

Section II – Attendance

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 reasons 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 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;
3. Any student that accompanies the student's parent when the parent is exercising his or her right to vote in a (1) scheduled election shall not be considered absent.

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
A.C.A. § 6-18-234

APPOINTMENTS AND EARLY CHECKOUT

- A. We encourage you to make health-related appointments after school hours. The success of the students is dependent on being in class. We discourage any early checkout if possible. Excessive early checkouts may result in your child being **RETAINED** or **LOSING CREDIT IN THE CLASS**.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS (Grades 9-12)

- A. Students in grades nine through twelve (9-12) may take part in enrollment and attendance at a post-secondary institution. Each credit hour shall count as three (3) hours of attendance time, meaning a three (3) hour course will count as nine (9) hours weekly.
- B. Study Halls - Study halls are to be used for the purposes of self-study or for organized tutoring, which is to take place in the school building.
- C. Extracurricular Classes - Extracurricular classes related to a seasonal activity shall meet for an entire semester whether or not the season ends prior to the end of the semester. Students must attend and participate in the class for the entire semester in order to receive credit for the course. For the purpose of this policy, extracurricular classes are defined as school sponsored activities which are not an Arkansas Department of Education approved course counting toward graduation requirements or classes that have not been approved by the Arkansas Department of Education for academic credit. Such classes may include special interest, fine arts, technical, scholastic, intramural and interscholastic opportunities.
- D. Course Enrollment Outside of ASBVI - Enrollment and attendance in vocational-educational training courses, college courses, schoolwork programs, and other department-sanctioned educational programs may be used to satisfy the student attendance requirement even if the programs are not located at the public schools. Attendance in such alternative programs must be pre-approved by the school's administration. The school shall strive to assign students who have been dropped from a course of study or removed from a schoolwork

program job during the semester into another placement or course of study. In the instances where a subsequent placement is unable to be made, the school may grant a waiver for the student for the duration of the semester in which the placement is unable to be made.

- E. In any instance where a provision of a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) conflicts with a portion(s) of this policy, the IEP shall prevail.

Legal References: A.C.A. § 867 Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Mandatory Attendance Requirements for Students in Grades Nine through Twelve.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Arkansas Code 6-18-201 (a) (1): Under the penalty for noncompliance set by law, every parent, guardian, or other person residing within the State of Arkansas having custody or charge of a child five (5) years of age through seventeen (17) years of age on or before the date established in 6-18-207 for the minimum age for enrollment in public schools shall enroll and send the child to a public, private, or parochial school or provide a home school for the child, as described in 6-15-501 et seq. with the following exceptions:

1. The child will not be age six (6) on or before August 1, 2023, and the parent, guardian or other person having custody or charge of the child elects not to have him/her attend kindergarten. A kindergarten waiver form prescribed by regulations of the Department of Education must be signed and on file with the school's administrative office.
2. The child has received a high school diploma or its equivalent as determined by the State Board of Education.
3. The child is age sixteen (16) or above and is enrolled in a post-secondary vocational-technical institution, a community college or a two-year or four-year institution of higher education.
4. The child is age sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) and has met the requirements to enroll in an adult education program as defined by A.C.A. § 6-18-201 (b).

DAILY ATTENDANCE FOR PARTICIPATION

Students that miss any part of the regular school day may be ineligible to participate in games, practices, performances, contests or credited work programs unless the absence is cleared by the principal in advance.

DAILY BELL SCHEDULE

- A. Buildings will be opened for the entrance of students prior to 7:50 a.m. School buildings will not be opened to the students without a teacher in charge.

Instruction Begins.....	7:55 a.m.
Elementary Dismisses.....	3:30 p.m. (busses will depart at 3:40)
High School Dismisses....	3:30 p.m. (busses will depart at 3:40)
Friday Dismissal.....	1:30 p.m.

EARLY TERMINATION (CRITERIA)

If at any point in the program a student exhibits one or more of the following conditions, a conference may be called to determine if continued placement at ASBVI is appropriate. (The conference procedures will be in accordance with the admission, review and dismissal procedures of ASBVI, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and should involve the student's parents and LEA.)

- A. Destructive, physically aggressive, or unacceptable social behavior that cannot be brought under control through the use of behavior modification and/or medication as prescribed by the primary care physician;
- B. Inability to respond to developmental training (self-care, feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.);
- C. Failure, after a reasonable period of time, to make appropriate progress toward behavioral and/or educational objectives that have been established for the child in the **IEP**;
- D. Failure to attend the prescribed number of student days within each semester.

MAKE-UP WORK

- A. At the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired students who miss school due to an absence shall be allowed to make up the work they missed. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for all make-up work with his/her teacher(s). Students are allowed one day make-up time for each day of absence.
- B. Assignments made, including tests, prior to days missed, will be due upon returning to class.
- C. Assignments made while a student is serving suspension shall be made up for credit. For each missed day, the student will be given one (1) school day for make-up work.
- D. Work may not be made up for credit for absences in excess of the number of allowable absences in a semester **unless** the absences are permitted by the ASBVI Attendance Policy

STUDENTS OFF CAMPUS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- A. Parents/guardians must call from a number listed in the student permanent records before a student will be permitted to leave the school campus with someone other than the parent/guardian. Blocked calls are unacceptable. Photo identification will be required by the adult.
- B. School trips will be supervised by a teacher, coach, school official, approved parent or adult sponsor. Students will be required to ride the bus to the trip destination. Only the parent/guardian may sign the student out at the end of school activity trip.

TRUANCY AND TARDINESS

- A. Truancy is unexcused and defined as a student that is not present at school without the prior consent of parents and/or without permission from the office of the principal. If a student comes to class more than 5 minutes late without permission, they are considered truant.