



**EAST TALLAHATCHIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE &
ENGAGEMENT PLAYBOOK**

2026-2027

Every student accounted for. Every class. Every day.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLEMENTATION EDITION

Version 1.0 | August 31, 2026

Board-ready implementation guide; Policy JBD alignment pending

411 East Chestnut Street | Charleston, Mississippi 38921
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PREPARED FOR DISTRICTWIDE USE AT CES, CMS, CHS, AND DISTRICT PROGRAMS



Superintendent Directive

Attendance is an instructional, safety, access, and accountability responsibility. Every ETSD employee who touches attendance data must ensure that students are accurately accounted for, families receive timely support, and the District meets each legal reporting obligation without delay.

This playbook establishes one districtwide operating standard for Charleston Elementary School, Charleston Middle School, Charleston High School, the Alternative Learning Center, and all other ETSD programs. Principals shall train staff, monitor daily compliance, correct deficiencies immediately, and maintain the evidence required for district, MDE, and Board review.

THE ETSD STANDARD

Every student is accounted for in every required class or block. Facts are recorded first, classifications are determined second, supports begin early, and no record is recreated, altered, hidden, or backdated to make the data appear compliant.

Raymond Russell, Superintendent

East Tallahatchie School District

Document Control

Field	Controlled value
Full district name / state	East Tallahatchie School District, Mississippi
District number	6811
Document ID	ETSD-SA-001
Version / date	Version 1.0 / August 31, 2026
Status	Administrative implementation edition; Board policy alignment pending
Policy owner	Superintendent / District Attendance and Student Services
Executive sponsor	Raymond Russell, Superintendent
Schools / grades	Charleston Elementary (3-4); Charleston Middle (5-8); Charleston High (9-12); Alternative Learning Center and district programs as assigned
Systems of record	SAM Spectra / ActiveParent; ParentSquare for family communication; MDE SAO Portal for required referrals
Primary evidence repository	District-controlled attendance compliance folder; access limited by role
Review cadence	Annual before school opens and immediately after any legal, policy, calendar, or system change

CRITICAL POLICY ALIGNMENT

ETSD Policy JBD contains outdated language identified in the 2026-2027 policy alignment review, including the former 63% day rule and obsolete attendance consequences. Current Mississippi law, current Board action, and the adopted Student & Family Handbook control. Policy JBD should be amended before or with formal Board adoption of this playbook.

BOARD ACTION DEADLINE - NOVEMBER 1, 2026

Mississippi law requires locally tailored Board policy on absence documentation and family-engagement protocols by November 1, 2026. The policy must address acceptable verification, submission timelines, a local parent/guardian-note limit before third-party documentation is required, privacy protections, conferences, Attendance Success Plans, multichannel/translated communication, and referral to local supports. The adopted policy must be posted online, reviewed at least every three years, and reported on annually to the Board using disaggregated attendance data.



Quick Reference: 2026-2027 Attendance Rules

Use this page during the school day. Detailed procedures, decision rights, scripts, and forms follow.

Trigger / Rule	Required ETSD action
Full-day present	Student is present for at least 66% of the instructional day.
Full-day absence	Student misses more than 33% of the instructional day. Arrival and checkout minutes must be calculated from the official schedule.
After 7:59 a.m.	Student reports to the front office, signs in, and carries an official office pass to class. The office records the actual arrival time.
Every class / block	Teachers and substitutes record attendance within the first 10 minutes of every rostered class or block. Never copy the prior period or guess.
3 cumulative absences	Contact the parent/guardian, document the two-way attempt, review barriers, begin school-based intervention, and send the 3-absence notice. The three absences may be excused, unlawful, or a combination.
5 cumulative unlawful absences	Submit the required referral through the MDE SAO Portal by the end of the next business day; continue interventions and maintain complete evidence.
8, 12, and 15 unlawful absences	Submit a new referral at each threshold; update attendance totals, communication, supports, and protected-program review.
Every additional 5 unlawful absences	Submit another referral at 20, 25, 30, and each additional five unlawful absences.
Chronic absence	Missing 10% or more of enrolled school days for any reason. This is an early-support measure, not the same as unlawful absence or truancy.
Absence documentation	Submit written explanation and supporting documentation within three school days after return. The principal may accept later documentation for good cause.
Make-up work	Provide a reasonable opportunity to recover essential learning. ETSD does not apply an automatic F/60 solely because of absences.

