



**Orange County
Public Schools**

Attendance Handbook

Student Attendance | Policies and Procedures

2026-2027

www.ocps.net | 407-317-3200

Table of Contents

Attendance Overview	1
ATTENDANCE	1
Technical Assistance	2
ParentSquare Assistance	2
Skyward Assistance	2
Attendance Policy and Procedures Contacts	2
ATTENDANCE DEFINITIONS	3
Policy, Procedures, and Best Practices	5
Attendance Recording Requirements	5
Excused Absences	6
Compulsory Attendance	6
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	7
IMPORTANT NOTES	7
Student Attendance	7
Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement	10
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	11
IMPORTANT NOTES	11
Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance	12
POLICY	12
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	12
Habitual Truancy Case Procedures	13
POLICY	13
STATUTORY AUTHORITY	14
IMPORTANT NOTES & BEST PRACTICES	14
Universally Recognized Religious Holidays	16

All Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) Policies cited within this handbook are taken from OCPS Board Policy JE unless otherwise noted.

OCPS EEO Non-Discrimination Statement

The School Board of Orange County, Florida, does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other reason prohibited by law. The School Board also provides equal access to Scouting America and other designated youth groups. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities. The following individuals at the Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center, 445 West Amelia Street, Orlando, Florida 32801, attend to compliance matters: Civil Rights Compliance Officer: Keshara Cowans; ADA Coordinator: Jay Cardinali; Section 504 Coordinator: Marlene Phillip-Magee. (407.317.3200)

OCPS EEO Declaración de No Discriminación

La Junta Escolar del Condado de Orange, Florida, no discrimina en la admisión o el acceso a, o el tratamiento o empleo en sus programas y actividades, por motivos de raza, color, religión, edad, sexo, origen nacional, estado civil, discapacidad, información genética, orientación sexual, identidad o expresión de género, o cualquier otra razón prohibida por la ley. La Junta Escolar también proporciona igualdad de acceso a Scouting America y a otros grupos de jóvenes designados. Esto se aplica a todos los estudiantes que estén interesados en participar en programas educativos y/o actividades escolares extracurriculares. Las siguientes personas, en el Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center, 445 West Amelia Street, Orlando, Florida 32801, se encargan de los asuntos de cumplimiento: Civil Rights Compliance Officer (Oficial de Cumplimiento de Derechos Civiles): Keshara Cowans; ADA Coordinator (Coordinador de ADA): Jay Cardinali; Section 504 Coordinator (Coordinador de la Sección 504): Marlene Phillip-Magee. (407.317.3200)

OVERVIEW

We all want our students to thrive, and the Florida Legislature strongly emphasizes the link between consistent school attendance and **academic success**. They believe it is crucial for every school district to actively promote attendance, as it directly contributes to students achieving their full potential. They have also found that **early intervention** is the most effective way to foster good attendance habits, which, in turn, leads to improved learning and achievement. It is truly about setting our students up for a bright future!

Here at Orange County Public Schools, our faculty and staff genuinely believe that being in every class, every day, and on time makes a huge difference. **Regular attendance and promptness** are key to your success. Think of it this way: when you're in class, you actively participate in discussions, gain appreciation for diverse perspectives, and build the habit of consistent attendance; all invaluable parts of any course. The learning and experiences missed due to absences simply cannot be fully replicated.

ATTENDANCE

All students of **compulsory school age** are required to attend school for the full 180-day school year, or its hourly equivalent, as mandated by the State Board of Education. Parents and guardians of children within this age range (6-16) are responsible for ensuring their child's daily school attendance.

Recognizing the association between **poor academic performance and non-attendance**, schools will respond promptly to prevent the development of non-attendance patterns that may indicate early signs of truancy. To this end, schools will collaborate with appropriate local and state agencies involved in **truancy prevention, intervention, and judicial action**.



