**Highlighted are the parts that will apply to WAM**

Attendance in school and participation in class are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process.  Through regular attendance, students develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life.  Regular attendance by every student is mandatory.  The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school.  Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily.

1. **Attendance Records**

School officials shall keep accurate records of attendance, including accurate attendance records in each class.  Attendance records will be used to enforce the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina.

**Excused Absences**

 When a student must miss school, a written excuse, which states the dates and reason for the absence and is signed by a parent or guardian, must be presented to the student’s teacher within three days of the student’s return to school after the absence.  After five consecutive or ten accumulated absences in a semester, the principal may also require a written doctor’s excuse for any additional absences attributed to illness.  In addition, absences for medical or dental appointments should be presented with a doctor’s signature or stamp.  An absence may be excused for any of the following reasons:

* 1. personal illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school;

* 1. isolation ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health;

* 1. death in the immediate family (immediate family includes, but is not necessarily  limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters);

* 1. medical or dental appointment;

* 1. attendance at the proceedings of a court or administrative tribunal if the student is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness in;

* 1. a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student’s parent or legal guardian;

* 1. participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel or service as a legislative or Governor’s page, with prior approval from the principal;

* 1. pregnancy and related conditions or parenting,when medically necessary; or

* 1. a minimum of two days each academic year for visitation with the student’s parent or legal guardian if the student is not identified as at risk of academic failure because of unexcused absences and the student’s parent or legal guardian (a) is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4050, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

In the case of excused absences and short-term out-of-school suspensions and absences under G.S. 130A-440 (for failure to submit a school health assessment form within 30 days of entering school), the student will be permitted to make up his or her work without receiving penalties to the student’s marks or grades.  (See also policies 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission, and 4351, Short-Term Suspension.)  The teacher shall determine when work is to be made up.  High school and middle school students are responsible for securing and arranging make-up work from their teachers.  In an elementary school, the teacher shall assign make up work to a student as the teacher deems appropriate.  Make up work will be assigned at the convenience of the teacher and may be specific material missed by the student or may be reinforcement or enrichment assignments.

1. **School-Related Activities**

All classroom activities are important and difficult, if not impossible, to replace if missed.  Principals shall ensure that classes missed by students due to school-related activities are kept to an absolute minimum.  The following school-related activities will not be counted as absences from either class or school:

1. field trips sponsored by the school;

1. job shadows and other work-based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a);

1. school-initiated and -scheduled activities;

1. athletic events that require early dismissal from school;

1. Career and Technical Education student organization activities approved in advance by the principal; and

1. in-school suspensions.

Assignments missed for these reasons are eligible for makeup by the student.  The teacher will determine when work is to be made up.  The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

1. **Tardies**

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process.  Students are expected to be at school on time and to be present at the scheduled starting time for each class.  Tardies will be excused only for those reasons that absences are excused as listed in Section B, above.  If a student accumulates five or more unexcused tardies during the school year, the principal or designee shall contact the student’s parents and request a conference with the student and parent to discuss the problem and possible solutions.  The principal or designee may invite the school social worker, guidance counselor, or other school personnel to attend the meeting.  If a student continues to accumulate unexcused tardies after non-disciplinary interventions have been attempted, the principal may give written notice to the student’s parent that any additional unexcused tardies may result in disciplinary action.  In administering disciplinary consequences for tardies, principals must give strong consideration to measures other than out-of-school suspensions.  Any out-of-school suspension for tardiness may not exceed two days and may be imposed only after documented interventions.

1. **Excessive Absences**

 The principal shall notify parents and take all steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences.  In addition, each school will develop incentives which do not involve grades, to encourage attendance.  The principal and school staff shall take appropriate action to help prevent excessive absences and provide counseling for students with a history of excessive absences.  The superintendent shall designate a school system employee to assist parents or other caretakers, principals, and social workers with chronic cases of absenteeism.  The designated employee shall work closely with the juvenile justice system, the city and county police departments, the Department of Social Services, Durham Housing Authority, and other community agencies to establish support systems for students who refuse to attend school regularly.  The designated employee shall request that immediate consequences be imposed when students under court mandate to attend school do not comply.  Students may be suspended for up to two days for truancy but only after documented interventions.

 Students with excused absences due to documented chronic health problems are exempt from this policy.  In addition, for students experiencing homelessness (see board policy 4125, Students Experiencing Homelessness), school officials must consider issues related to the student’s homelessness, such as a change of caregivers or nighttime residence, before taking disciplinary action or imposing other barriers to school attendance based on excessive absences or tardies.

 Excessive absences may impact eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics.  See policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations