

Attendance Policies at Sun Blaze Elementary

These policies may also be viewed at any time on the school's website: www.sunblaze.ocps.net

Arrival to school:

- *No students are to be on campus before 8:15 a.m. unless they are registered in the morning YMCA program. If students are in the morning Extended Day program, parents are required to sign in the student each morning.*
- *Breakfast is served in the cafeteria from 8:15 - 8:35 a.m.*
- *First bell rings at 8:35 a.m. Classroom doors will open at this time.*
- *Tardy bell rings at 8:45 a.m. Students that are not physically in class **before** this bell will be considered tardy and should obtain a tardy slip from the front office first. Please plan for traffic delays!*
- *Please note that bus delays will not prevent a child from eating breakfast and/or result in a tardy.*

Dismissal from school:

- *No early student sign outs will be permitted at the end of the day after 2:15 p.m., 1:15 p.m. on Wednesday, unless prior arrangements have been made with an administrator.*
- *Day Care Van riders will be dismissed at 2:53 p.m. (Wed. 1:53 p.m.)*
- *All Walkers, YMCA and Bike Riders will be dismissed at 2:55 p.m. (Wed. 1:55 p.m.)*
- *All car riders will be dismissed at 2:57 p.m. (Wed. 1:57 p.m.)*
- *For car pick up, you **MUST** have the orange tag on your dash or you will have to park and come in to check ID*
- *Parking along the fence is not permitted.*
- *Double parking in any of the parking lanes is not permitted.*

Student Absences:

- *A student is absent for the entire day if he or she misses more than half of the school day, morning or afternoon. All absences are recorded as unexcused until the student returns and provides documentation concerning the reason for the absence.*
- *For purposes of excused absences concerning family hospitalization or death, there are no specific guidelines provided for the definition of 'immediate family'; however, the generally accepted definition includes the student's mother, father, brother, sister, stepmother, stepfather, step-siblings, and other relatives who live in the student's home.*
- *If a student begins to demonstrate a pattern of absences for medical reasons, the attendance office may require a physician's note for any future absences.*
- *Students who are absent for three or more consecutive days or who request more than five non-consecutive absences for medical reasons are required to bring in a doctor's note.*
- *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.*
- *Because so many of the school's functions depend on accurate attendance, **all excuse notes should be received within 24-hours of the student's return to school.** The reason for the absence will be changed (if necessary) in the computer the day it is received.*
- ***Not all absences are excused.** Merely providing a note is not enough to excuse an absence. The reason provided on the note must be considered before granting the excused absence.*

- Phone calls are **not** acceptable communications for excusing an absence. **Only written notes will be accepted.** Phone calls, emails, and faxes are not acceptable communication for excusing an absence. Notes from a doctor's office, however, are acceptable if they are sent from the doctor's fax number.
- Any student whose parent/legal guardian is an active member of the United States Armed Forces, set for deployment, on leave, or has returned from deployment may be excused up to five days per OCPS Policy provided all assignments for missing dates are completed and return within the allotted time.

Suspensions

- Days during a suspension are considered excused.
- Suspended students are allowed to make up missed school work according to the guidelines provided above.

Tardiness

- Students are tardy if they are not **physically in class** at the beginning of the school day (**prior to 8:45 a.m.**) Students are required to obtain a tardy slip from the school front office before they may enter class.
- Tardies **TO SCHOOL** are all recorded electronically. The parent may provide a reason for the tardiness, and this will be considered if truancy actions are initiated, but all tardies are recorded electronically as unexcused, regardless of the reason.
- Students may not be suspended out of school for excessive tardiness TO SCHOOL.
- For truancy purposes, **five (5) tardies to school** or **five (5) early departures equal one (1) unexcused absence.** However, this is for referral purposes, and the electronic record is not to be altered. Actual presence or absence on campus must be accurately reflected in the electronic record.

Early Departures

Students who have attended more than half a school day, morning or afternoon, and are checked out from school prior to the closing of the school day shall be considered an early departure. Early departures are either excused or unexcused and are to be used sparingly by parents. Students may or may not be excused for the following reasons: (See examples below)

Excused

- Medical appointments for student only, siblings are not excused
- Counseling
- Legal appointments
- Funeral of family member or closely related friend (school may request proof)
- Family emergency (school may determine if valid)

Unexcused

- For convenience of parent, lack of transportation, etc.
- Personal reasons
- Shopping trips, going out of town, etc.

Early Release

According to district policy, Sun Blaze Elementary will not release any child, barring an **absolute emergency** authorized by an administrator, 45 minutes prior to the closing of the school day. This means no early student sign outs will be permitted at the end of the day after 2:15 p.m. (Wed. 1:15 p.m.), unless prior arrangements have been made with a school administrator.

Truancy and Habitual Truancy

- **Truant** means one who is subject to compulsory school attendance (6 years and older), but who is absent from school with or without a justifiable consent from a parent or legal guardian.
- **Truancy** means the student has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period pursuant to s. 1003.26(1)(b), or a combination of unexcused absences and tardies equivalent to the above numbers.
- **Habitual Truancy** means the student has 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or justifiable consent of the child's parent or legal guardian, is subject to compulsory school attendance under s. 1003.21(1) and (2)(a), and is not exempt under s. 1003.21(3), s. 1003.24, or any other exemptions specified by law or the rules of the State Board of Education.

Religious Absences

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**. To obtain a pre-arranged absence form, please contact the school attendance office.

Religious holidays which fit the criteria defined by the FDOE are as follow:

- Jewish
 - Rosh Hashanah –September 25 & 26
 - Yom Kippur-October 4
 - Sukkot –October 9
 - Simchat Torah –October 17
 - Passover –April 4-10
 - Shavout –May 25
- Muslim
 - Eid ul-Fitr –July 28
 - Eid ul-Adha –October 4
- Christian
 - Good Friday-April 3
 - Holy Epiphany-January 6

Requests for holidays that are not included here should be forwarded to the school attendance office to be researched with the Orange County Public School District Office.

Special Note:

Sun Blaze Elementary offers a perfect attendance award at the end of the school year for students who are present every day with no tardies and no early departures, regardless of excused or unexcused status. This is not part of the attendance policy but instead is recognition for students being present every day!