

# Marion County Board of Education

Monitoring:

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## **Attendance**

**6.200**

**07/08/24**

Rescinds:

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**6.200**

**08/08/22**

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. Continued unexcused tardiness and /or skipping school classes are considered a violation of compulsory attendance. Unexcused tardiness includes any late arrival when the student fails to bring an acceptable note upon arriving. Excused and unexcused absences are the only two (2) types of excuses recognized by the Marion County School System. Students and parents must accept full responsibility for regular school attendance. It is the student's responsibility to monitor his/her unexcused absences and tardiness. Students not in attendance during at least 50% (3:50 hours) of the school day are not allowed to participate in after school programs.

The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include: <sup>1</sup>

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.<sup>2</sup>

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent/guardian.<sup>3</sup>

### GRADES K-12

The building principal, in determining excused and unexcused absences, may use some discretion. The school office will need approved excused notes turned in and filed to aid the attendance supervisor in documenting attendance. All excuses must be turned in within 3 days of student returning to school. For the purpose of record keeping, late check-ins and early check-outs are considered as tardies. Five (5) tardies will accumulate into one (1) day absent. Six (6) parent discretionary days will be allowed per one hundred eighty (180) days. Once these parent discretionary days are exhausted, absences due to illness shall require a doctor's or dentist's excuse. These parent discretionary days are accepted at the principal's discretion. The following shall be accepted by any certified employee of the Marion County School System as an excuse for absences, tardiness and early dismissal.

Excused absences shall include.<sup>4</sup>

1. Medical reason:
  - a. Only six (6) parent discretionary days, whether consecutive or not, can be excused in the one hundred eighty day (180) school year.
  - b. All absences due to illness must be accompanied by a medical note.
2. Illness of immediate family member;
  - a. An immediate family member refers to a person's parent(s)/guardian(s) or sibling. (Principal's Discretion)
3. Death in the immediate family: absences not to exceed three days: (parent, guardian, step-parent, brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or any other family member that resides in the student's house. Principal's discretion is allowed in extreme circumstances.
4. Legal, (court order, attorney, subpoena, summons, truancy board, etc.)
5. A one day excused absence shall be granted for students whose parent or guardian is leaving for active military duty or returning from active military duty, Documentation must be provided to student's school
6. School Bus Transportation Issue (Must be verified with the Director of Transportation)
7. Religious observances<sup>5</sup> (Not to exceed three (3) total days)
8. School-sponsored activities or school endorsed activities College Visits, Field trips<sup>6</sup>
9. Other excuses for "good cause" shall be granted, provided prior approval is obtained from the principal. Anticipated absences shall be excused in advances by the building principal. Forms will be available from the principal's office.
10. For grades nine through twelve (9-12) where eighteen weeks constitutes one full credit, more than three (3) total unexcused absences per eighteen (18) week session shall constitute failure for the session. Where thirty-six (36) weeks constitutes one full credit, more than three (3) total unexcused absences per 18- week session shall constitute failure of the session in courses.
11. The parent shall notify the school of the absence of the child before 8:30 AM each day the student will be absent.
12. School sponsored fishing team events, which includes pre-fishing days for TSSAA sponsored tournaments. (Not to exceed three (3) total days) Absences caused by fishing in tournaments that are not sponsored by the TSSAA will not be excused.

**The first six absences a student acquires, when an acceptable excuse note is not turned into the office within three (3) days, will automatically be counted as excused and will eliminate one of their parent discretionary days.**

1. A written excuse from a doctor, dentist, or dentist, or other medical professional must have the following: the date and time of the appointment must be specified. **Only dates specified on the note will be excused as medical.** Doctor's excuses from a doctor's office will only be accepted if the diagnosis and treatment is within the area of the doctor's certification. Students who have office visits not involving an illness (ex; tests, physicals, visits to the dentist, or health department) are expected to return to school and will be excused for reasonable travel time. All notes from doctors/clinic visits are subject to be checked and confirmed by the attendance supervisor or school. Any fraudulent/forged notes will be turned over to the doctor's office/clinic and local law enforcement.
2. If a student is sent home from school by an administrator or nurse for illness, that day will be counted as an excused early dismissal. If the child is absent the next day because of the illness, the school will excuse this day as well. Any absences after these 2 days will require a doctor's note or the parent will need to use a parent discretionary day.

**The Principal or their designee shall be responsible for ensuring that:<sup>7</sup>**

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excused are submitted for absences are verified;
5. System -wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

## **Truancy**

### **General**

Students shall be present at least fifty (50) percent of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students receiving exception Education services may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan.<sup>8</sup>

If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s) and the school provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.<sup>2</sup>

Students who are absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of School/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of the student's absences. The Director of Schools /designee shall also comply with state law regarding the reporting of truant students to the proper authorities. If the student accumulates a total of five (5) unexcused absences,

then he/she is subject to referral to juvenile court.<sup>1°</sup>

The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

### Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan

\*\*\*\* If doctors, dentist, of other medical professional notes appear to be excessive ten (10) days, this will result in referral of the student to the Truancy Review Board for further review. Because there are scheduled breaks throughout the year, i.e. fall break, Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, and spring break. Family vacations and skip days will not be excused.

