



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Attendance Guidance

May 31, 2023

Background

Schools are required to collect and report daily student attendance. This requirement applies in both in-person and distance learning. Schools may utilize distance learning as a part of their instructional model; however, there are certain parameters on its use, including how attendance must be collected and reported. Distance learning may be provided on a routine or a situational basis.

Scope

This document describes the attendance requirements for routine and situational distance learning and in-person learning in District of Columbia public and public charter schools.

Effective Date

This policy will take effect from July 12, 2023, and will remain in effect until further notice.

Key Terms

- *Asynchronous*: Non-simultaneous distance instruction where a student completes work independently without a teacher providing real-time instruction.
- *Module*: A subdivision of the instructional day (as defined in 5-A DCMR § 2100.3) for distance learning.
- *Output*: An instructional activity completed by the student during a module of distance learning that reflects the instruction delivered in that module.
- *Synchronous*: In synchronous modules, teaching and learning occur simultaneously such that the teacher is able to react and respond to students in real time and vice-versa.

Attendance Policy

Broadly, DC Code § 38-201, *et. seq.* makes education compulsory for all children from age of 5 until age 18. Further, it requires schools to take, collect, and report daily attendance and requires referrals to other District agencies when a specific number of unexcused absences are reached. Unless provided a waiver, K-12 schools must have instructional days that are at least six hours in length including breaks. Schools must report daily attendance to OSSE by using the attendance codes defined in OSSE's [LEA Data Collections Template](#). Students must be present for 60 percent of the instructional day to be considered "present" on that day. Schools must

enter absences as either “excused” or “unexcused,” consistent with definitions set in 5-A DCMR Chapter 21. This applies to both in-person and distance learning.

Guidance for Routine Distance Learning

Schools approved by their authorizer – District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) or the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) – to provide routine distance instruction to students must abide by the regulations and policies set forth by OSSE for taking attendance. Schools that are not approved by their authorizer may not use routine distance learning.

Chapter 21 of Title 5-A of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) governs compulsory education and school attendance in DC, and schools and LEAs must abide by all regulations set therein. 5-A DCMR §§ 2101.11—2101.17 address routine distance learning requirements. Among these conditions are requirements for taking attendance in distance learning, which include the following:

1. The instructional day must consist of at least six hours, which includes breaks (in accordance with 5-A DCMR § 2100.3).
2. The instructional day must be divided into modules that may be either synchronous or asynchronous.
3. Each instructional day must consist of at least one synchronous module.
4. To be considered present in synchronous modules, a student must (at least temporarily) turn on their cameras and indicate their presence.
5. To be considered present in an asynchronous module, a student must complete an output during the module.
6. To be considered “present” for the day for purposes of attendance tracking in distance learning, a student must attend at least one synchronous class and be present for modules that comprise at least 60 percent of the instructional day.¹ For example, in the below graphic, the student is counted as present because they have attended 60 percent of the instructional day and at least one synchronous module.

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Lunch Break	Module 4	Module 5
Scheduled Time	8:30-9:30	1 Hour Lesson	1 Hour Lesson	11:30-12:30	12:45-1:45	1 Hour Lesson
Modality	Synchronous	Asynchronous	Asynchronous		Synchronous	Asynchronous

¹ D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 5-A § 2199.1 (note, the former “80/20 rule” has been changed to 60/40).

Student Action	Student is seen on camera for the module.	Student completes output activity.	Student does not complete output activity.		Student does not appear on camera during the module.	Student completes the output activity.
Student Attendance	Present	Present	Absent		Absent	Present

In addition, **schools must submit to OSSE for approval** a [routine distance learning attendance plan](#) by June 30th that shows how the school will abide by these requirements.

Guidance for Situational Distance Learning

Situational distance learning is the use of distance instruction by a school otherwise providing in-person instruction to address a temporary, emergency need. Situational distance learning may be used for the entire school, groups of students, for example classrooms and grades, and individual students as needed. When using situational distance learning, use the attendance codes for Distance Learning Situational (e.g., “Present Full – Distance Learning Situational”) and take attendance in accordance with the parameters below.

For a student to be considered present in situational distance learning, a school **must**:

1. Authenticate the student’s presence. This can be done in a number of ways, for example, signing on to a learning management system or through any communications means (text, phone, camera, etc.); and
2. Ensure that the student complete at least one output per situational distance learning day.

Questions

If you have questions related to this guidance, please contact, Andrew Gall, Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs and Policy, at (202) 802-5827 or Andrew.Gall@dc.gov.