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

At 3 cumulative absences, the school contacts the family and begins intervention. The statutory SAO referral threshold begins at 5 cumulative unlawful absences, not at 3 absences.



Contents at a Glance

The electronic Word version uses true heading levels for navigation. Each appendix is designed for immediate district use.

Part	What you will find
1. Purpose, Scope, and Authority	Governing hierarchy, audience, guiding commitments, required policy alignment
2. District Non-Negotiables	Every-class attendance, 7:59 procedure, same-day reconciliation, no backdating
3. Definitions and Legal Standards	66% rule, compulsory age, excused/unlawful absence, chronic absence, thresholds
4. Daily Bell-to-Data Workflow	Before bell, first 10 minutes, morning reconciliation, end-of-day certification
5. Documentation, Coding, and Corrections	Excuse rules, three-day window, medical documentation, SAM Spectra audit trail
6. Tardy, Checkout, Period, and Special Settings	Late arrival, class cuts, activities, suspension, homebound, dual credit, transfers
7. Same-Day Outreach and Safe Return	ParentSquare/phone workflow, safety escalation, re-entry, academic recovery
8. Tiered Attendance Support	Tier 1-3 triggers, Attendance Success Plans, barrier-to-support map
9. Protected Supports, Equity, and Privacy	IDEA/504, homelessness, foster care, health, language access, FERPA, due process
10. SAO Referral and Formal Escalation	5/8/12/15/+5 process, next-business-day deadline, quality gate
11. Roles and Decision Rights	Teacher, substitute, office, support team, principal, district, SAO responsibilities
12. Data Governance and Compliance Evidence	SAM Spectra authority, folder structure, access, audit logs, no parallel records
13. Metrics, Meetings, and Accountability	Daily/weekly/monthly controls, targets, principal certification, Board reporting
14. Communication Standards and Scripts	Same-day call, 3-absence notice, planning invitation, return script
15. Training and 30-Day Launch Plan	Role-based training, access setup, live audit, stabilization
Appendices A-N	Checklists, intervention forms, success plan, correction form, outreach log, referral gate, certifications, contacts, sources



1. Purpose, Scope, and Authority

Attendance is a student-success, safety, access, and accountability function.

Purpose

The purpose of this playbook is to ensure that every ETSD school records attendance accurately, responds to missed instructional time quickly, partners with students and families, removes barriers, preserves student rights, and completes required reporting on time.

Audience and scope

- Applies to all administrators, teachers, substitutes, attendance clerks, counselors, social workers, nurses, program coordinators, data staff, transportation staff, and employees who create, review, classify, correct, report, or act on attendance information.
- Covers daily and period attendance, tardies, early checkouts, approved activities, suspensions, alternative placements, homebound and virtual arrangements, dual-credit/work-based schedules, transfers, withdrawals, corrections, interventions, and SAO referrals.
- Applies to Charleston Elementary School, Charleston Middle School, Charleston High School, the Alternative Learning Center, and any off-site or contracted placement for which ETSD retains attendance responsibility.

Governing hierarchy

Priority	Authority
1	Federal and Mississippi law, court orders, and binding state rules
2	Mississippi State Board of Education and MDE requirements
3	ETSD Board policy and adopted Student & Family Handbook
4	IEPs, Section 504 plans, health plans, and individualized legal protections
5	This playbook and Superintendent-approved administrative procedures
6	School-level job aids and schedules that do not conflict with higher authority

CONFLICT RULE

When a lower-level document conflicts with controlling law or a student-specific legal plan, the higher authority controls. Staff shall pause the disputed action, protect the student, and immediately notify the principal and Superintendent/designee.