Technical Assistance

ParentSquare Assistance

If you need help with the **ParentSquare system**, please contact one of the following:

- Shari Bobinski (shari.bobinski@ocps.net) – 407.317.3458

Skyward Assistance

Skyward Attendance by Office documentation can be found on the Customer Care website (<http://cc.ocps.net/>) using the following search path: > Student Systems Training and Support > Skyward > Skyward Documentation link > Support > Attendance.

For additional technical support assistance with Skyward, please contact Student Systems Training and Support (sst@ocps.net) or:

Customer Care number: 407-317-3375

Submit an Online Service Request at: help.ocps.net

For assistance with registration and enrollment policy and procedures, please contact **Student Enrollment** at **407-317-3233**.

For access to all attendance, truancy, and DMV concerns, please visit our Attendance and Student Advocacy SharePoint: attendance.ocps.net.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your **District Attendance** contacts below:

Tammy Loftus, Attendance/Truancy Liaison
tammy.loftus@ocps.net
(407) 836-7578

Shadeana Williams, Administrative Specialist
shadeana.oliver@ocps.net
(407) 836-6578

Dr. Amana Levi, Senior Administrator
41636@ocps.net
(407) 836-9328

ATTENDANCE DEFINITIONS

All students of **compulsory school age** are required to attend school for the full 180-day school year, or its hourly equivalent, as mandated by the State Board of Education. Parents and guardians of children within this age range (6-16) are responsible for ensuring their child's daily school attendance.

Recognizing the association between **poor academic performance and non-attendance**, schools will respond promptly to prevent the development of non-attendance patterns that may indicate early signs of truancy. To this end, schools will collaborate with appropriate local and state agencies involved in **truancy prevention, intervention, and judicial action**.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. **Attendance:** Students are to be counted in attendance for the school day if they are present at school and shall be recorded as present by the teacher or attendance clerk. At the elementary level, the homeroom ("00") period teacher will record daily attendance. At the secondary level, each class period is factored into the daily attendance count.

B. **Chronic Absenteeism:** When a student's absences total 10% or more school days for any reason, including *excused* and *unexcused absences*, and *out-of-school suspensions*. Using the percent of days enrolled, schools may identify students early in the school year to provide appropriate interventions. At the end of a 180-day school year, a *chronically absent student* misses **at least** 18 days of school. FLDOE reports chronic absenteeism as 21 or more absences.

C. **Class Attendance:** Students are to be counted in attendance if they are physically present in class at the secondary level (grades 6-12). Teacher codes for attendance include: "A" for Absent; "T" for Tardy; "R" for Not Entered. All students default to Present.

D. **Early Warning System:** A system to identify students who need additional support to improve academic performance and stay engaged in school. The early warning system in Orange County Public Schools includes data for students from kindergarten through 12th grade and includes "Attendance below 90 percent, regardless of whether the absence is excused or as a result of out-of-school suspension" (F.S. 1001.42(18)(b)(1)(a)).

E. **Field Trip:** A District-approved trip away from a school site or the student's regularly assigned classroom. A student with a signed permission slip that attends a field trip shall be recorded in attendance as "FT." The school attendance clerk is responsible for recording "FT" for students on a field trip. The classroom teacher can enter "AU" (absent unexcused) to identify that the student is not in class. The attendance clerk will override the teacher's attendance record.

F. **Habitual Truancy:** A student of compulsory school attendance age who accumulates 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days. In this definition, "calendar days" refers to all the days in a month, including weekends and holidays (F.S. s. 1003.01(8)).

G. **Pattern of Nonattendance**: A child study team will determine if a student is developing a pattern of nonattendance to allow the school to initiate interventions in a proactive effort to prevent patterns of nonattendance from becoming excessive or repeated from year to year. Chronic absenteeism is one metric for a child study team to consider in determining a pattern of nonattendance. A pattern of nonattendance may be developing if a student has 5 unexcused absences within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences within a 90-calendar-day period. A child study team may find that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, whether the absences are excused or unexcused (F.S. s. 1003.26(1)(b)).

H. **Regular School Attender**: A student that attends more than 95% of the academic school year. A regular attender's absences range from 0 to 4.9% of school days. At the end of a 180-day school year, a regular attender may miss from 0 to 8 school days.





Policy, Procedures, and Best Practices

In an effort to be consistent with the OCPS goals: "To ensure every student has a promising and successful future" attendance forms were standardized and are to serve as the sole source for attendance forms.

Attendance recording requirements

- Attendance must be recorded daily in a timely manner (at the beginning of each class and/or upon entry/departure to/from school). Attendance Clerks and Front Office Staff will record attendance in Skyward using the path provided in training (See ccdocs.ocps.net > Student> Skyward> Attendance> Skyward 1.1 Attendance Records). Teachers will record attendance in Educator Access Plus (Skyward).
- When a student begins their school year and arrives on the first day, their attendance is *automatically* set to **Present**, so **no entry** is required. If a student is on a roster but does NOT show up on their first day of the school year, or if a student transfers in mid-year and it's their first day at the new school, use the **"R" code (Not Entered)**. Students not in attendance on the first day and up to 10 days thereafter will receive a code of "R" (Not Entered).
- Attendance must be recorded by **3:25 PM** for secondary and **12:15 PM** for elementary for ParentSquare.
- **Tardies to school (M)** must be recorded by the attendance clerk or other designated front office personnel in Skyward daily. Teachers can only record **tardies to class**.
- For all early student departures from school, whether elementary or secondary, you must record the **time** and **reason** in the **Comment section**. The student's Day Status will automatically update based on their departure time.
- For secondary students, manually enter the early departure in the attendance system for the **period** of departure each time it happens. If an elementary student leaves early, and they were already marked "absent," enter the **"B" (Absent Unexcused)** code in the **"00" column**. This "B" code should remain until a proper excuse is provided.
- For any other early departure (not already covered by an "absent" mark) that is unexcused, record the departure time in the **Comment section** and immediately follow it with an **"F" (Early Dismissal Unexcused)**.
- When a substitute teacher can't enter attendance into the computer, they need to provide an Official Substitute Teacher Attendance Report to the attendance clerk or other assigned staff at the start of each period. The principal is responsible for making sure this happens. Office staff must enter this attendance data into the computer quickly: for secondary schools, it should be done as soon as each class begins; for elementary schools, entries are due by **12:15 PM**.

Excused absences FS 1003.26 (1)(a), (b), (c) 1, 2, 3, (d), (e), (f)

- All absences are recorded as unexcused until the student returns and provides documentation concerning the reason for the absence.
- If the absence meets criteria for an excused absence as indicated on page 9 of this handbook, then the absence will be recorded as "excused."
- *Requests that fall outside the guidelines of district policy require the discretion of the principal; however, all excused absences outside the list provided should offer educational opportunities that are age appropriate for the student.*
- If a student begins to demonstrate a pattern of absences for medical reasons, the school may require a physician's note for any future absences. Best practices indicate that students who are absent for three or more consecutive days or who request more than five non-consecutive absences for medical reasons should be required to bring in a doctor's note. Illness can also be verified by the school nurse, while the youth is at school. This practice is encouraged, if possible.
- Students who are granted an excused absence must be allowed a reasonable time to make up any missed work. At least one day must be allowed for each excused absence.

Compulsory Attendance

POLICY: With respect to compulsory attendance at school, it shall be the policy of The School Board of Orange County, Florida ("Board") that:

