

Attendance Policy

Attendance is key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present each day of school is in session.

The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:¹

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license drop out of school.

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or his/her designee. Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances²; or
6. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness;
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

Truancy is defined as an absence for an entire school day, a major portion of the school day or the major portion of any class, study hall or activity during the school day for which the student is scheduled.

The Board shall determine annually and include in the school calendar a plan for using three (3) abbreviated school days and the procedures for making up missed instructional days. In addition, the Board shall determine annually whether to use flexible scheduling for kindergarten students.

Students participating in school-sponsored activities whether on- or off-campus shall not be counted absent. In order to qualify as "school-sponsored", the activity must be school-planned, school-directed, and teacher-supervised. Mass exodus or early dismissal or late arrival of all students or any segment of students shall not be permitted for any reason except for

emergencies such as inclement weather or other unavoidable situations, unless instruction time is made up in full.³

All missed class work and/or tests (whether from excused or unexcused absences) may be made up if the student makes the request immediately upon returning to school and if class time is not taken from other students.

At the beginning of each year, the classroom teacher must inform his/her student to request any missed/make-up or homework.

Ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) total unexcused absences during a semester renders a student ineligible for promotion to the next grade and/or to receive credit toward graduation, and to retain a driver's permit or license, or to obtain such if of age.⁴

After ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported absences (excused or unexcused) by a student during any semester, an attendance committee appointed by the principal will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist or verifying that the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course, be promoted, or retain or obtain a driver's permit or license.⁴

The principal shall be responsible for notifying in writing the superintendent and the parents of the student of any action taken by the school.

Any administrative decision regarding attendance may be appealed initially to the superintendent and ultimately the Board. The appeal shall be made in writing to the superintendent within five (5) days following the action or the report of the action, whichever is later.

Students attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other students records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent/guardian.

Requests for students to attend school in counties in adjoining states shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.⁶

Legal References:

1. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.08(1)a.
 2. TRR/MS 0520-1-3.03(B)(14).
 3. Attendance Accounting Procedural Manual, Minimum Standards and Guidelines, State Department of Education.
 4. TCA 49-6-3017; TCA 49-2203(b)(7).
 5. TCA 10-7-504; 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.
 6. TCA 49-6-3108.
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