2026 policy and public-reporting duties

- By November 1, 2026, the Board must adopt and implement locally tailored absence-documentation and family-engagement policies, post them on the district website, review them at least every three years, and report annually to the Board using disaggregated attendance data.
- When a school chronic-absence rate exceeds 10% for any grade level or student subgroup, ETSD must prepare a written chronic-absence reduction plan, submit it to the Board, and make it publicly available on the district website.
- Chronic-absence data must be actively monitored by school, grade, and subgroup and incorporated into district/school accountability reporting and improvement planning.

Guiding commitments

- Record what happened first; determine the legal classification second.
- Ask what is getting in the way before asking what consequence applies.
- Use one authoritative record in SAM Spectra and retain a complete audit trail for every correction.
- Begin support early and match intensity to need through an MTSS framework.
- Welcome students back without public questioning, sarcasm, shame, or automatic loss of belonging.
- Protect students from discrimination and review disparities in coding, supports, and formal referrals.
- Recognize improvement and connection - not perfect attendance or attendance while sick.



2. District Non-Negotiables

These requirements are mandatory across every ETSD campus and program.

#	Non-negotiable	Required practice
1	Every rostered class or block	The teacher or substitute records attendance within the first 10 minutes. Attendance is never carried forward from another period.
2	Observed facts only	Teachers record presence/absence based on observation. Office staff determine excuse classification and authorized corrections.
3	Arrival after 7:59 a.m.	The student reports to the front office, signs in, receives an official pass, and proceeds to instruction without public questioning.
4	Same-day reconciliation	The office resolves missing rosters, present/absent conflicts, unreported absences, late arrivals, early checkouts, and approved activities each day.
5	Same-day outreach	An unexpected, unreported absence receives timely phone/ParentSquare outreach in the family's preferred language and method.
6	No backdating or reconstruction	Missing evidence is documented as missing. Staff may correct a record only through the authorized workflow with the original value preserved.
7	No parallel attendance system	SAM Spectra is the official record. Spreadsheets, texts, paper notes, and ParentSquare are supporting evidence, not substitute records.
8	No data manipulation	Do not alter enrollment, withdrawal, suspension, activity, or attendance codes to avoid an alert, chronic-absence rate, referral, or accountability impact.
9	Support and rights before escalation	Every formal action must pass accuracy, notice, intervention, protected-program, equity, and authorization checks.
10	Principal ownership	The principal is accountable for daily completion, staff compliance, timely referrals, monthly certification, and correction of recurring failures.

Teacher and substitute compliance reporting

- Each school runs a missing/late roster report after the first instructional period and again after every major class change.
- The principal or designee contacts noncompliant staff immediately and ensures the actual teacher/substitute supplies the factual record.
- A consolidated daily noncompliance report is provided to the District Attendance/Social Worker/Parent Liaison, Shaquita Prince, and the Superintendent/designee.
- Repeated noncompliance is handled through supervision and personnel procedures. It is never “fixed” by guessing or fabricating attendance.

DO

Document the true condition, identify the owner, correct the process, preserve the audit trail, and follow up.

DO NOT

Create a paper roster after the fact, copy another period, use a generic “all present,” or change timestamps to make a deadline appear met.



3. Definitions and Mississippi Legal Standards

Keep chronic absence, unlawful absence, and daily attendance calculations separate.

Term	ETSD operating definition
Compulsory-school-age child	A child who is six by September 1 and has not reached seventeen by September 1, including a five-year-old enrolled in full-day public kindergarten, subject to the statutory one-time kindergarten withdrawal provision.
Present - full day	Present for at least 66% of the student's instructional day or participating through another state-approved attendance arrangement.
Full-day absence	Missing more than 33% of the instructional day. Actual scheduled minutes and recorded arrival/departure times control.
Period / class absence	A secondary student misses all or a substantial portion of a scheduled class without an approved educational assignment or valid excuse.
Tardy	Arrival after the school day or class begins but before the missed-time threshold produces an absence.
Early checkout	Departure before scheduled dismissal. Missed minutes are included in the daily attendance calculation.
Excused absence	An absence fitting a category recognized by law or Board policy and supported by required documentation.
Unlawful / unexcused absence	An absence that is not authorized, does not fit a recognized category, or remains unsupported after notice and a reasonable opportunity to provide documentation.
Chronic absence	Missing 10% or more of enrolled school days for any reason, including excused, unlawful, and suspension days. Use the official state calculation for reporting.
Severe chronic absence	An ETSD analytic support band of 20% or more of enrolled days missed. It is not a separate legal finding.
Pending review	Temporary classification while a reason, document, correction, or protected circumstance is being verified. Pending is not a permanent code.
School-sponsored activity	An approved educational activity recorded as present when state rules permit and supporting rosters/documentation are complete.
School Attendance Officer (SAO)	The state attendance officer who receives required district referrals and performs statutory follow-up.

Required statutory and district thresholds

Trigger	Required response
3 cumulative absences - any reason	Parent/guardian contact; document communication; begin school-based intervention.
5 cumulative unlawful absences	SAO Portal referral by the end of the next business day; continue support.
8 cumulative unlawful absences	New SAO referral; review effectiveness and strengthen intervention.
12 cumulative unlawful absences	New SAO referral with complete updated intervention documentation.
15 cumulative unlawful absences	New SAO referral; repeat for every additional five unlawful absences.
10% of enrolled days missed	Chronic absence flag and intensified support regardless of excuse status.

SUPPORT BANDS ARE NOT LEGAL THRESHOLDS

A serious safety, housing, health, disability, bullying, transportation, or access concern may require intensive support after only one absence. An automated risk flag may open a review but must not automatically trigger punishment or court referral.



4. Daily Bell-to-Data Workflow

The workflow is complete only when the student's location, status, outreach, and exception queue are reconciled.

Before the first bell

- Review advance absence reports, approved activities, transportation alerts, suspensions, alternative placements, approved homebound/virtual schedules, dual-credit/work-based schedules, and overnight enrollment or schedule changes.
- Confirm every teacher and substitute has live roster access and a one-page attendance instruction sheet.
- Open the school telephone, ParentSquare, portal, email, and voicemail queues used for absence reporting.
- Route diagnoses and detailed medical information to the confidential health process, not routine attendance notes.

First 10 minutes of every class or block

1. Verify the live roster against students actually present or participating through an approved arrangement.
2. Mark only what is observed. An unknown or missing student is not marked present merely because the student was present earlier.
3. Submit attendance within 10 minutes of the bell. Substitutes follow the same deadline.
4. Report roster errors immediately; do not add, remove, or transfer a student by informal note.
5. If a student shown present cannot be located, notify the office immediately under the missing-student safety protocol.

Morning reconciliation - first period / homeroom

Target time	Action
Bell + 10	Run missing-roster report; call noncompliant classrooms; begin the daily compliance log.
Bell + 20	Resolve known family reports, approved activities, late buses, nurse disposition, enrollment/schedule changes, and placements.
Bell + 30	Build the verified queue of absent students with no family notice; reconcile bus/drop-off information and safety conflicts.
Within 60 minutes	Call the primary caregiver, send ParentSquare confirmation, then try approved alternate contacts. Log channel, language, time, outcome, and next action.
Ongoing	Keep reason/classification pending until verified; route safety concerns to the safety/welfare process, not the truancy process.

During the day

- Students arriving after 7:59 a.m. sign in at the front office and receive an official pass. Record exact arrival time and missed minutes.
- Early dismissal requires identity/authorization verification and exact departure time. The office updates SAM Spectra promptly.
- Each class/block teacher records period attendance. The office investigates unexplained period absences and locates the student before classifying a class cut.
- Teachers submit factual corrections through the approved workflow; they do not directly change legal excuse classifications.
- Approved school activities, nurse visits, testing, and program placements are reconciled from authorized rosters - never by assumption.

End-of-day close

- Resolve present/absent conflicts, impossible arrival/departure combinations, missing intervals, aged pending codes, and unreported absences without logged outreach.
- Assign every unresolved item to a named owner with a due date on the next-day exception report.
- Principal/designee reviews the exception report and confirms no safety case or referral deadline is outstanding.
- Preserve all supporting evidence in the district-controlled folder using the approved naming convention.

