

Decatur Christian School



2024-2025 Absenteeism and Truancy Policy

Our Mission

Decatur Christian seeks to fulfill the God-given potential of each student by teaching excellence in academics, character, leadership and responsibility through solid principles based upon scriptural truth in order to enable students to live out their faith as servant leaders in every area of society.

Our Vision

Educating the Mind - Impacting the Heart - Changing the World

ATTENDANCE

Elementary attendance shall be recorded at the opening of the school day.

Middle and High School attendance shall be recorded daily during each class period.

Decatur Christian attendance requirements are in compliance with the Illinois State laws regarding compulsory attendance for students who have not graduated.

see <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/102/HB/10200HB0169enr.htm>

The school year is defined as the period of time from the opening of school in August to the close of the regular school term. Students who are absent due to illness may be required to submit a doctor's statement.

Parent Responsibility:

Parents have responsibility for requiring and promoting their child's regular attendance, the first step in achieving academic success. Punctuality and regularity of attendance expresses responsibility in character and are also vital to the academic success of students, as well as creating a functional environment for all students and teachers for learning and instruction.

Reporting Absences—A parent or legal guardian must email the school office (attendance@decaturchristian.net) when reporting an absence or tardiness including the reason for the absence or tardiness. The parent should communicate with the school office by 8:30 a.m. each day the student is absent.

Parents planning to take their child out of school during the school day must make advance arrangements with the school administration. For accountability and record keeping, if an elementary student is present less than two hours, it will be recorded as a full day absence. If an elementary student is here more than two hours, but less than the full day, it will be recorded as a half-day absence.

In the event of an attendance problem, parents or legal guardians and the school shall cooperatively work to resolve the situation.

Excusable Absences:

In accordance with Section 26-2e of the Illinois School Code, "valid cause" for absence shall be illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, or family emergency and shall include such other situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the Decatur Christian School board, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.

Our attendance policy designates **18** days of absence **per school year** (**9** days of absence **per semester**) as the **maximum** allowed for regular school attendance under normal circumstances. <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/PA-102-0321-FAQ.pdf>

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Absenteeism-Truancy-Policy-FAQ.pdf#search=chronic%20absence%20pdf>

The following absences will be excused. If the absence is foreseeable, a written notification is required two days in advance so teachers can be notified and school work given to the student for the time they will miss.

1. Illness of the student.
2. Death in the student's immediate family or parent's immediate family.
3. Doctor and dental appointments.
 - a. Doctor, dental, music, and other appointments are to be made after school hours if at all possible. Students returning to school after a doctor/dental appointment must have a written excuse from the doctor/dentist.
 - b. If a child is absent three consecutive days for illness, a note from a doctor must be provided (unless there are special circumstances cleared by administration at the beginning or during the absence.)
4. Emergency, which, in the judgment of administration, constitutes good and sufficient cause.
5. Mental Health Day as allowed by Illinois Law
6. Court appearance.
7. School approved vacation. When a family is leaving town and desires to take the student with them, they may be excused if the family and student follow these guidelines:
 - a. The school is notified at least 48 hours in advance of the absence.
 - b. The student procures assignments or establishes a written plan for make-up work with all of their teachers in advance of the absence - at least a 48-hour notice is required.
 - c. Students are expected to be accomplishing their assignments while on school approved vacation.
 - d. All assigned work shall be turned in immediately upon returning to school or it is considered late work, with any exceptions at the direction of the individual teacher. Also, all tests will be made up at the direction of the individual teacher.
 - e. see also "Make-up Work After Excused Absences" in this section.
8. College Visits - Juniors and Seniors are allowed to take days away during the year to visit college campuses.
 - a. These days are not to be used as "vacation" days or for any other purpose than the one stated.
 - b. For an excused absence, at least 24-hour written notification from the parent/guardian stating the days requested and college to be visited should be provided to the teacher and school office.
 - c. Students are expected to be accomplishing their assignments while on school approved college visit(s).
 - d. All assigned work shall be turned in immediately upon returning to school or it is considered late work, with any exceptions at the direction of the individual teacher. Also, all tests will be made up at the direction of the individual teacher.

e. see also "Make-up Work After Excused Absences" in this section.

Other Attendance Considerations:

1. Absences for other reasons that are inexcusable shall be treated as truancy. A student is considered truant when he/she is absent from a class or school without permission or knowledge by parent or guardian.
2. The administration shall determine the impact of suspensions on absences and credit loss on a case-by-case basis.
3. When parents/guardians request that students leave the campus during the school day, a note or phone call from home will be required, and a pass to leave must be secured in the office. During the school day, students must secure permission from the office before missing a class or leaving the campus. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.
 - Any student leaving campus for any reason during the school day must either leave with a parent or designee. No student will be allowed to leave the school facility during the normal school day with anyone other than a parent or guardian unless advance notice is given to the office by phone or note. This policy is for the protection of each student.
 - All students who leave school early will need a parent note presented to the office **before school** stating the reason for early departure. No student may leave early without a note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian, a telephone contact, or a personal contact from the parent/guardian.
 - All students (or parent for the student) must sign out of the office prior to leaving school early.
 - Students who drive must have a parent-signed permission slip and permission from the administration.
 - When a student returns, he/she is to sign in at the office and is expected to report to class immediately.
 - Off-campus senior lunch privilege will be addressed at the start of each school year and will require a signed agreement by parent and student for conduct, departure time(s), return time(s). The senior lunch privilege is subject to review and adjustment including cancellation of the senior lunch option for individuals or the entire program based upon administrative judgement.
4. Students who have been absent because of injuries or communicable diseases must receive a note of clearance from their doctor presented to the school office before returning to classes.
5. Students participating in school-sponsored activities (field trips, away competitions, etc.) are not considered absent.

