

ABSENTEE/TARDINESS POLICY

- A. Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Important as that is, students' regular attendance at school is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept responsibilities they will face as adults. Interactions with other students and participation in the instruction within the classroom enrich the learning environment and promote a continuity of instruction which results in higher student achievement. In recognition of the need for students to regularly attend school, the district's policy governing student absences is as follows. Attendance and achievement go hand-in-hand. The policy explains procedures the school may use to address attendance problems.
- B. Absence is defined as missing more than an accumulation of 3.5 hours (210 instructional minutes) per day. When a student is absent, he or she must return to school with a signed and dated note from the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis that states the date and reason for the absence. The written note will be used to evaluate excessive absenteeism.
- C. Students will be allowed six (6) excused absences per semester with an accompanying excusal from a medical doctor or therapist. When a student attends a medical appointment, he or she should return with a note from the medical office affirming the appointment for that day. Any medical or extenuating documentation should be attached to this note.
- D. Additional absences that are considered excused absences are those where the student was on official school business or when the absence was due to one of the following reasons and the student brings a written statement upon his/her return to school from the parent, guardian, person in loco parentis, or appropriate government agency stating such reason:
1. Death or serious illness in a student's immediate family;
 2. Observance of recognized holidays observed by the student's faith;
 3. Participation in an FFA, FHA, or 4-H sanctioned activity;

4. To visit his/her parent or legal guardian who is a member of the military and been called to active duty, is on leave from active duty, or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting;
 5. Participation in the election poll workers program for high school students or when any student accompanies his or her parent when the parent is exercising his or her right to vote in one (1) scheduled election; and,
 6. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal including but not limited to attending an appointment with a governmental agency, obeying a subpoena, or visiting prospective colleges.
- E. Any other absences not identified as excused absences using the aforementioned criteria will be considered unexcused absences. When a student has 5 unexcused absences in a semester, the school shall notify the student's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis that the student has missed more than half the allowable days for the semester. Notification shall be by telephone, email, or by regular mail with a return address, sent no later than the following school day.
- F. Whenever a student exceeds 9 unexcused absences in a semester, a Family in Need of Services (FINS) petition may be filed and the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis may be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.
- G. Students with more than 9 unexcused absences in a course in a semester may not receive credit for that course. If the student fails to receive credit for a sufficient number of courses and at the discretion of the principal after consultation with persons having knowledge of the circumstances of the absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Absences, however, shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.
- H. It is the Arkansas General Assembly's intention that students having excessive absences due to illness, accident, or other unavoidable reason be given assistance in obtaining credit for their courses. Therefore, at any time prior to when a student exceeds the number of allowable absences (unless unable to do so due to unforeseen circumstances), the student, or his/her parent, guardian, or person in

loco parentis may petition the school or district's administration for special arrangements to address the student's absences. If formal arrangements are granted, they shall be formalized into a written agreement which will include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement's requirements. The agreement shall be signed by the student, the student's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis, and the school or district administrator or designee. Unless a student's excessive absence is due to an unforeseen circumstance, the district will not accept a parent note for a student's absence.

- I. Days missed due to in-school or out-of-school suspension shall not count toward the allowable number of days absent.
- J. If a student comes to class more than 5 minutes late without permission, the student is considered tardy. If a student misses more than 25 minutes in any class period, it is considered an absence for that class period.
- K. Tardiness to class is disruptive and repeated tardiness will not be tolerated. The consequences for habitual tardiness in one class per nine-week period are as follows:
 - 3-Tardies = 1-day lunch detention
 - 4-Tardies = 3-day lunch detention
 - 5-Tardies or more = 4-days lunch detention
- L. If any student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan conflicts with this policy, the requirements of the student's IEP or 504 Plan take precedence.

Note: A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f) prohibits the lowering of grades of foster children for absences due to 1) a change in the student's school enrollment; 2) the student's attendance at a court ordered dependency-neglect court proceeding; or 3) the student's attendance at a court-ordered counseling or treatment.

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-18-209 A.C.A. § 867 A.C.A. § 6-18-222
A.C.A. § 6-18-229 A.C.A. § 6-27-113 A.C.A. § 7-4-116
A.C.A. § 27-16-701 A.C.A. § 6-18-213 A.C.A. § 6-47-406