

## **Athens Drive High School Attendance Policies**

Attendance at Athens Drive High School is taken very seriously. We know that there is a direct relationship between attendance and student success. The more students are in the classroom, the more opportunities they have to be successful. We also know that from time to time it is necessary to be out of class. Please use the descriptions below to help answer your questions about what to do when you are absent.

### **What do I need to do if I am absent?**

The first day that you return, be sure to bring a note from a parent, doctor, etc. to the Attendance Office. Notes should clearly list the student's name, the date(s) of absence, and the reason for absence. Absences will be excused for medical, court, or illness. Medical absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note. Court absences must be accompanied by an official note from the court. Notes must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Also be sure to talk with your teachers about the work you have missed. You will only have a limited amount of time to make up that work.

### **What do I need to do if I am arriving late or leaving early?**

Students needing to leave before the end of the school day must present a note from a parent/guardian to the Attendance Office. This note must include a date, time, the student's name, and the reason for leaving. Absences will be excused for medical, court, or illness. Medical absences must be accompanied by a doctor's note. Court absences must be accompanied by an official note from the court. Notes will be confirmed with a parent/guardian before the student is released. Notes must be dropped off at the Attendance Office before the school day starts. Students who return to school before the day is over must sign back in. Otherwise, they are marked absent for the rest of the day. Additionally, failing to sign out properly could result in disciplinary action. Students who arrive to school late must sign in at the office. Please also note that if half of the class is missed, the student will be marked absent for the entire class period.

### **What makes an absence excused or unexcused?**

Most unexcused absences are the result of students not bringing notes for their absences within the two-day window.

For all other absences where a note is present, Athens Drive must follow policy that the state has set forth for excusing absences. There are seven reasons that the state has listed as acceptable reasons for excused absences. They are: (1) Illness or Injury; (2) Quarantine; (3) Death in the Immediate Family; (4) Medical or Dental Appointment; (5) Court or Administrative Proceedings; (6) Religious Observance; and (7) Educational Opportunity. Please note that Educational Opportunities require approval from the principal **prior** the absences.

See the School Attendance & Student Accounting document published by the Department of Public Instruction for greater explanation of state attendance policy. Also, see Wake County Board Policy 6000 and Wake County Board Rules and Procedures 6000.

**What is the "two-day rule"?** Wake County Board Policy 6000.4 requires that notes to excuse an absence be submitted within two days of the student's return to school. Failure to do this results in the absence being permanently marked as unexcused.

**Why am I getting letters and phone calls about my absences?** Athens Drive is required by state law to alert parents when their student is absent. Plus, Athens Drive's goal is to keep parents as informed as possible. Phone calls are made by an automated machine at the end of each day. Even if we know exactly where the student was, the machine will still call.

Letters are sent to parents when students reach five and ten absences. These letters are also a requirement of state law. The intent is to ensure that parents are aware that students could lose credit for their courses once they exceed 10 absences. Also, we hope that it gives parents some knowledge of the resources that are available at Athens Drive to address attendance issues. Please note that these letters are sent whether or not the absences are unexcused or when a student has a well-documented excused reason for being absent.

**How do Senior Exam Exemptions work?** Seniors may be exempted from their final exams in January and June if the following criteria are met: \*\* An "A" average with 3 or fewer excused absences for the course \*\* A "B" average with 2 or fewer excused absences for the course \*\* A "C" average with 1 or fewer excused absences for the course

There are few important notes about exam exemptions. First, no senior can be exempt from state testing including End-of-Course Tests, VoCATs, and state field tests. Second, school-sponsored field trips and activities do not count toward exam exemptions. Third, class periods missed because of administratively assigned In-School-Suspension (ISS) will count towards exam exemptions. Last, if a student has any unexcused absences in a course, they cannot be exempt.