NOTE: There are still limits to the total number of absences (excused and unexcused combined) as outlined in this section of the handbook.

Make-up Work After Excused Absences (**other than approved vacation or college visit**) :

1. Students who have an **excused absence** shall have the opportunity to make up work after they return.
2. For elementary students, the teacher shall determine make-up work and assignments.
3. For secondary students, it shall be the **responsibility of the student**, on his or her own initiative, to contact the teacher or teachers involved to determine make-up assignment. FACTS lists all lesson plans and homework assignments.
4. Students will be granted the amount of time they were absent in which to make up work.
5. Students who have justifiable reasons for absence such as quarantine, long-term illness or accident and whose probable absence will extend beyond two weeks shall be considered by administration for homebound or remote instruction.
6. Students who have an **unexcused absence will not be allowed** to receive credit for work missed.
7. The administration and staff have the authority to establish specific procedures for administering the Make-Up Policy.

ATTENDANCE - PROCEDURES AND ACTIONS

Unexcused Absences

No credit **for the semester** will be given to students whose **unexcused absences exceed five (5)** periods per class per semester without administrative approval.

1. On the third (3rd) and five (5th) **unexcused** absence from the same class, the parents/guardians will be notified by phone or email by the office administration and that **the student is being placed on credit probation. It should be noted that parents are always notified for any absence issues.**
2. On the sixth (6th) **unexcused** absence from the same class, parents/guardians will be notified explaining that loss of credit will occur and an administrative review will be arranged to discuss future academic options.

Total Absences (Combination of Excused and Unexcused Absences)

Secondary:

On the eighth (8th) total absence from the same class during the semester, the parents/guardians will be notified by phone or email by administration and that **the student is being placed on credit probation.**

On the ninth (9th) total absence during the semester for any class, **there will be an administrative review meeting.** The **administrative review** is a conference with the said student, parent/guardian, grade level administrator and possibly teachers/advisors to discuss attendance concerns and academic options that best suit the student's needs.

On the tenth (10th) total absence from the same class in one semester, parents/guardians will be notified of student **loss of credit and the grade will be recorded as an "F" for the semester for that class.**

DCS Attendance Communication Protocol

Communication of a student's absences will consist of, but not be limited to one or more the following prior to administrative review or loss of credit:

1. DCS office will call home for each unexcused absence
2. Email correspondence to parent/guardian with attendance concerns
3. Administrative contact after 3rd and 5th unexcused absence
4. Administrative contact after 8th and 9th total absence
5. If parent/guardian is not reachable via e-mail or phone, a certified letter will be sent with information regarding attendance concerns.

Attendance - Tardiness:

Being tardy to class is detrimental to student learning, disrespectful to the teacher, and disruptive to the learning of fellow students. DCS students are expected to be in class, ready to work when the bell rings to start each period. A late arrival of less than 15 minutes will be counted as a tardy. Late arrivals of more than 15 minutes will be counted as absences and must be excused by the verification methods outlined in the "Excused Absences" section. A tardy may not be excused by a parent or guardian, only by a DCS staff member. Tardy students **will not** be given additional class time or make-up opportunities for what is missed due to their late arrival.

Tardiness

If a student is late to homeroom in the morning, he/she will report to the office before reporting to class. A student with excessive tardiness will be referred to the administration. Approved tardy excuses will include uncertain weather conditions, vehicle problems, family emergencies, etc.

Any student who is not in class when the bell rings and does not have a pass, is considered tardy.

1. Tardiness due to oversleeping or chronic vehicle problems will not be excused.
2. Tardy counts are considered on a semester basis; that is, the first semester does not carry over to the second semester.

All elementary students must report to the office for a late pass (accompanied by a parent/guardian) if arriving to school at 8:30 am or later.

All secondary students must report to the office for a late pass if arriving to school at 8:15 am or later. No secondary students will be admitted to class without a late pass if they are tardy for any hour. If the student anticipates being late to class for any reason, they must get a pass from the teacher of the class they are leaving, or the teacher of the class they will be in next.

Elementary Tardy Policy:

Excessive tardiness will result in parent communication and a meeting with the elementary principal to discuss and develop a solution.

Secondary Tardy Policy:

Tardy attendance for students is documented and counted cumulatively (i.e., for all periods together), per semester, and assigned interventions and consequences per the following structure. :

- Tardy #5: Warning by Administration with restorative planning, and parent contact
- Tardy #10: Lunch detention with restorative planning and counseling, and parent contact
- Tardy #15: 1-hour detention with restorative planning review, and parent contact
- Tardy #20: 1-hour detention with restorative planning review, and parent meeting with Administration
- Tardy #25: 1-day **In-School Suspension**, restorative action counseling, and parent contact
- Tardy #30 plus: Administrative-Parent meeting with possible consequences of loss of privileges, including, but not limited to: athletic-activity restriction, extra-curricular restriction (LEGO League, FIRST Tech Challenge, Drama, etc.), restrictions on attending sporting or school events, etc.