

## South Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law

### SC Code of Law 59-65-10

“South Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law requires that a parent or guardian shall require his child to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten of this State which has been approved by the State Board of Education, a member school of the South Carolina Independent Schools and Association, a member school of the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church-related school, or other programs which have been approved by the State Board of Education from the school year in which the child is five years of age before September first until the child attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school.”

### Lawful Absences

- Absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his or her health or the health of others,
- Absences due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family,
- Absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith, and
- Absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the principal.

### Unlawful Absences

- Absences of a student without the knowledge of his or her parents, and
- Absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his or her parents.

**Note!** Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.

## ATTENDANCE TIPS FOR PARENTS

**A**lways know the school's policies on absences and making up homework.

**T**each your child that being on time each day is important.

**T**alk with your child about why he or she is avoiding school.

**E**xplain to your child the importance of attending school every day.

**N**otify school personnel if your child is going to be absent for any reason.

**D**iscourage your child from leaving school before the end of the school day.

**A**rrange for your child's personal appointments to be held after school or during breaks whenever possible.

**N**otify your school promptly in writing to explain why your child was absent from school.

**C**ontact teachers to find out what your child's homework assignments are when he or she has been absent.

**E**nlist the help of a school counselor if your child's academic problems seem to be affecting his or her attendance.

## CONTACT US

### South Carolina Department of Education Office of Student Intervention Services

**Aveene Coleman**  
Education Associate  
Chronic Absenteeism, Dropout, Truancy  
Phone: 803-734-3057  
acoleman@ed.sc.gov

**Jamaal Perry**  
Education Associate  
At-Risk Programs  
Phone: 803-734-8116  
jperry@ed.sc.gov



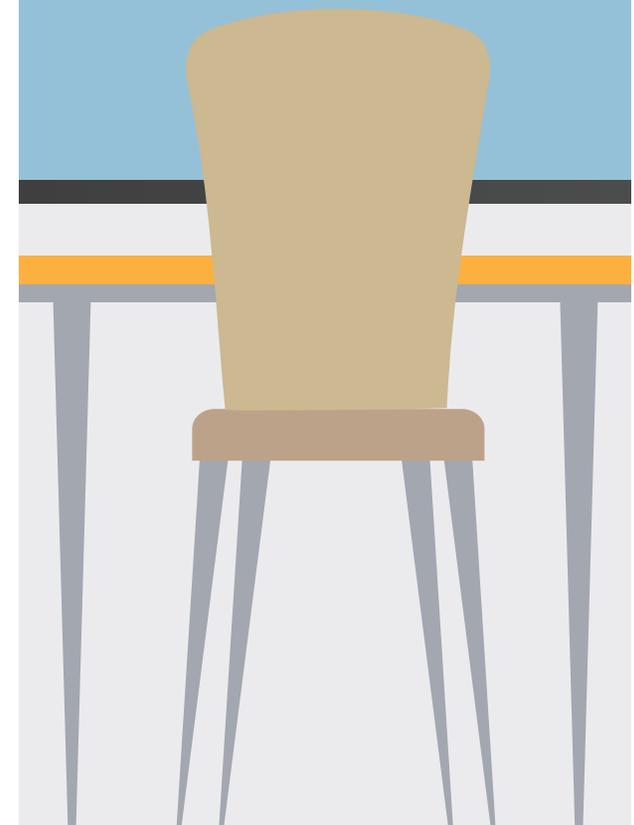
### LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:



[www.ed.sc.gov](http://www.ed.sc.gov)

# ATTENDANCE EVERY DAY!

# ONE EMPTY CHAIR IS ONE TOO MANY



South Carolina Department of Education  
Office of Student Intervention Services

## BENEFITS OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

BETTER GRADES

A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

COLLEGE OPPORTUNITIES

WORKPLACE SKILLS

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Students who fail to attend school could be truant.*

### Truant

A child age 6 to 17 years meets the definition of a truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences.