- All children who have attained the age of six (6) years by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six (6) years of age but have not attained the age of sixteen (16) years, shall be required to attend school regularly during the school term. A student shall attend all school sessions unless excused by the proper school authority. This rule does not apply to students who have been granted a Certificate of Exemption.
- Student's age sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) are required to attend school regularly unless a formal Declaration of Intent to Terminate School Enrollment ("Declaration") is filed and signed by the student and the student's parent/legal guardian. The Declaration must acknowledge the impact that terminating school enrollment is likely to have on the student's earning potential. The Declaration must also inform the student that withdrawal will result in the loss of his or her driver license. Upon receipt of the Declaration, the school must notify the parent/legal guardian of the student's intent to withdraw from school. **OCPS Intent to Terminate School Enrollment** Form link: <https://tinyurl.com/4aj24u9a>.
- In the above section, the student's guidance counselor or other school personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities to continue his or her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in a format prescribed by the Florida Department of Education to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.
Florida Department of Education Exit Survey link: <https://tinyurl.com/4ju2kvru>.
- Students who attain the age of sixteen (16) years during the school year will not be required to attend school beyond the date that they attain that age only if a Declaration is filed and signed by the student and the student's parent/legal guardian.

- Each student in grade 12 shall be required to enroll in courses for a full school day. A student's parent/legal guardian may request waiver of this requirement. The principal may grant the waiver after determining the student's attendance for less than a full school day would not prevent the student from achieving the minimum requirements for high school graduation.
- The parent/legal guardian of a student within compulsory attendance age of six (6) to sixteen (16) is responsible for the student's school attendance.
- The Superintendent or designee, working cooperatively with teachers, parents/legal guardians, and principals, shall take appropriate action, if necessary, to enforce the state compulsory attendance law.
- Policy JF (*Re-Entry of Students Previously Withdrawn*): A student over sixteen (16) years of age who has been **withdrawn previously**, regardless of reason, ***may apply to the principal of the school to re-enter at the beginning of the next semester.*** A student who has been withdrawn twice for nonattendance during a single school year may apply to the principal at the beginning of the next school year. A high school principal shall take into account the previous disciplinary and academic record of the student, post high school plans, and curriculum desired when agreeing to re-enter any student age eighteen (18) or over. Overage students shall be counseled into adult education to facilitate their high school graduation.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.33; 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.53; 1001.54; 1002.20; 1003.01; 1003.21; 1003.24; 1003.26; 1006.08; and 1012.28, Florida Statutes

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Late students **must** be allowed to sign-in regardless of their arrival time.
- Florida State Statute provides that students under the age of 18 shall have access to education. Therefore, students who are **16 or 17 must** be allowed to re-enter school upon request. An exception to this practice exists when an administrative action has occurred that restricts enrollment in a standard school setting. Please note that even if a student has filed a formal Declaration of Intent to Terminate School Enrollment form, this **does not** preclude re-entry into school.
- According to Individual Education Program (IEP) team decisions, students with disabilities may remain in school until the semester of their 22nd birthday. Because each ESE student's education is individualized, their educational plan (including graduation and transition plans) in school should be discussed in an IEP meeting.

Student Attendance

POLICY: The Superintendent or designee is responsible for enforcing school attendance of all children subject to the compulsory school age in the Orange County Public Schools ("OCPS") district and supporting enforcement of school attendance by local law enforcement agencies. The responsibility includes recommending policies and procedures to The School Board of Orange County, Florida ("Board") that require schools to respond in a timely manner to every unexcused absence, and every absence for which the reason is unknown, of students enrolled in the schools.

The Superintendent's attendance procedures shall outline the responsibilities within the school system including, but not limited to, the following:

