

A. ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION TEAMS

Each principal will establish a school attendance intervention team to monitor school wide attendance and design interventions to reduce individual student excused and unexcused absences. This document is intended to provide clarification and specific procedures for BCS Policy 4400 - Attendance. The purpose of the procedures is to ensure consistency in the implementation of Policy 4400. In addition, 4400-R provides attendance teams with guidelines and procedures for development of attendance plans and/or initiation of court proceedings for excessive absences and consideration of absence waiver applications.

I. Composition of Attendance Team

The term “attendance team” in Policy 4400 - Attendance and in this document refers to any group of school employees who are assigned to collect and analyze attendance data, develop attendance plans to address excessive absence, and to make decisions regarding attendance related issues, such as absence waivers and alternative make-up time for student absences. The following members are required participants: school social worker, at least one school counselor, and one administrator. Other members may be included as needed or as designated by the school administrator: school nurse, Graduation Initiative personnel, teacher(s) as assigned by principal and the school-based therapist, or DHHS prevention caseworker (only if students are on their caseload). It is strongly encouraged to have teacher representation on this team to assist in developing attendance plans.

II. Attendance Team Implementation of Mandatory Attendance Law

In accordance with G.S. 115C-378, every parent, guardian, or custodian in North Carolina having charge or control of a student between the ages of 7 and 16 years shall cause the student to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the student is assigned is in session. Every parent, guardian, or custodian in North Carolina having charge or control of a child under age seven who is enrolled in a public school in grades Kindergarten through two shall also cause the child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in session unless the child has withdrawn from school. No person shall encourage, entice, or counsel any child of compulsory age to be unlawfully absent from school. The parent, guardian, or custodian of a child shall notify the school of the reason for each known absence of the child, in accordance with local school board policy.

School attendance intervention teams will establish regularly scheduled meetings. Schools will collect and review data regularly to make decisions about individual interventions, targeted group interventions, and school-wide incentives for improved attendance. The attendance intervention team will analyze individual student attendance data to determine whether a child is excessively absent and determine if interventions are necessary.

The attendance intervention team may:

1. Review individual attendance data.
2. Consider the reasons for the student absences.
3. Encourage the child's teacher to follow up with the child's parent about the impact excessive absences may be having on the child's academic progress.
4. Require mandatory physician documentation.
5. Required appointment verification.
6. Develop an attendance intervention plan if needed.

G.S. 115C-378 requires the following actions and/or interventions at the following benchmarks for unexcused absences:

At 3 Unexcused Absences

1. Requirement under G.S. 115C-378: School must notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of child's excessive absences after child has 3 unexcused absences. The parent will be notified with a 3 Day Unexcused Absences Letter*, telephone contact, or face-to-face consultation.

After Not More Than 6 Unexcused Absences

1. Requirement under G.S. 115C-378: The principal or principal designee *shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian by mail* that they may be in violation of the compulsory attendance law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be just justified under the established attendance policies for the State and local board of education. The parent will be notified with a 6 Day Unexcused Absence Letter.*
2. Once the student has accumulated not more than 6 unexcused absences and the parent has been notified, the attendance intervention team will review any additional information that may be potentially impacting the students overall academic performance, i.e.: attendance history, health issues, family issues, environmental issues in the home, mental health needs, specific educational needs, social/behavioral needs, etc.

The school counselor and/or school social worker will work with the child, and child's family, to analyze the causes of the absences and develop strategies to improve the student's attendance, i.e., adjust school-based services or instructional supports as warranted by student's academic/behavior needs, refer to community resources for basic or mental health needs, assess child and family needs and refer to other supportive services, provide supportive counseling or social work resources in/out of the school setting, and develop behavioral strategies for parent implementation.

3. The attendance intervention team could review additional information that may be potentially impacting the students overall academic performance, i.e., attendance, history of attendance issues/patterns, health issues, family issues, environmental

issues in the home, mental health needs, specific educational needs, social/behavioral needs, etc.

An individual attendance intervention plan will be developed through the school based attendance committee in cooperation with the parent, guardian, or custodian.

4. Law enforcement officer may assist in conducting home visits as needed.

After 10 Accumulated Unexcused Absences in a School Year

1. Requirement under G.S. 115C-378: The principal or designee shall review any reports or investigations relating to G.S. 115C-381, school social workers; reports; prosecutions. This section gives authority for school social workers and other designees to file court petition under the compulsory attendance law.

