

Policy: Attendance



Developmental Research School
at the University of Florida

P.K. Yonge's mission as a developmental research school is dependent on student attendance at school. Students are expected to attend school regularly and punctually in order to be successful and to take advantage of all the educational opportunities offered at P.K. Yonge.

Attendance is required of all students enrolled at P.K. Yonge during the days and hours that P.K. Yonge is in session. School attendance is the responsibility of families and students. Parent responsibilities with regard to student attendance at school are defined in Florida's Compulsory Student Attendance law [F.S. 1003.24].

All children who have attained the age of six (6) years or who will have attained the age of six (6) years by February 1st of any school year or who are older than six (6) years of age but who have not attained the age of sixteen (16) years, except as otherwise provided in Florida statute, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. A student who has attained the age of sixteen (16) years and who has not graduated is subject to compulsory school attendance until s/he files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with P.K. Yonge.

Enrollment at P.K. Yonge is a choice. Attendance is a requirement. In order for P.K. Yonge to carry out its mission as a developmental research school, students must attend P.K. Yonge regularly. If a student does not comply with the P.K. Yonge's Attendance Policy, P.K. Yonge has the right to dismiss the student or the student may not be permitted to re-enroll at P.K. Yonge if minimum attendance requirements as outlined in this policy are not met.

P.K. Yonge Responsibilities

P.K. Yonge has the responsibility to encourage regular student attendance, to maintain accurate attendance records, and to follow reporting procedures.

Provision shall be made for promoting school attendance through educating families and through the enforcement of compulsory attendance laws and related child-welfare legislation.

Accordingly:

- A. Teachers shall take attendance at the beginning of the school day for elementary, and at the beginning of each class period for secondary, recording and reporting absences, whether excused and/or unexcused
- B. Insofar as possible, parents will be contacted each time their child has an unexcused absence, or an absence for which the reason is unknown, to prevent the development of patterns of nonattendance
- C. When a student has five (5) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown, or ten (10) unexcused absences or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a semester the child may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. Unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, the Principal will refer the case to determine if early patterns of nonattendance are developing. If the Principal finds that a pattern of nonattendance is developing, a meeting with the parent must be scheduled to identify potential remedies. If the problem is not resolved, the child study team will implement interventions as provided in F.S. 1003.26.

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Administrative Procedures

The Principal shall develop administrative procedures that:

- A. Provide the student and parents/guardians the opportunity to challenge the attendance record prior to notification and that such notification complies with applicable P.K. Yonge rules
- B. Govern the keeping of attendance records
- C. Identify habitually nonattendant students, investigate the cause(s) of the behavior, and consider modification of the educational program to meet particular needs and interests
- D. Require that students whose absence has been excused have an opportunity to make-up assignments they missed and receive credit for completed assignments
- E. Require that any student who, due to a specifically identifiable physical or mental impairment, exceeds or may exceed P.K. Yonge's limit on excused absence is referred for evaluation for eligibility either under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or other appropriate accommodations

Parent/Guardian and Student Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing documentation regarding student absences to P.K. Yonge as soon as practical. Failure to report and provide documentation for a student's absence(s) within two (2) school days of a student's return to school shall result in unexcused absence(s).

P.K. Yonge reserves the right to verify such documentation and to investigate the cause of each single absence. It is at the Principal's discretion as to whether documentation provided after the required two (2) school days meets the requirements to be deemed an excused absence.

The Principal or designee shall determine whether a student's absence is excused or unexcused under the criteria of this policy.

Tardiness

It is important to be at school on time. If students arrive late, they miss class time and may disrupt the learning of others. Students are tardy if they come to school after the beginning of the school day or if they are not in their classrooms when the tardy bell rings.

If students are tardy to school, they or their parent/guardian must sign in at the Attendance Kiosks.

A student's tardiness may be excused at the discretion of P.K. Yonge administration. The following reasons will not be accepted as reasons to excuse tardiness: heavy traffic; oversleeping; returning home for forgotten items; and non-educational appointments other than doctor/dentist.

Parents/guardians will be notified in the event that a student is habitually tardy/absent.

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For elementary students, tardiness or early check-outs that result in a student missing more than 50% of the school day will count as one absence. For secondary students, tardiness or early checkouts that result in a student missing more than 50% of a class period will count as one absence for that class period. Whether these absences qualify as excused or unexcused is determined based on criteria outlined below.

Four (4) unexcused tardies to school or unexcused early releases from school will count as one absence.

Excused Absences

Excused absences shall include the following:

- A. Absence due to sickness, injury, death in the family, or some other insurmountable condition. The fact that attendance was impracticable or inadvisable due to any of these reasons must be attested by a written statement from the student's parent/guardian or licensed physician to school officials normally within two (2) school days of the student's return. A parent/guardian may document up to six (6) days of absence for illness per semester, after which such absences will be unexcused unless documented by a physician or health care provider.
- B. Documented appointments with health care professionals including the date(s) the student was under a doctor's care
- C. Documented absence for religious instruction or a religious holiday
- D. Absence due to participation in an academic class or school-sponsored activity approved by the Principal
- E. Court appearances (copy of court documentation must be provided)
- F. Attendance at a center under Children and Families Services supervision
- G. All other absences are considered unexcused, including out-of-school suspensions

Students may not be given excused absences to remain out of school for the purposes of working, unless the job is an integral part of the student's instructional program.

