Hickman County Board of Education

	Descriptor Term: **Attendance**	Descriptor Code: **6.200**	Issued Date: **08/02/21**
		Rescinds: **6.200**	Issued: **01/04/21**

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The official school day for students begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 3:00 p.m. unless so noted on the Board approved calendar.

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 withdraws from school.[2]

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent/guardian.[3]

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee. Excused absences shall include:[4]

1. Personal illness;

2. Illness of immediate family member;

3. Death in the family;

4. Extreme weather conditions;

5. Religious observances;[5]

6. Pregnancy;

7. School-endorsed activities;

8. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or

9. 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:[6]

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

General

Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be considered present for school attendance purposes. If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s) and the school system provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.[7]

Students who are absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the director of schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's absence. If a parent does not provide documentation within adequate time excusing those absences, or request an attendance hearing, then the Director of Schools shall implement the progressive truancy intervention plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

The director of schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan[8]

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy intervention plan will be implemented.

Students with three (3) unexcused absences shall be subject to the progressive truancy intervention framework outlined below.

Tier I

Tier I of the progressive truancy plan shall apply to all students within the district and include schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to,

1. A conference with the student and the student's parent/guardian;

2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent/guardian, and an attendance officer. The contract shall include:

    a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
    b. The period for which the contract is effective. The term of the contract must not exceed ninety (90) school days or continue beyond the last day of the semester, whichever comes first; and
    c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court; and

3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.

If the student accumulates additional unexcused absences in violation of the attendance contract, in Tier I, he/she shall be subject to Tier II.

Tier II

An individualized assessment by a school employee of the reasons a student has been absent from school. This may result in referral to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

Tier III

This tier shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful.

Tier III interventions must include a review of the previous individualized assessment and an amended attendance contract but may also result in further action including but not limited to a review of grades and the discipline record, a referral to restorative justice programs, a referral to community-based services, or a referral to the Department of Children's Services.

These interventions shall be determined by a team formed at each school. The interventions shall address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/designee.

NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY[9]

A principal/designee may excuse a student to participate in non-school sponsored extracurricular activities. The principal shall document the approval in writing and shall excuse no more than ten (10) absences each school year. No later than seven (7) business days prior to the student's absence, the student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation along with a written request for the excused absence from the student's parent/guardian. The request shall include the following:

1. Student's name and personal identification number;
2. Student's grade;
3. The dates of the student's absence;
4. The reason for the student's absence; and
5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.

RELEASED TIME COURSE[10]

A principal/designee may excuse a student to attend a course in religious moral instruction for up to one (1) class period per school day. Students shall not be excused during any class which requires an examination for state or federal accountability purposes.

The student shall submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian prior to participation in the released time course. The principal/designee shall document the approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal/designee as proof of the student's participation in the released time course.

The district shall not be responsible for transporting students to and from the place of instruction.

Upon submission of the student's transcript from the entity that provided the released time course, the student may be awarded one-half (1/2) unit of elective credit.

The Director of Schools shall develop procedures with secular criteria for determining whether credit shall be awarded.

MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN[11]

School principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one-day excused absence upon the return of a parent or custodian serving active military service.

Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent or guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during the these absences.

MAKE-UP WORK

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

A grade of incomplete will be received for any work missed until the work is completed. A student may have up to three (3) days to make up work from a single absence and up to five (5) days to make up work from an absence longer than a single day. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for make-up work, and if not completed in the allotted time, a grade of zero (0) will be recorded for the assignments.

For school-sponsored activities, the student will be required to make up all work missed and will receive full credit for the assignment or upon completion of a test. The student will not be counted absent for a school sponsored event (school planned, school-directed, and teacher supervised).

STATE-MANDATED TESTS/END OF COURSE EXAMS

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled End of Course Exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a make-up exam that will count as 15% of their grade. Excused students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the End of Course Exam.

Students who have an unexcused absence shall receive a failing grade on the course exam which shall be averaged into their final grade at 15%.

CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL

Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance, however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion.[9] However, if attendance is a factor, prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. Parents and students shall be advised if a student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.

2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION[2]

More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license, or to obtain such if of age.

~~In order to qualify for reclaiming a driver's permit or license, the student must make a passing grade in at least three (3) full unit subjects or their equivalency at the conclusion of a subsequent grading period.~~

ATTENDANCE HEARING[10]

Students with excessive (more than 5) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or their parent/guardian shall be provided written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist or to determine if the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send written notification to the director of schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise parents/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the director of schools/designee.

The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.

Within five (5) school days of the director of schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the director of schools/designee. The action of the Board shall be final.

The director of schools/designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and disseminated to all students, parents, teachers and administrative staff.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-3006
2. TCA 49-6-3017(c)
3. 20 USCA § 1232g
4. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(5); State Board of Education Policy 4.100
5. TCA 49-6-2904(b)(5)
6. TCA 49-6-3007
7. TCA 49-6-3021
8. TCA 49-6-3007; TCA 49-6-3009; Public Acts of 2021, Chapter No. 223
9. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7); TCA 49-6-3002(b)
10. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(7)
11. TCA 49-6-3019

Cross References

School Calendar 1.800
Extracurricular Activities 4.300
Interscholastic Athletics 4.301
Field Trips/Excursions/Competitions 4.302
Reporting Student Progress 4.601
Promotion and Retention 4.603
Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs, & Holidays 4.803
Voluntary Pre-K Attendance 6.2011
Homeless Students 6.503
Students in Foster Care 6.505
Students from Military Families 6.506
Student Records 6.600