- School attendance is the responsibility of the student and parent/legal guardian.
- Students shall begin each new school year with zero (0) absences.
- All school personnel shall encourage regular attendance.
- Schools shall publish and distribute their attendance procedures to students and parents/legal guardians.
- On a daily basis, student absences will be recorded as unexcused until an acceptable excuse has been provided by the parent/legal guardian indicating the reason for the student's absence. The principal has the ultimate authority to decide whether an absence shall be excused. *Attendance documentation must be submitted to the school within 48 hours of the student's absence. The principal may extend this deadline beyond 48 hours.*
- ***Early student departure during the last hour of the school day is strongly discouraged.***
- If a student is repeatedly absent from school due to illness, the school is authorized to require the parent/legal guardian to provide a written physician's statement for each subsequent absence to be considered excused.
- Absences shall be excused for the following:
 - Illness, injury, or other insurmountable condition;
 - Illness or death of a member of the student's immediate family (*OCPS practice has been to define **immediate family** as the student's mother, father, brother, sister, stepmother, stepfather, step-siblings, and other relatives who live in the student's home*);
 - Recognized (or established) religious holidays and/or religious instruction;
 - Medical appointments;
 - Legal appointments;
 - Participation in an approved activity or class of instruction held at another site;
 - Prearranged absences of educational value with the principal's prior approval;
 - Pediculosis (head lice) infestation (up to four (4) days per school year); or
 - Catastrophic disasters that significantly impact the life of the student (e.g. loss of residence from natural disaster).
- Students shall be given a reasonable amount of time to make up any work assignments which were missed during an absence. At least one (1) school day shall be allowed to make up missed work for each day of absence.

- A student who is **not** in his/her **first assigned class at the beginning of each school day** shall be considered tardy to class.
- In **cases of truancy and habitual truancy** that are referred for Child Study Team action, tardies *may be recognized and calculated in the truancy instances*. For truancy purposes in Child Study Team documentation that may also be used for court action, five (5) tardies to school or five (5) early departures from school will equal one (1) unexcused absence. The authority to apply accumulated tardies and early departures as unexcused absences is given to the Board pursuant to Section 1003.02, Florida Statutes. The principal has the authority to determine whether an absence is excused.
- Schools ***may not exempt students*** from examinations, papers, or other academic performance requirements to encourage student attendance.
- Report cards shall reflect the academic status, attendance, and number of daily tardies for each student.
- A student between the ages of **six (6)** and under **sixteen (16)** who is absent from school without having an excused absence, with or without the knowledge and/or consent of the parent/legal guardian, will be considered **“truant.”**
- A student between the ages of six (6) and under sixteen (16) who has fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences **within ninety (90) calendar days**, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined in the Child Study Team action, will be considered a **“habitual truant.”** Days when a student is suspended from school are not included in the number of absences when determining “habitual truancy.” Students may make up work missed during a suspension within a time limit established by the principal.
- Each school shall implement the following steps to enforce regular school attendance of the students enrolled in their school:
 - Upon each unexcused absence, or absence for which the reason is unknown, the principal or designee shall contact the parent/legal guardian to determine the reason for the absence. At least one (1) school day shall be allowed to make up missed work for each day of absence.
 - If a student has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or ten (10) unexcused absences, within a ninety (90) calendar day period, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined in the Child Study Team action, the student's primary teacher shall report to the principal or designee that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. The principal or designee shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, refer the case to the school's Child Study Team to determine if early patterns of truancy are developing. If the Child Study Team finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, whether the absences are excused or not, a meeting with the parent/legal guardian must be scheduled to identify potential remedies.
 - If an initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the Child Study Team shall implement the following:

- Frequent attempts at communication between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian;
 - Evaluation for alternative education programs; and
 - Attendance contracts.
- The Child Study Team may, but is not required to, implement other interventions, including referral to other agencies for family services or recommendation for filing a truancy petition pursuant to Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.
 - The Child Study Team shall be diligent in facilitating intervention services and shall report the case to the Superintendent or designee only when all reasonable efforts to resolve the nonattendance behavior are exhausted.
 - If the parent/legal guardian refuses to participate in the remedial strategies because he or she believes that those strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent/legal guardian may appeal to the Board. The Board may provide a hearing officer, and the hearing officer shall make a recommendation for final action to the Board. If the Board's final determination is that the strategies of the Child Study Team are appropriate, and the parent/legal guardian still refuses to participate or cooperate, the Superintendent or designee may seek criminal prosecution for noncompliance with compulsory school attendance.
 - If a student subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the parent/legal guardian or the Superintendent or designee shall refer the case to the case staffing committee and the Superintendent or designee may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.
 - If the Superintendent or designee chooses not to file a truancy petition, the procedures for filing a Child-in-Need-of-Services ("CINS") petition shall be commenced.

Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement

- Orange County Public Schools ("OCPS") shall implement the following steps to enforce regular school attendance of students of compulsory school age **who are not enrolled**:
 - Under the direction of the Superintendent or designee, a designated school representative shall give written notice, in person or by return receipt mail, to the parent/legal guardian when no valid reason is found for a student's non-enrollment in school. The notice shall require enrollment or attendance within three (3) days after the date of notice. If the notice and requirement are ignored, the designated school representative shall report the case to the Superintendent or designee and may refer the case to the Case Staffing Committee. The Superintendent or designee shall take such steps as are necessary to bring criminal prosecution against the parent/legal guardian or other person having control.
 - Subsequent to the activities described above, the Superintendent or designee shall give written notice in person or by return receipt mail to the parent/legal guardian that criminal prosecution is being sought for nonattendance. The Superintendent or designee may file a truancy petition, as defined in Section 984.03, Florida Statutes, following the procedures outlined in Section 984.151, Florida Statutes.

- *A law enforcement officer may take a student into custody when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the student is absent from school without authorization or is suspended or expelled and is not in the presence of his or her parent/legal guardian. The officer may take the student into custody and deliver the student to the appropriate “school system site”, including but not limited to, a center approved by the Superintendent of schools for the purpose of counseling students and referring them back to the school system or an approved alternative to a suspension or expulsion program. If a student is suspended or expelled from school without assignment to an alternative school placement, the student shall be delivered as follows:*
 - To the parent/legal guardian; or
 - To a location determined by the parent/legal guardian, or to the Alternative Center for Truancy until the parent/legal guardian can be located.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 984.03; 984.12; 984.15; 984.151; 1001.41; 1003.02; 1003.21; 1003.24; 1003.26; and 1003.33, Florida Statutes

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Late students **must** be allowed to sign-in regardless of their arrival time.
- Students may **not** be suspended out of school for excessive tardiness **to school**.
- In the event a student’s attendance has met the definition of truancy, school tardies and early departures will become part of the truancy referral process (five tardies to school or five early departures are equivalent to one unexcused absence). However, this is for referral purposes only, and the student attendance record will not be altered. **Actual presence or absence of a student on campus must be accurately reflected in the electronic record.** *Schools are encouraged to establish school-based interventions for tardies that do **not** include the use of out-of-school suspensions.*
- *Phone calls are not acceptable communications for excusing an absence. Digital excuse notes can be accepted by the parent and/or guardian of the student; however, preliminary steps should be taken to ensure **authentication** of the excuse note.*
- Any student whose parent/legal guardian is an active member of the United States Armed Forces and is preparing for deployment, on leave, or has returned from deployment may be excused up to five days.
- Excused absences, field trips, and suspension days may not count against a student for purposes of credit hours.
- Students must be allowed a reasonable time to make-up any missed work regardless of the type of absence (excused or unexcused). A minimum of one day must be allowed for each absence from school.
- Students suspended from school should be treated like an excused absence with regards to make-up work and course attendance hours.
- All students placed in the **Hospital Homebound Program** are ***subject to compulsory school attendance laws*** and are subject to the OCPS Truancy Policy.

- **Pregnancy is not an acceptable excuse for non-enrollment.** Pregnant students and new parents are mandated to attend school. However, if a student is enrolled in a teenage parent program, then they are exempt from the minimum attendance requirement for absences related to pregnancy or parenting. The student is required to make up work missed as a result of any absences. Pregnant students sometimes require extra excused absences due to medical issues. These additional absences must be documented by a note from the student's doctor where the doctor must determine the amount of time that will be excused. The student is required to make up any work missed during these extended absences.
- When a parent requests in writing that their child be withdrawn from school, the student should be immediately withdrawn. However, the school must inform parent that the student should be immediately enrolled in another school for student records to be released. If records are not requested within 5 days, student's withdrawal will revert to "Unexcused" absences from date of withdrawal request, which may trigger a truancy status.
- The attendance clerk or attendance designee should monitor the student's enrollment status. If the child has not enrolled at another school within five schools days, non-enrollment procedures should be initiated.

Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance

POLICY

Recording of student attendance for the purpose of administering the full-time equivalent program and other State programs shall be pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.044. The principal or designee shall be responsible for compliance with all Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, The School Board of Orange County, Florida ("Board") policies, and the Orange County Public Schools ("OCPS") attendance procedures pertaining to student attendance. The principal or designee shall assure that all teachers and clerks are instructed in the proper recording of attendance and may periodically determine whether instructions are being followed.

- Each principal shall devise a system of student monitoring and accounting which determines the presence or absence of any student during the school day. This monitoring is in addition to the regular daily check of student attendance. If a discrepancy of the presence or absence of a student is noted during the school day, the fact shall be reported immediately to the principal or designee who shall take such action as deemed proper.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 1001.41; 1001.42; 1001.54; 1003.02; 1003.23; 1003.25; 1006.07; and 1012.28, Florida Statutes Rule 6A-1.044, Florida Administrative Code

Habitual Truancy Case Procedures

POLICY

- For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:
 - “Truant” means that:
 - The student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or five (5) absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or ten (10) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a ninety (90) day calendar period, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies or early departures as determined by the OCPS Child Study Team.
 - “Habitual truant” means that:
 - The student has fifteen (15) unexcused absences within ninety (90) calendar days, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined by the Orange County Public Schools (“OCPS”) Child Study Team, with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the parent/legal guardian. Said student is subject to compulsory school attendance and is not exempt.
 - A “truancy petition” means a petition filed by the Superintendent or designee alleging that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has met criteria for either truancy or habitually truancy as defined by Florida State Statute 1003.26.
- Procedures for filing a “truancy petition” by the Superintendent or designee.
 - If the school determines that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least five (5) unexcused absences, or five (5) absences for which the reasons are unknown within a calendar month, or ten (10) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a ninety (90) day calendar period, or an equivalent combination of unexcused absences and accumulated tardies as determined in the OCPS Attendance Child Study Team action, the Superintendent or designee may file a truancy petition.
 - The petition shall be filed in the Circuit Court of Orange County, Florida, as that is where the student is enrolled in school.
 - Original jurisdiction to hear a truancy petition shall be in the Circuit Court; however, the Circuit Court may use a general or special master pursuant to the applicable Florida Supreme Court rules.
 - The petition must contain the following: the name, age, and address of the student; the name and address of the student's parent/legal guardian; the school where the student is enrolled; the efforts the school has made to get the student to attend school; the number of out-of-school contacts between the school system and student's parent/legal guardian; and the number of days and dates of days the

student has missed school. The petition shall be sworn to by the Superintendent or designee.

- o Once the petition is filed, the court shall hear the petition within thirty (30) days.
- o The student and the student's parent/legal guardian shall attend the hearing.
- o If the court determines that the student missed the alleged days, the court shall order the student to attend school and the parent to ensure that the student attends school, and may order any of the following: the student to participate in alternative sanctions to include mandatory attendance at alternative classes to be followed by mandatory community services hours for a period up to six (6) months; the student and the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in homemaker or parent aide services; the student or the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in intensive crisis counseling; the student or the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in community mental health services, if available and applicable; the student and the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in service provided by voluntary or community agencies as available; the student or the student's parent/legal guardian to participate in vocational, job training, or employment services; and any other appropriate action the court deems necessary.
- o If the student does not successfully complete the sanctions ordered, the case shall be referred to the OCPS Case Staffing Committee with a recommendation to file a Child-in-Need-of-Services ("CINS") petition.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 984.03; 984.151; 1001.41; 1003.02; 1003.24; and 1003.26, Florida Statutes