SERVICE TARGETS

ETSD target: 98% of class/block attendance submitted within 10 minutes, 100% within 20 minutes, and first human outreach for an unreported daily absence within 60 minutes of school start.



5. Documentation, Coding, and Corrections

The note explains the absence; authorized staff decide whether it meets the legal excuse rule.

Family reporting and documentation

1. Notify the school as early as possible on the day of the absence through the school office, ParentSquare, telephone, portal, or another approved channel.
2. Provide the student's name, school/grade, date or periods affected, a broad reason, expected return if known, and a working callback number.
3. Submit the written explanation and supporting documentation within three school days after the student returns. The principal may accept later documentation for good cause.
4. Do not send diagnoses or unnecessary health details through routine messages. Use the confidential school nurse or designated program contact.
5. Review ActiveParent/SAM Spectra and request correction promptly when the record appears wrong.

Excused absence controls

- An absence is excused only when it falls within a category recognized by Mississippi law or Board policy and required evidence is provided.
- Common categories include personal illness, medical or dental care, death or serious illness in the immediate family, court or administrative proceedings, religious observance, approved school activity, emergency, or another extenuating circumstance approved by the Superintendent/designee.
- For personal illness, medical-provider documentation is required after the third illness absence under the current statutory rule.
- Mississippi law generally limits excused absences to five per semester under the specified categories unless the Superintendent/designee approves extenuating circumstances.
- A school-sanctioned event is not treated as an absence when documented and coded under state rules.

Unlawful absence controls

- Skipping school or class, staying home without a recognized reason, leaving without permission, oversleeping, missing a ride without another qualifying reason, routine errands, or failing to supply requested evidence may result in unlawful status.
- Before converting pending to unlawful, provide notice and a reasonable opportunity to submit or correct documentation.
- Do not classify suspension, approved placement, or school activity as unlawful absence.

SAM Spectra coding rules

Field	Control
Membership	Expected / not expected under verified enrollment, calendar, and schedule rules.
Participation	Present / absent / partial day or period based on observation and time.
Classification	Excused / unlawful / pending / not applicable; authorized office staff only.
Broad reason	Use only the district codebook. Do not record diagnosis, immigration information, or unnecessary case narrative.
Time	Actual arrival, departure, and minutes/periods missed.
Source	Teacher observation, family report, office verification, approved program roster, transportation, or nurse disposition.
Documentation	Not required / pending / received / reviewed.
Intervention	None / same-day outreach / Tier 2 / Tier 3 / formal referral.

Correction and appeal workflow

1. Accept the request by portal, ParentSquare, email, telephone, written form, or in person in the preferred language and accessible format.
2. Acknowledge the request and identify the date/period, current code, requested correction, and basis.
3. Review teacher records, sign-in/out logs, approved activity rosters, transportation information, nurse disposition, and relevant documentation.



4. Authorized office staff correct SAM Spectra. A post-lock change requires principal approval and district data review as assigned.
5. Retain the old value, new value, source, reason, authorizer, date, and timestamp. Never overwrite the history.
6. Notify the family of the result and appeal route within three school days when practicable; pause discretionary escalation during a timely dispute.

NO RECREATION OR BACKDATING

If a required contact, roster, signature, or referral was not completed on time, document the deficiency honestly and correct the process prospectively. Do not create a false document, alter a timestamp, or sign for another person.

Common correction examples

Situation	Required evidence and action
Approved testing or activity	Verify the authorized roster; correct the class/day record; retain old/new values, source, approver, and timestamp.
Verified late bus	Use transportation evidence and exact arrival time; correct only the affected tardy/absence field under the approved codebook.
Teacher entry error	Use the teacher's contemporaneous record and office evidence; teacher requests the change, authorized office staff completes it.
Family supplies timely documentation	Review whether the reason meets law/policy, the semester limit, and any medical-documentation requirement before changing the classification.
Post-lock or late request	Require principal/district authorization as assigned; preserve the original value and explain the reason for the delayed change.
Claim remains unsupported	Keep pending only for the reasonable review period, then classify under law/policy. Do not create or solicit a false note.