Unexcused Absences/Habitual Nonattendance

When a student has accrued more than five (5) unexcused absences or tardies in a semester, P.K. Yonge will request from the parent/guardian a statement explaining such absences or tardies. Documentation of the request and the parent/guardian statement will be maintained at P.K. Yonge.

Four (4) unexcused tardies to school or unexcused early releases from school will result in one (1) absence for purposes of determining habitual nonattendance.

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When a student reaches ten (10) unexcused absences (including accumulated unexcused tardies/early releases) within a semester, an attendance notice will be put in place between P.K. Yonge, the student, and the family.

A student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences (including accumulated unexcused tardies/early releases) within a semester, with or without the knowledge or consent of the parent, shall be considered habitually nonattendant. The Principal will inform the student and the student's parents/guardians of the record of excessive absences and P.K. Yonge's intent to notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (if appropriate.)

If a student is habitually nonattendance and continues to violate P.K. Yonge's Attendance Policy, the school may dismiss the student from further attendance at P.K. Yonge.

Pre-Arranged Absences

Parents/Guardians planning ahead for a student's absence from school must apply for pre-arranged absence approval from the Principal including requests for absences for religious instruction or religious holidays.

Pre-arranged absence applications must be submitted to the Front Office seven (7) days in advance of the absence. Applications turned in late may NOT be approved and may be considered unexcused absence(s).

Application forms are available in the Front Office and online under the Information>Attendance tab on the website (<http://pkyonge.ufl.edu/information/attendance/>).

Prearranged absences may be requested for medical procedures, significant family events (e.g. weddings or funerals), school-sponsored events/activities. Prearranged absences will NOT be granted for family vacations or leisure activities.

Missed Assignments and Examinations

Upon a student's return to school from an excused absence, the student shall have a reasonable amount of time, up to five (5) school days after the date of return to school, to complete the missed assignments or examinations. The Principal may grant extensions to the time limit for extenuating circumstances. It is the responsibility of the student to pursue this option with the teacher.

Upon a student's return to school from an unexcused absence, the receipt of missing or late work or completion of examinations is contingent upon a teacher's late work/exam policy as defined in the course syllabus.

For required state assessments, the assessment will be taken on a scheduled make-up day.

Discipline

No student will be suspended for unexcused tardiness, lateness, absence, or habitually nonattendant. However, a student may be assigned consequences based on a progressive disciplinary model resulting in dismissal. Disciplinary action will include notification to parents or

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guardians. If a student is habitually nonattendant and continues to violate P.K. Yonge's Attendance Policy, the school may dismiss the student from further attendance at P.K. Yonge.

Grades/High School Credits

A student's grade in any course is based on his/her performance in the instructional setting and shall not be reduced for reasons of conduct. If a student violates the Attendance Policy or other school rules, they may be disciplined for the misconduct. Grades, however, are based on the level to which the student can demonstrate mastery of course content.

A student will not be awarded credit unless the student demonstrates mastery of the performance standards in the course by doing one or more of the following:

- A. Showing knowledge of the course content
- B. Earning an overall passing grade in the course
- C. Passing a comprehensive final examination

P.K. Yonge will provide opportunities for students who exceed six (6) unexcused absences per semester to demonstrate mastery of the student performance standards.

A student's mastery of performance standards will be determined by the teacher with the Principal's approval.

Driver's License

In accordance with Florida law, the school Principal or designee will notify the Director or designee and the Director or designee will notify the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) of any minor student who accrues fifteen (15) unexcused absences in a period of ninety (90) calendar days. The DHSMV may not issue and may suspend any previously issued driver's license or learner's driver's license for any such minor student.

- A. **Hardship Waiver Request**
A minor student or the parent/guardian may request a hardship waiver hearing before the Principal or designee. The request for hearing shall be in writing, signed by the student or parent/guardian, and delivered to the school office within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the department's notice of intent to suspend. The school will notify the DHSMV within twenty-four (24) hours or the next school day after receiving the request for a waiver hearing.
- B. **Waiver Hearing**
The Principal or designee will conduct the hearing within thirty (30) calendar days after the school receives the request for a waiver hearing. The Principal or designee shall waive the school attendance requirements for any minor student for whom a personal or family hardship requires that the minor have a driver's license for his/her own or his/her family's employment or medical care.
- C. **School-Level Decision**

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The Principal or designee will render a decision in writing explaining the reasons for granting or denying the waiver. The Principal or designee will also notify the DHSMV of the decision in writing within twenty-four (24) hours or on the next school day after conducting the hearing.

D. Appeal

Any student denied a hardship waiver by the Principal or designee may appeal the decision to the Director. Requests for appeal shall be in writing, signed by the student or parent/guardian, and delivered to the office of the Director within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the Principal's decision. The Director or designee will review the student's waiver request and the Principal's decision and will recommend action, either to affirm the denial or to grant the waiver. Hearings will be held and the Director will inform the DHSMV of the action taken.

E. Reinstatement

Once suspended or denied, a minor's driving privilege will be reinstated if the minor subsequently becomes compliant with attendance requirements. P.K. Yonge will, upon request, provide the minor student with verification of compliance with attendance requirements for reinstatement of the minor's driving privilege.