



**Notice Regarding New SC School Attendance Policy**

District Five Families,

As our students prepare to head back to class, we want to make you aware of a new attendance policy that South Carolina will be implementing this school year.

Under the guidance of the federal Office of Civil Rights, the South Carolina Department of Education is now requiring all SC school districts to report students who are “chronically absent”. Research shows that students with a history of “chronic absenteeism” face a serious risk of falling behind in school, thus, making it more difficult for them to succeed in the classroom.

As part of these new requirements, South Carolina students will now be considered “absent” if they miss 50% of their instructional day for ANY reason, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. **THIS MEANS DISTRICT FIVE STUDENTS, ALONG WITH ALL OTHER SC STUDENTS, NOW HAVE TO BE IN SCHOOL FOR AT LEAST HALF OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY TO BE COUNTED “PRESENT” FOR THAT DAY.**

For our schools, those new attendance requirements will look like this:

School	School Start Time	School End Time:	Minutes Required to be Counted Present for the Day
Elementary	7:40 a.m.	2:25 p.m.	203 minutes
Intermediate	7:50 a.m.	2:50 p.m.	210 minutes
Middle School	7:50 a.m.	2:50 p.m.	210 minutes
High School	8:10 a.m.	3:25 p.m.	218 minutes

In addition, attendance will be taken during EVERY CLASS PERIOD at the middle and high school level. If a student reaches a certain number of unexcused absences in any particular class, they will not meet the state-mandated attendance requirement, and will receive a failing grade for that class. Students must be present for at least half of the period to be counted present.

Those attendance requirements are:

School	Maximum Unexcused Absences Allowed
Middle School	10 absences (per year)
High School	5 absences (per semester)

We appreciate your understanding as we implement and adhere to these new state school attendance requirements. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the South Carolina Department of Education’s Office of Student Intervention Services at (803) 734-3057.