#### Marion County Schools Attendance Intervention Tiers

Tier I	3 Days (Unexcused)
<b>School</b> <u>Action Level</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement proactive attendance procedures that identify students with a chronic attendance issue. (letters, phone calls, home visits, meetings, conference).</li> <li>• Handbooks will provide parent/guardian/students written notice of the law at the beginning of each school year.</li> <li>• Monitor attendance data.</li> <li>• Establish a positive and engaging school culture.</li> <li>• Letters are to be sent home after 3 days of unexcused absence</li> <li>• Schedule a conference with parent/student.</li> <li>• Develop and sign a contract stating the specific expectations and additional penalties, if warranted.</li> <li>• Student Progress will be monitored on a regular basis and additional communication with the home (calls, meetings, home visits) will be scheduled as needed.</li> </ul>
Tier II	5 Days (Unexcused)
<b>School Community Resources/Agencies</b> <u>Action Level</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an individual attendance assessment to identify the barriers impacting attendance.</li> <li>• Develop an intervention plan to address the barriers.</li> <li>• Refer the student to school based services which may include counselor, nurse or special education. (if needed)</li> <li>• Utilize Centerstone Service within the school setting where available.</li> <li>• Letter will be sent home at 5 days of unexcused absences.</li> <li>• Referral made to Truancy Board.</li> <li>• Possible Home Visits to check-on student welfare</li> </ul>
Tier III	5 + Days (Unexcused and Excused)
<b>School, District, Judicial</b> <u>Action Level</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter will be sent home at 15 days of total absences.</li> <li>• Review the barriers identified in intervention plan.</li> <li>• Current intervention plan and contract submitted to the Office of Pupil Services.</li> <li>• Petition filed with Juvenile Court.</li> <li>• Coordinate with probation officer or service agency assigned by the court.</li> <li>• Make additional recommendation to parent(s) based on outcome of judicial intervention.</li> <li>• Make referral to Department of Children’s Service, if attendance is impacting academic growth at the level of educational neglect.</li> <li>• Refer the student to district based services which may include Family Resource Centers, Coordinated School Health, School Psychologist.</li> </ul>

### **Military Service of Parent/Guardian**

School Principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one day excused absence upon the return of the parent or custodian serving active military service.

Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his /her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during these absences.<sup>12</sup>

### **School Based Extra Curriculum Activities**

State guidelines for students and schools; students are expected be in school 93 percent of the school year, which only allows 13 absences per year. Student with more than 13 absences may be denied school based extra curriculum activities. Examples; field trips, ball games, dances, and graduation activities, etc. These decisions will be decided on a case by case bases by a school-based team comprised of Principal/Assistant Principal, school counselor, member of the Marion County Schools Attendance office, a student's teacher and SRO.

### **Make-up Work**

Upon a student's return to school, the length of time for completion of make-up work shall be one school day per absence with a maximum of five days.

### **State-Mandated Assessment**

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled EOC exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or must have been given an excused release by the Principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a makeup test. Excused students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam. Students who have an unexcused absence shall receive a failing grade on the course exam which will be averaged into their final grade.

### **Credit/Promotion Denial**

Credit/ promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion<sup>3</sup>. If attendance is a factor; prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. Student and the parent/guardian shall be advised if student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.
2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

### **Driver's License Revocation**

More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any ninety (90) days semester renders a student ineligible to retain a drivers' permit or license, or to obtain such if of age.

In order to qualify for reclaiming a driver's permit or license, the student must make a passing grade in at least three (3) full unit subjects of their equivalency at the conclusion of a subsequent grading period.<sup>4</sup>

## **Attendance Hearing<sup>s</sup>**

Students with excessive (more than 5) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the Director of Attendance and Principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist or to determine if the student has met the requirements that would allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send written notification to the Director of Schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of Schools/designee.

**The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.**

Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the board, and the board shall review the record. Following the review, the board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee. The action of the board shall be final.

## **Attendance & Postsecondary School Visits**

High school students participating in postsecondary school visits will be counted as present as follows:

- i. High school students may have 2 postsecondary school visits during junior year and 2 during senior year.
- ii. The parent or legal guardian must notify the high school one week prior to the postsecondary school visit.
- iii. A signed letter or form from a campus official of the postsecondary institution verifying the students visit to the campus must be submitted to the high school after the visit.
- iv. All schoolwork missed by the student during the postsecondary school visit must be completed in two days per school day absence not to exceed six school days. The student must acquire pre-approval and submit evidence from the date of visit.
- v. Postsecondary school visits are not mandatory for any high school student.
- vi. Postsecondary school visits are the sole responsibility of the parent or the guardian of the high school student. The student's parent or guardian are solely responsible for facilitating postsecondary school visits and for ensuring the safety of students during the visit.

**\*\*\* The Director of Schools /designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and disseminated to all students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrative staff.**

Legal References:

1. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.08(1)(a)
  2. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.03(15); TCA 49-6-2904
  3. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)
  4. TCA 49-6-3006
  5. TCA 49-6-3002
  6. TCA 49-6-3007; 3008
  7. TCA 49-6-3009; 3010
  8. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.06(2)
- TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(1)(C)  
TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.03(15); TCA 49-6-2904 (b)(5)  
Tenn. Department of Education; Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual (2017)  
TCA 49-6-3021  
Tenn. Department of Education; Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual (TCA 49-6-3007; Public Acts of 2017, Chapter No. 379  
TCA 49-6-3007; TCA49-6-3009; Public Acts of 2017; Chapter No.379  
TCA 49-6-3019<sup>13</sup> TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)

Cross References:

- Extracurricular Activities 4.300
- Reporting Student Progress 4.601
- Promotion and Retention 4.603
- Recognition of Religious Beliefs 4.803
- Student Records 6.600