

## **Attendance and Tardiness Policy (2025–2026)**

### **A. Purpose and Importance**

Education is more than grades. Regular attendance is critical to academic success, social development, and preparation for adult responsibilities. Interactions with peers and instructional continuity enrich learning and directly impact student achievement.

### **B. Definitions**

- Absence: Missing more than an accumulation of 3.5 hours (210 minutes) in a school day.
- Tardy: Arriving more than 5 minutes late to a class period without permission.
- Class Period Absence: Missing more than 25 minutes of a single class period.
- Excused Absence: Absence documented and approved based on outlined criteria.
- Unexcused Absence: Absence that does not meet excused criteria.

### **C. Excused Absences**

A written, dated note from the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis must accompany each absence. Medical documentation is required when applicable.

Excused absences include:

1. Illness with medical documentation.
2. Death or serious illness in the immediate family.
3. Observance of religious holidays.
4. Official school business.
5. Participation in sanctioned activities (e.g., FFA, FHA, 4-H).
6. Military deployment-related leave or return visits.
7. Civic responsibilities (e.g., election poll working, court appearances).
8. Visits to prospective colleges (with prior approval).
9. Parents may provide up to 5 excused absences per year via email.
10. Other exceptional cases with prior administrative approval.

Note: Foster children's grades will not be penalized for absences due to placement changes or court-ordered proceedings per A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f).

#### **D. Tardiness and Truancy**

- 3 Tardies = 1-day lunch detention and parent contact
- 4 Tardies = 3-day lunch detention and parent conference
- 5 or more Tardies = Behavior contract established

If a student exceeds 2 minutes late without permission, they are marked tardy. More than 15 minutes late is counted as an absence for that class period.

#### **E. Attendance Thresholds and Notifications**

- A student may not exceed 9 unexcused absences per semester or 18 per year (10% of school days).
- At 5 unexcused absences, a notification will be sent to the parent/guardian via email or mail.
- At 9 or more unexcused absences within the semester:
  - An IEP meeting will be held
  - A Family in Need of Services (FINS) petition may be filed.
  - Civil penalties may apply per law.

#### **F. Make-Up and Support Options**

Before reaching the absence limit, students or parents may request special arrangements due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g., illness, accident). If granted, a formal agreement will be written and signed by all parties, outlining expectations and consequences.

#### **G. Suspensions**

Days missed due to out-of-school suspensions will count toward the 9-day absence limit and may require an IEP meeting to address concerns.

#### **H. Students with IEPs**

Attendance requirements must align with the student's IEP. These plans supersede general policy where conflicts exist.

#### **I. Legal References**

A.C.A. § 6-18-209, § 6-18-222, § 6-18-229  
A.C.A. § 6-27-113, § 7-4-116, § 6-18-213, § 6-47-406  
A.C.A. § 27-16-701  
A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f)