6. Tardy, Checkout, Period Attendance, and Special Settings

Actual time, approved status, and the district codebook determine the record.

Tardy and early checkout

- Arrival after 7:59 a.m. requires front-office sign-in and an official pass. The student enters instruction immediately after check-in.
- The office records exact arrival and departure times. Tardy or checkout becomes a full-day absence only when the student fails the 66% attendance rule.
- Secondary schools also track class/block absences. A student can be present for the day and absent from an individual class.
- Repeated tardy/checkout patterns trigger a barrier review and Attendance Success Plan when appropriate. Corrective responses never replace required SAO referrals.

Special-situation decision guide

Situation	Required ETSD response
Late bus / district transportation	Record actual arrival; verify route disruption; do not assign unlawful status for a verified district-caused delay; create a temporary access plan if repeated.
Nurse / health office	Teacher records departure to nurse; nurse logs disposition; office reconciles return, checkout, or approved health exclusion.
Field trip / school activity	Use authorized roster and approved activity code; do not mark absent when state rules permit present status.
Testing / district assignment	Record according to approved testing or program roster; home teacher must not mark absent merely because student is elsewhere on campus.
Out-of-school suspension / expulsion	Use the suspension/expulsion code; do not relabel as a family-caused unlawful absence. Provide a meaningful opportunity to obtain essential assignments when applicable, count missed time in chronic-absence monitoring, and report the suspension/expulsion to the SAO as required.
Alternative placement	Sending school and program reconcile daily; one verified record controls. Do not leave the student unaccounted for between locations.
Homebound / hospital instruction	Attendance follows the approved plan and state rules. Only authorized staff create the record; review services and access regularly.
Virtual / remote arrangement	Only a formally approved program may create remote attendance. Participation evidence must meet state and district requirements.
Dual credit / work-based / CTE off-site	Use the approved schedule and provider verification. Missed provider time is reconciled to the student's ETSD day/period record.
Religious observance / court	Review documentation and code under law/policy; coordinate reasonable make-up work.
Transfer / withdrawal	Nonattendance alone does not prove transfer or withdrawal. Verify the authorized exit and receiving enrollment when required; never backdate to improve data.
Emergency closure	A district-approved closure or calendar adjustment is not a student absence.
Missing student / location conflict	Activate the safety protocol immediately. Do not delay while debating the excuse or truancy classification.

CLASS CUTTING IS COURSE-SPECIFIC

Investigate safety, relationships, academic confidence, schedule, and classroom climate. Do not treat repeated class cutting only as whole-day truancy or assume the motive.



7. Same-Day Outreach and Safe Return

The first contact verifies safety and invites problem-solving; it is not a threat or legal notice.

Same-day outreach sequence

1. Verify the student is actually absent and not on a late bus, approved activity, nurse visit, schedule change, placement, or enrollment transition.
2. Call the primary caregiver in the preferred language; send a ParentSquare confirmation that protects privacy.
3. Try approved alternate contacts when the primary contact is unsuccessful. Document every attempt, time, language, channel, result, and next action.
4. Ask whether the student is safe, whether the record is correct, what is making attendance difficult, and what support could help tomorrow.
5. If facts indicate a genuine safety/welfare concern, follow the safety or mandated-reporting procedure. Absence alone is not a child-protection finding.
6. Assign one staff owner and a next contact or review date when a barrier is identified.

Same-day family script

SUGGESTED WORDING

Hello, this is [name] from [school]. We missed [student] today and want to make sure [student] is safe. Our record shows an absence from [school/class]. Is that correct? Is anything getting in the way of attendance, or is there anything we can do to support a safe return? We can communicate in the language and method that works best for you.

When a barrier is identified

- Thank the family and summarize the barrier neutrally.
- Offer the smallest useful support that ETSD can actually deliver.
- Agree on the next-school-day step and identify one staff owner.
- Avoid promising transportation, placement, services, or schedule changes that have not been approved.
- Automated messages may supplement but do not replace human contact for repeated absence, vulnerable students, or unresolved safety concerns.

