return.



▶ PARENTS PLAY A BIG ROLE IN STUDENT'S ATTENDANCE

Don't wait for problems to happen before getting involved in your child's education. Ask them questions about school and their day at school. Set high expectations and offer encouragement and praise. Find ways to reward achievements. Attend parent-teacher conferences. Let the school know about any special situations when your child will need to miss school. When your child skips school, take steps to deal with it right away. Try to find out why he or she doesn't want to go to school. Work together with the school to find a solution. Let your child be involved in the process. Students have better attendance and more success in school when parents are involved. School attendance laws must be followed during virtual attendance as well as face to face.



COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW

Section 59-65-10: All parents shall cause their children or wards to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten of this State which has been approved by the State Board of Education or a member school of the South Carolina Independent School Association or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church related school, or other programs that have been approved by the State Board of Education from the school year in which the child or ward is five years of age before September first until the child or ward attains his seventeenth birthday or graduated from high school.



SECTION 59-65-20. Penalty for failure to enroll or cause child to attend school.

Any parent or guardian who neglects to enroll his child or ward or refuses to make such child or ward attend school shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than fifty dollars or be imprisoned not more than thirty days; each day's absence shall constitute a separate offense; provided, the court may in its discretion suspend the sentence of anyone convicted of the provisions of this article.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE Policy JE

State law requires all children between the ages of five and 17 to attend a public or private school or kindergarten. A parent whose child or ward is not six years old on or before September 1st of the school year may waive kindergarten attendance for his/her child.

The Board expects children to attend school regularly. Regular attendance is necessary if students are to make the desired and expected academic and social progress.

The school year consists of 180 days. High school students must attend 85 days of each 90 day semester to receive one-half unit of credit. They must attend 170 days through the course of the school year to receive one unit of credit.

STUDENT ABSENCES & EXCUSES

The Board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable. Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by the parent or guardian. If the student fails to bring a valid excuse, he will automatically receive an unlawful absence. A student is considered lawfully absent when (1) they are ill, (2) there is a death or serious illness in their immediate family, or (3) there is a recognized religious holiday of their faith and they provide a written excuse to the school.

VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE (If applicable)

Virtual students must login daily and participate in the class. They are expected to do all assigned classwork in a timely fashion as directed by the teacher. Students who fail to login and follow the teacher's instructions will be considered absent from school. All truancy rules and regulations will apply.



Williams Memorial
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Woodland
HIGH SCHOOL