### Habitual Truant

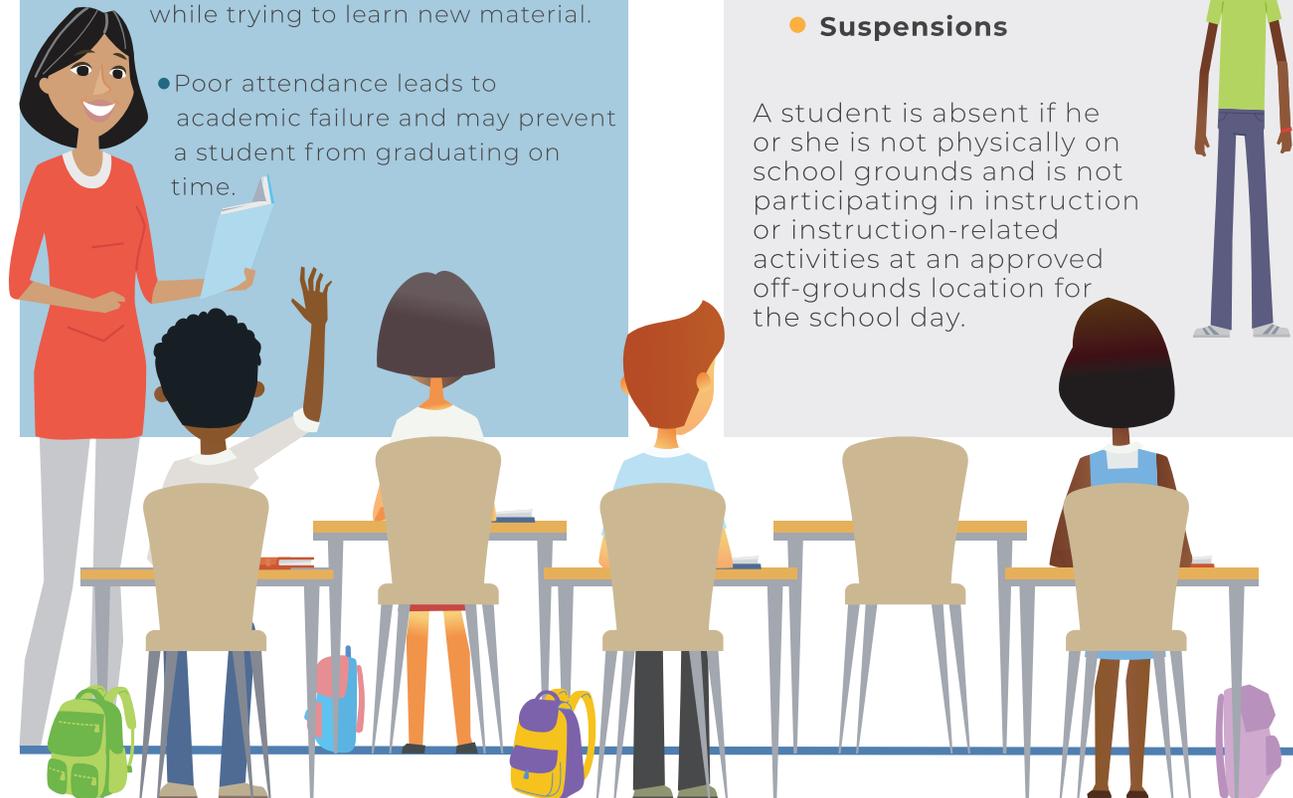
A "habitual" truant is a child age 12 to 17 years who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences. This child may need court intervention and an initial truancy petition may be filed.

### Chronic Truant

A "chronic" truant is a child age 12 to 17 years who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a "habitual" truant, has been referred to Family Court and placed on an order to attend school, and continues to accumulate unlawful absences. Should other community alternatives and referrals fail to remedy the attendance problem, the "chronic" truant may be referred to the Family Court for violation of a previous court order.

## ATTENDANCE FACTS

- Attendance is taken on the first day of school.
- There is a direct link between higher student achievement and regular school attendance.
- Truant behavior often leads to a student's being involved in other risky behaviors.
- Poor attendance is an early warning sign of trouble in a student's life; including the possibility of dropping out.
- Students who miss a day of school miss instruction and must make up the work while trying to learn new material.
- Poor attendance leads to academic failure and may prevent a student from graduating on time.



## DID YOU KNOW?

If a student fails to attend 50 percent or more of the school day, this student will be counted absent.

**Chronically absent:** Any student in grade K-12 who misses 50 percent or more of the instructional day for any reason for 10 percent (or more) of the enrollment period.

All types of absences contribute to chronic absenteeism:

- **Excused Absences**
- **Unexcused Absences**
- **Suspensions**

A student is absent if he or she is 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.

