

Policy 5.03: Attendance

Status: ADOPTED

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Compulsory School Attendance Law

Alabama State Law 16-28-3, Code of Alabama, 1975 requires all children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) to attend school regularly. Alabama State law states that each child who enrolls in a public school, whether or not the child is required by law to enroll, is subject to the school attendance and truancy laws of the state. Parents or guardians having control over school age children are responsible for their children's regular attendance and proper conduct. Failure to comply with the Compulsory School Attendance Law requires the Attendance Officer to file a complaint in the Autauga County Court system.

Absences

A parent, guardian or other person having charge of any child officially enrolled in Alabama public schools (K-12) shall explain in writing the cause of any and every absence of the child no later than **three (3) days** following return to school.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism is habitually missing 10% (18) or more of school days due to absences for any reason - excused, unexcused or suspensions.

Extreme and extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parent or guardian should seek assistance from the Homebound Program.

Excused Absences

Any time that a student is absent, the parent or guardian must send a written note to school satisfactorily explaining the absence. A satisfactory note from parent or guardian meets the following State guidelines:

- illness;
- death in the immediate family;
- inclement weather (as determined by the principal) which would be dangerous to the life and health of the child;
- legal quarantine;
- emergency conditions as determined by the principal;
- and prior permission of the principal and written consent by the parent or guardian.

The parent note or doctor's excuse must be sent to school **within three (3) days** of the student's return to school to be counted as an excused absence. Excuses will not be accepted after three (3) days.

A written note from parents or guardians, as described above, will excuse absences for up to but **not exceeding seven (7) absences during the school year. Further absences will require a written excuse from a medical doctor or court official.**

Tardiness

Students are required to be on time for school. It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to make sure that their children arrive on time each day. Any student arriving after that time should be accompanied to the office by a parent or guardian. **Excessive tardiness**, for any reason other than reasons for excused absences, **will result in disciplinary action.** Only an excused tardy permits class work to be made up.

- Students are required to remain at school for the entire day.

Check-Outs

Students who leave school for any reason must check-out through the school office following their school's check-out procedures. Only persons whose names appear on the school's registration form/card may check-out students, unless the school verifies permission with the parent/guardian. Written permission is to be given by the parent/guardian or "emergency person" shown on the school's registration form/card before each check-out. **Valid picture identification is required.**

Students must attend a minimum of one-half of the instructional day to be counted present. An early dismissal before one-half of the school day (three and one-half hours) or a check-in after one-half of the school day is counted as an absence. Check-outs are excused for the same reasons as absences. Written explanation for the time missed must be submitted and will follow the same guidelines for excused and unexcused absences as outlined.

Check-Ins

Students are required to report to school no later than the official beginning of school day and to be on time for all classes during the day. Each school will devise procedures that will ensure compliance with this regulation. Check-ins are excused for the same reasons as absences. Check-ins for any other reasons is unexcused and may result in disciplinary action. No make up work is allowed for unexcused check-ins.

Perfect Attendance

A student will not be eligible for a perfect attendance certificate if the student has an absence, check-in, or check-out.

Truancy Definition/Unexcused Absences

Absences for reasons other than those defined above shall be considered as unexcused. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant each day he/she is absent. Forged excuses will be coded as unexcused. The child shall also be deemed truant for any absence determined by the principal to be unexcused based on the State Department of Education's current School Attendance law. Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal or his/her designee of the first truancy/unexcused absence (warning), third truancy/unexcused absence (letter), and fifth truancy/unexcused absence (conference – mandatory except in case of an emergency or prior arrangement). Seven (7) unexcused absences within a school year constitute a student being truant for the purpose of filing a petition with the Court.

Early Warning Truancy Program

Parents and students will be referred to the Early Warning Truancy Program on the fifth (5th) unexcused absence. Referral to the program includes the following steps:

- The parent will receive official notification by certified mail. The notice will require the parent to report to the Early Warning Meeting.
- The parent will meet with the Truancy Officer. The Truancy Officer will review the system's Attendance Policy, the State of Alabama Attendance Laws and consequences of breaking the law.
- If the parent fails to appear at the scheduled Early Warning Meeting, the parent will receive a legal notice and a court referral.
- Parents or guardians of any student having a chronic ailment, which may cause the child to miss school during the year, are required to provide the school with a doctor's statement verifying the child's condition. The statement shall reflect the nature of the child's illness, and state why the child may need to miss school from time to time due to this illness. Failure of parents/guardians to provide the school with a chronic ailment statement can result in unexcused absence accumulation and referral to the Court system.

Make-Up Work (Excused Absences)

If a student is absent for any excused reason as defined above, the student shall be allowed to make up schoolwork and/or examinations missed during said absence or absences. For kindergarten through fifth grade students, the teacher shall be responsible for providing the student with a written list of missed assignments within three (3) days after the absence (s). The student shall be responsible for completing all make-up assignments within a reasonable length of time, not to exceed two (2) weeks.

For sixth through twelfth grade students, the student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher or teachers immediately upon return to school to arrange a reasonable length of time, not to exceed one (1) week, to make up work and/or examinations. Teachers shall not be required to re-teach lessons, but students shall be given reasonable opportunity to learn lessons missed due to excused absences.

School Participation Absences

Students who are away from school due to participation in official school sponsored activities shall be marked present and shall be allowed to make up missed work.

Religious Absences

A student shall be excused on religious holidays when the student's parents/guardians come to the school in person and sign a request for the student to be absent for this purpose. When this procedure is followed, the student's absence shall be excused and shall not be counted toward the excessive absence clause of this policy. Students shall

be allowed to make-up work missed during such absences.

Appeal Process

Students or parents/guardians may appeal to the school's review committee decisions rendered as it pertains to excused/unexcused or excessive absences. Suspensions shall count as a part of the number of excessive absences.

Parental Responsibility for Student Attendance and Behavior

It is the policy of the Board to comply with Act 93-672 as adopted by the Alabama Legislature. Parents/guardians or persons in charge of children are required to ensure that their children enroll and attend school and conduct themselves properly in accordance with written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education. The failure of a parent/guardian and persons in charge of children to exercise this responsibility is a crime. If convicted, said persons shall be fined not more than \$100 and may also be sentenced to hard labor for the county for not more than 90 days.

School principals and the superintendent of education or his/her designee are required to report suspected violations to the district attorney within ten (10) days. Any principal or superintendent or his/her designee intentionally failing to report inform parents of school children of their education-related responsibilities.

Student School Attendance Standards and Operation of a Motor Vehicle (Pertaining to a Driver's License)

"The Department of Public Safety shall deny a driver's license or a learner's license for the operation of a motor vehicle to any person under the age of 19 who does not, at the time of application, present a diploma or other certificate of graduation issued to the person from a secondary high school of this state, or any other state, or documentation that the person:

1. Is enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a course leading to a general educational development certificate (GED) from a state-approved institution or organization, or has obtained the certificate;
 2. Is enrolled in a secondary school of this state or any state;
 3. Is participating in a job training program approved by the State Superintendent of Education;
 4. Is gainfully and substantially employed;
 5. Is a parent with the care and custody of a minor or unborn child;
 6. Has a physician certify that the parents of the person depend on him or her as their sole source of transportation; or
 7. Is exempted from this requirement due to circumstances beyond his or her control as provided in this chapter."
- Ala. Code 16-28-40(1975)***

Legal Ref: Alabama Code §§ 16-28-12, 16-28-13; 16-28-15; 16-28-16; Alabama Administrative Code § 290-3-1-02(7)(c)
