



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Daily attendance and active participation in each class is a critical part of the learning process. Policies and procedures established at Coastal High School are designed to help students learn responsibility and increase their potential for success. A significant role of today's high school is to help students learn to understand and appreciate the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. Evidence shows that regular school attendance has a positive carry-over to the world of work. Attendance is primarily the responsibility of the students and parents/guardians.

South Carolina law requires school attendance for every child 5 years or older on or before the first day of September of a particular school year, until the child attains the age of 17. There are several, limited exceptions to this compulsory attendance requirement. For exceptions, see S.C. Code Ann. §59-65-30.

Parents/legal guardians are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The law provides statutory penalties for parents(s)/legal guardian(s) who neglect this responsibility.

Our school year currently consists of 180 school days. To receive credit, high school students must attend at least 85 days of each 90-day semester course and at least 170 days of any 180-day course, as well as meet all requirements for each course.

Absences in high school are accrued by course. In order to receive high school credit after the 5th absence of any kind within a semester, attendance recovery is required for every subsequent absence. If attendance recovery is not completed, the student will risk failing the course due to attendance regardless of what grade he or she receives. All make-up time must be completed within thirty days from the last day of the course(s).

Any student who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by their parent or guardian or a healthcare professional, for all absences within three days of the student's return to school. The written excuse should include the reason for and the date of the absence (and also the specific time for any medical appointments that occur during school hours). Parental excuses are limited to three (3) per semester. If a student fails to bring a valid written excuse to school, their absence will be recorded as unlawful/unexcused. All notes, letters, etc. should be provided to the Attendance Clerk/Front Desk Receptionist either in person or through email.

Readmittance notes (excuses) must contain the following: student's full name, specific dates and class periods of absence, reason for the absence, and signature of the parent/guardian or doctor, along with a daytime telephone number for home or work.

Email can be sent to mbostick@coastalhs.org

**A call out will occur notifying parents/guardians when a student is absent.

UNLAWFUL ABSENCES (UNEXCUSED)

1. Absences of a student without the knowledge of their parent or guardian
2. Absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent or guardian

LAWFUL ABSENCES (EXCUSED)

The criteria below will be used to determine if an absence is lawful or unlawful.

1. Absences caused by a student's illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his or her health or the health of others. These absences must be verified by a physician statement within three days of the student's return to school. (Absences for chronic or extended illness will be approved only when verified by a physician's statement for that particular date.)
2. Absence due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family verified by a statement from a parent within three days of the student's return to school. Limited to 3 per semester, maximum 5 days only. A student is allowed to be out a total of 5 days when there is a loss of a parent/caretaker. A statement will need to be provided to the school for documentation.
3. Absences due to a recognized religious holiday/observance of the student's faith when approved in advance. Such requests must be made to the administration in writing.
4. Absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the administration. This would include absences for extreme hardships, including parental military deployment.
5. Absences for high school juniors and seniors may be lawful for the purpose of visiting college campuses. Requests for approval of absences for college visits must be submitted in writing by a parent-caregiver at least one week in advance of the scheduled visit. Approval will be granted for no more than two visits per school year. Each request should specify the duration of the visit and travel time, which may be approved at the discretion of the administration.

● **TRUANCY PLAN**

A student is considered truant when they have three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences. Student absences without the knowledge and consent of the parent/guardian are considered truant. Students that are truant are subject to disciplinary measures imposed by both the school and Family Court.

As a part of the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), schools are required to report to the SC Department of Education the number of students who are chronically absent each year. According to the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR), an absent student is one who misses 50-percent of the instructional day for any reason and regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. The OCR requires states to report the number of students in each district and school who are absent at least 10% of the time during which they are enrolled in a particular school or district. More specifically, students who are enrolled in the same school for an entire academic year and miss 18 or more days (10%) will be considered chronically absent. The total number of chronically absent students will be included on district and school report cards and reported to the OCR. All types of absences

contribute to chronic absenteeism (lawful, unlawful, and suspensions). OCR defines a student as absent if they are not physically on school grounds and is not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for the school day.

School officials will make every reasonable effort to meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any child who is determined to be truant so as to identify the reasons for the child's continued absence. After 3 consecutive or 5 total unlawful absences, efforts may include telephone calls, home visits, emails and written messages. Administration will develop a written intervention plan to address the student's continued absence in conjunction with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). A team intervention approach will be used to develop and implement the attendance intervention plan. This will ensure that the parent, student and school have an understanding regarding the future attendance of the student.

If additional unlawful absences (2 or more) occur and/or lack of attendance recovery occurs within 30 days of the attendance plan, the student and parent will be referred to family court for a motion for court-ordered attendance and or the Department of Social Services for Educational Neglect.

No student who is lawfully absent will be referred for an intervention plan.. Please see the definition of lawful and unlawful absences in the previous section.

Educational Neglect occurs when a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for a child's welfare fails to supply the child with adequate education as required under Article 1 of Chapter 65 of Title 59, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so and the failure to do so has caused physical or mental injury or presents a substantial risk of causing such injury. If an intervention plan is unsuccessful and further efforts by school officials fail to bring about cooperation and/or compliance on the part of the student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences, the student is considered an "habitual" truant. Under such circumstances, the school may petition the court for a school attendance order. Once a school attendance order has been issued by the Family Court and the student continues to accumulate unlawful absences, the student is considered to be a "chronic" truant and school officials may petition the Family Court to hold the student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) in contempt of court.

A child may be placed on probation or committed to a DJJ institution for failing to comply with a school attendance order issued by the Family Court. A parent/guardian who fails to comply with an order to require his/her child to attend school may be fined up to fifty dollars or given an imprisonment sentence not to exceed thirty days for each offense. Any student that is in the custody of DJJ must be unenrolled from Coastal High School, as DJJ is a school district within the state of South Carolina.