

**Procedures for Complying With the
COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW**

**AR6000
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Regular attendance in school is a precursor to good academic skills. In an effort to insure that **Warren County Schools'** personnel, students, and parents/guardians comply with the *Compulsory Attendance Law* (G.S. 115C-381) and **Warren County Board of Education policies (6000, 6010, 6101- 6103, 6110-6112, 6120, and 6121)**, the following procedures shall be followed for accounting and enforcing attendance.

IT SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TO INSURE ACCURATE ACCOUNTING OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE.

I. Documentation of Student Absences: It is the responsibility of the principal or his/her designee to excuse a student's absence(s) from school.

A. **Lawful Absences:** The following absences are considered lawful and may be excused:

1. Illness or Injury
2. Isolation as ordered by the State Board of Health
3. Death in the Immediate Family
4. Emergency Medical or Dental Appointment (or pre-approved by the principal).
5. Court or Administrative Proceedings
6. Religious Observance
7. Educational Opportunity (Note: These absences should be approved prior to the absences.)

B. **Unlawful Absences:** Unlawful absences are:

1. Absences from school other than those listed as lawful.
2. Student's willful absences from school with or without the knowledge of the parent/guardian/custodian.

C. **SIMS Accounting of Absences:** It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to determine the reason for a student's absence(s) from school and to code the absence as lawful or unlawful. Although written excuses from parents or medical professionals are the usual methods of determining the cause of the absence(s), information may be obtained through other means. The reason for all absences must be documented and kept on a file at the school for a period of one school year. **If the cause of the student's absence is not determined within two (2) days of the student's return to school or if it is not deemed lawful, the teacher is responsible for coding the absence(s) as a "2".**

D. **Consecutive Absences:** Schools should monitor students' consecutive absences of **three (3) days or more** to determine the reason for the absences and

to initiate the procedures for violation of the *Compulsory Attendance Law*, if necessary.

II. Documentation of Efforts to Notify Parents/Guardians/Custodians.

A. The principal, or his/her designee, must notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his/her child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated **three (3) unlawful absences** in a school year. These absences do not have to be consecutive.

B. After **six (6) unlawful absences** in a school year, the principal, or his/her designee, must notify the parent/guardian/custodian **by mail** that he/she may be in violation of the *Compulsory Attendance Law*, and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under established attendance policies of the state and the board of education.

C. After **six (6) unlawful absences**, and following the mailing of the letter to the parent/guardian/custodian, the principal should refer the student to the school social worker. The social worker and the principal, or designee, shall make every attempt to work with the student and family to analyze the cause of the absences and determine steps to eliminate the obstacles to attendance and compliance with the *Compulsory Attendance Law*.

(Note: No referrals should be made to the school social worker unless: 1) unlawful absences have been documented, and 2) parents/guardians/custodians have been notified of the 3rd and 6th absences.)

D. After **ten (10) accumulated unlawful absences** in a school year, the principal will review any reports of the investigation prepared. The principal, or his/her designee, will confer with the student and parent/guardian/custodian to determine whether the parent/guardian/custodian made a good faith effort to comply with the *Compulsory Attendance Law*. Then, dependent upon the circumstance, the principal will:

1. File a petition with the District Attorney at the magistrate's office (if parent has not complied with the law);
2. File a complaint with the juvenile intake counselor (if the student is in violation of the law); and/or
3. Refer the student to the Department of Social Services.