

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 an adult. 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. At the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the student 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. When a child attends a medical appointment, s/he 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. The written note will be used to evaluate excessive absenteeism. Students will be allowed six (6) excused absences per semester with an accompanying excusal from a medical doctor. Absences for outside therapies will not be excused.
- C. If a student comes to class more than 5 minutes late without permission, the student is considered truant. If a student misses more than 25 minutes in any class period, it is considered an absence for that class period.
- D. 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:

1. 3-Tardies = 1-day lunch detention (3-Tardies = 1 Absence)
 2. 4-Tardies = 3-day lunch detention
 3. 5-Tardies or more = 4-days lunch detention
- E. Students shall not be absent, as defined in this policy more than 10 percent of the school year (18 days), or 9 days in a semester. When a student has 5 absences, his/her parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall be notified 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 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 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. Students are required to be in attendance 160 to 178 days in order to be considered for a passing grade, course credit, promotion, or graduation.

Additional Absences

Additional absences that are not charged against the allowable number of 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. 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; and
- 2. For purposes pre-approved by the school administration such as visiting prospective colleges, to obey a subpoena, or to attend an appointment with a government agency;

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