“The school social worker shall investigate all violators of the provisions of this Part. The reports of unlawful absence required to be made by teachers and principals to the school social worker shall, in his hands, in case of any prosecution, constitute prima facie evidence of the violation of this Part and the burden of proof shall be upon the defendant to show the lawful attendance of the child or children upon an authorized school. (1955, c. 1372, art. 20, ss. 3, 5; 1957, c. 600; 1961, c. 186; 1963, c. 1223, ss. 8, 9; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1985, c. 686, s. 3.)”

2. Upon the tenth (10th) unexcused absence, a conference is required pursuant to G.S. 115C-381. The parent will be notified with a 10 Day Unexcused Absence Letter.* See Attendance Conference Form to develop an intervention plan.
3. The school social worker and/or attendance team will confer with the student and student’s parent, guardian, or custodian to determine whether or not the parent, guardian or custodian has:
 - A. Received notification pursuant to the law.
 - B. Has made a good faith effort to comply with the law
 - C. If the principal or designee determines that the parent, guardian or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply, then the principal shall notify the District Attorney and the Director of Social Services where the child resides.
4. The attendance intervention team will continue to monitor the student’s overall attendance and academic progress and revise the plan as needed. The attendance intervention team will continue to assess the student/family needs and make referrals as appropriate. If unexcused absences significantly decrease, the intervention plan can be continued without further legal action. If the plan does not result in reduced unexcused absences, legal petition may be filed.

III. Attendance Team Procedures for Absence Waivers

In some cases, parents/students may request a waiver for some excused absences that exceed number of total absences allowed by Buncombe County Board of Education for promotion/credit. Waived absences are still recorded as absences on the student record, but do not count against the student for promotion standards or athletic eligibility.

The following documented reasons will be considered when determining absence waivers:

1. Chronic illness: Requires a doctor's note that includes explanation of the illness, specific days missed from school and the duration of the chronic illness. Parent notes may be accepted if there is a clear doctor's note stating that the student may not be seen every time an episode occurs, i.e. debilitating migraines, asthma attacks, etc.
2. Acute Illness: An illness of 5 or more days due to acute illnesses such as, influenza, etc. Doctor's notes must be provided for all days missed.
3. Death in an Immediate Family: Up to 3 days may be waived. Obituary/service program must be provided
4. Court appearances: Only waived if student is subpoenaed as a witness in a court case. Court appearances for involvement in criminal activity will not be waived.
5. Other: Compelling circumstances may be considered on a case by case basis.

A Request for Absence Waiver Application* must be completed and submitted to the attendance team with the required documentation and a signed release of information for the appropriate sources of documentation. The attendance team will review the application and make recommendations to the principal regarding the number of days waived. Parent/students will receive written decision from the principal regarding any make-up work or make-up study sessions required, or other requirements as determined by the attendance team or principal. Each school will establish an attendance make-up program consistent with requirements of Policy 4400, Attendance.

Appropriate fees may apply for attendance make-up time that occurs after school, on Saturday, or during the summer.

B. Student Athlete Attendance

1. Student athletes in grades 9-12 in semester-long courses may only have a total of five (5) absences per semester per class for the previous semester. Absences are considered for each class and students must be present two-thirds (2/3) of the class to be counted as present. Absences over five (5) days may be made up or waived in accordance with the school's attendance make-up program in order to receive credit and maintain athletic eligibility.
2. A student athlete must, at the time of any game in which he or she participates, be a regularly enrolled member of the school's student body, according to local policy. A student athlete must be in attendance for at least one-half (1/2) of the student's school day

to participate in that day's contest (the principal retains the right to waive this attendance requirement due to extenuating circumstances).

3. The student athlete must be enrolled within the first 15 days in regular attendance for the present semester to be eligible for athletics. A student athlete whose family has moved into a school district shall immediately assume the same status in the new district as that from which he moved. Summer school attendance shall be counted in determining athletic eligibility and approved homebound programs to fulfill the attendance requirement.
4. Student athletes who are ineligible because of attendance at the end of the previous semester have a maximum of 30 school days to regain eligibility by fulfilling approved attendance make-up requirements as determined by the school's attendance committee and principal.

* 3, 6, and 10 Day Unexcused Attendance Letter, Medical Provider Note Required Letter, Attendance Conference Form, and Request for Absence Waiver Application are available to parent/guardian as needed from school staff. School staff may access these documents on the employee website on the Student Services page.

Cross Reference: Attendance, Policy 4400

Submitted for Information: September 4, 2014

Revised: April 14, 2016

Replaces Administrative Regulation 401

History of 401R

Adopted: June 2, 1994

Revised: June 25, 1997