



# Orange County Schools First Choice for Families



## ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS FOR 2020-21

### COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

Regardless of the option selected, North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law requires **children between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school**. School attendance is a critical component to ensure that a child is successful at school. When students attend school daily, they will have a better opportunity of having higher student achievement and feel confident about their work at school. Our goal is for every student to have **Satisfactory Attendance** meaning that they attend 95% of all school days and have 10 or fewer total absences during the school year.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) of the school year increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers. Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks. Late arrivals and early dismissals contribute to loss of instructional time. Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up. By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We recognize that many students and families have suffered during the pandemic, continue to have challenges and concerns, and we want to do all we can to support our families during this difficult time. All students will begin this school year attending remotely (Plan C). However, when our students can safely return to school, we will still offer remote learning in lieu of in-person classes for those who want it (Plan B Hybrid). For those returning to an in-person learning environment, we will have safeguards in place to promote social distancing, mask-wearing, cleaning and disinfecting, and other protocols to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect all who enter our buildings.



**\*NOTE: YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED AREAS ON THE NEXT PAGE WILL BE PERSONALIZED BY EACH SCHOOL.**



## WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We miss your student when they are gone and we value their contributions to the learning process. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is absent due to illness or connectivity concerns, please email **[insert teacher's name]** at **[insert teacher's email address]**. If you do not have email access you may call **[insert attendance secretary's name]** at **[insert attendance secretary's phone number]** and leave a voicemail message.

After three consecutive absences, a member of the school team will establish follow up communication to put additional supports in place. After six absences, families will be notified in writing of their violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina. School Counselors and School Social Workers will initiate contact with the student and their family. After ten absences, families will be notified in writing of their violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law of North Carolina. School Counselors and School Social Workers will call the student and their family as well as make a home visit.

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or any other signs of illness, must be kept home. Students attending school in-person who miss school due to illness or COVID-19 related circumstances may attend school virtually if able to actively participate in remote learning. Active participation is defined as students logging into **[SeeSaw for grades K through 5 and/or Canvas for grades 6 through 12 and/or Flipgrid for Pre-K]** each instructional day, completes their daily assignments, either online or offline; **and/or** having a daily check-in, a two-way communication, with the appropriate teacher(s). In these circumstances, the new attendance code **"Present Off-Site"**, will be used to report attendance on a remote learning day. Students who

are unable to actively participate due to illness should be coded as **"Unexcused Absence"** and provided the opportunity for make-up work upon their return. If a student reports to the school site they will be considered **"Present On-Site"**.

## OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school, from health concerns to resource challenges. Our team is prepared to help you if you or your student face challenges in participating/getting to school regularly or on time.

We promise to take attendance daily, to notice when your student is missing from class, communicate with you to understand why they were late or absent, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your student participate in/attend school.

## SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

It is important that you understand our district policies and procedures as well as North Carolina State Law, to ensure your child is successful in school. Students attending school in-person must attend at least 50% of the scheduled school day to be counted present for the day. Remote learning students must log

**[SeeSaw for grades K through 5 and/or Canvas for grades 6 through 12 and/or Flipgrid for Pre-K]** each instructional day.

Remote learning students must also actively interact and respond to instruction. A student is considered to be truant after he or she has more than six unexcused absences in a school year. When a student has ten unexcused absences, the principal may make a referral to truancy court so the court can intervene with the student's truancy if school-level interventions have failed. For more information on district attendance policies, please review our district's website <https://www.orangecountyfirst.com/>

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance & active participation.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for attending & participating in school if something comes up. Contact family members, friends, or other parents for help.
- Keep track of your student's attendance through the PowerSchool Parent Portal.
- Talk to your students' teachers or Guidance Counselor if you notice sudden changes in behavior.