IMPORTANT NOTES & BEST PRACTICES

- Truancy and DNE Truancy letters on the Intranet have been translated into the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Arabic, and Vietnamese. For specifics, contact the Attendance Department at (407) 836-6578 or view them on the Attendance SharePoint (attendance.ocps.net).
- Each school must have an Attendance Child Study Team (ACST) Committee consisting of a minimum of three staff members which can include, but is not limited to, the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Attendance Clerk, Teacher, and/or any other interested party. A chairperson must be named to lead the ACST meetings. The School Social Worker (SSW) may participate in the ACST meeting if available.
- For each unexcused absence, a parent or guardian shall be contacted via Parent Square.
- Five-Day or Ten-Day Letter: Prior to a student accumulating five unexcused absences, interventions may be put in place to address the attendance concerns. OCPS may initiate truancy procedures at either the five or ten day thresholds for unexcused absences.
 - o Once a student accumulates five unexcused absences within a calendar month, the Attendance Clerk mails the five-day warning letter. If the pattern of non-attendance continues, a meeting addressing the attendance concerns must be held with the parent and documented on the Attendance Warning/Parent Conference Meeting Form. This meeting may be held as part of a MTSS meeting or parent-teacher conference where the parent may participate in person or via phone. A reasonable effort must be made to contact the parent.
 - o Once a student accumulates ten unexcused absences within a 90 calendar day

period, the Attendance Clerk mails the ten-day warning letter. If the pattern of non-attendance continues, a meeting addressing the attendance concerns must be held with the parent and documented on the Attendance Warning/Parent Conference Meeting Form. This meeting may be held as part of a MTSS meeting or parent-teacher conference where the parent may participate in person or via phone. A reasonable effort must be made to contact the parent.

- ACST Committee Meeting (Attendance Clerk or designee prepares the ACST forms)
 - The parent or guardian is notified by mail and given a reasonable time to respond.
 - The Attendance Clerk notifies all ACST Committee members of meeting date and time.
 - The student's teacher(s) completes a Teacher Input form documenting academic/behavioral concerns before the meeting, if unable to attend.
 - The ACST is held whether or not the parent/guardian attends the meeting. If a parent or guardian is not in attendance, record non-attendance on the appropriate forms and mail or send home the ACST paperwork with a request for their signature on the Attendance Contract created during the ACST committee meeting.
 - Forms to be completed:
 - Truancy_Attendance Child Study Team form
 - School Attendance Contract
 - Truancy Court Referral
 - Truancy Court Identification (ID) Form
- *All original ACST forms completed at the meeting should be kept by the Attendance Clerk or designee. ACST forms are only good for the school year in which they are held.*
- If the pattern of non-attendance continues, forward the information to School Social Worker for further investigation of the case.
- The warning letter, meetings, and truancy status must be documented on the student's Skyward RTI/MTSS screen.



Universally Recognized Religious Holidays

The holidays listed on this page may conflict with scheduled school days.

Jewish

Rosh Hashanah (September 12, 2026 – September 13, 2026)

Yom Kippur (September 20, 2026 – September 21, 2026)

Sukkot (September 25, 2026 – October 2, 2026)

Shemini Atzeret (October 2, 2026 – October 3, 2026)

Simchat Torah (October 3, 2026 – October 4, 2026)

Passover (April 21, 2027 – April 27, 2027)

Shavuot (June 10, 2027 – June 12, 2027)

Jewish holidays start at sundown on the first date printed in this section.

Muslim

Eid al-Fitr (March 10, 2027 – March 11, 2027)

Eid al-Adha (May 16, 2027 – May 17, 2027)

Christian

Holy Epiphany (January 6, 2027)

Good Friday (March 26, 2027)

Religious Absences FS 1003.21 (2) (b)

There are a number of religious holidays which qualify as excused absences. In order to qualify as an excused absence, the religious tenets must forbid secular activities on that day, and the parents must have declared that their student is observing the holidays of that specific religion. Religious absences are treated like pre-arranged absences, and must be requested in writing at least **five days prior**.