Student re-entry

WELCOME-BACK WORDING

I am glad you are here. You do not need to explain your absence in front of anyone. Let's make a quick plan for what you need today and which work matters most.

- Designate a welcoming adult and private check-in location.
- Prioritize essential learning rather than assigning every missed task at once.
- Coordinate health, disability, counseling, transportation, language, safety, and basic-needs supports.
- For an extended absence, use a staged academic recovery plan and review it within two to five school days.
- Provide at least one school day to complete make-up work for each day absent unless a different reasonable schedule is communicated. Long-term assignments announced before the absence may remain due unless extended.

NO AUTOMATIC GRADE PENALTY

Attendance may affect course credit only when the District follows current law and Board policy, provides notice and due process, and considers disability and other protected circumstances. ETSD does not use the obsolete automatic F/60 attendance penalty.



8. Tiered Attendance Support

Intervention is designed to remove barriers, restore access, and improve connection - not merely generate notices.

Level	Illustrative trigger	Core response
Foundation / Tier 1	All students; generally 0-4.9% absent	Belonging, clear expectations, accurate records, easy reporting/correction, same-day notice, proactive health/transportation/basic-needs information.
Tier 2 - emerging risk	Approximately 5-9.9% absent; repeated tardy/checkout; recurring day, period, route, or course pattern	Assign a consistent adult; hold student/family conversation; assess barriers and strengths; create a 4-6 week plan; weekly check-in.
Tier 3 - chronic/intensive	10%+ absent, worsening pattern, prolonged disengagement, or major health/housing/safety/access barrier	Assign case manager; multidisciplinary review; individualized plan; cross-program coordination; weekly monitoring; community connection with consent/legal basis.
Formal/legal response	Statutory unlawful-absence threshold met	Complete required SAO referral while continuing support. Formal action does not replace ETSD's obligation to address barriers and services.

Tier 1 - universal prevention

- Greet students by name and make every return visibly welcoming.
- Explain attendance expectations, reporting, correction, health, and support options at enrollment and annually.
- Use accessible formats and qualified interpretation/translation.
- Share transportation, calendar, schedule-change, meal, health, and community-resource information proactively.
- Monitor attendance by school, grade, course, day, route, and approved student group to identify systemic barriers.
- Recognize improvement, belonging, and problem-solving; avoid perfect-attendance rewards that encourage attendance while sick or stigmatize disability/access needs.

Tier 2 - targeted early intervention

1. Verify the record and pattern within two school days of the alert.
2. Assign a consistent adult point of contact.
3. Hold a student/family conversation in the preferred language and format.
4. Complete the brief barrier and strengths assessment.
5. Create a 4-6 week Attendance Success Plan with no more than two or three priority supports.
6. Check in at least weekly and review after 10 and 20 instructional days.
7. Recognize improvement, revise an ineffective plan, step down when stable, or intensify when needed.

Tier 3 - intensive coordinated intervention

- Assign one case manager so the family does not receive conflicting or duplicative contact.
- Include the student and family in a multidisciplinary review whenever possible.
- Review IEP/504/health-plan implementation, instruction and services, McKinney-Vento/foster-care needs, language access, discipline, transportation, school climate, safety, and academic access.
- Use trained home-visiting staff only under an approved safety, privacy, language, and non-intimidation protocol.
- Measure attendance, access, ETSD action completion, and student/family experience - not just notices sent.

PLAN MINDSET

Failure to meet a goal is information about the plan and barriers - not proof that a student or family is unwilling. Revise the support when the plan is not working.



9. Protected Supports, Equity, and Privacy

A protected circumstance does not erase attendance data; it changes ETSD's obligations and permissible response.

Area	Required ETSD response
IDEA / IEP	Repeated disability-related absence or avoidance may signal unmet access, service, transportation, health, behavior-support, or Child Find needs. Check implementation and refer for IEP review, reevaluation, or evaluation consideration.
Section 504 / ADA	The student may need individualized modification of attendance, make-up, schedule, or access rules. Refer to the 504 process; do not apply credit or attendance consequences mechanically.
McKinney-Vento	Housing instability may trigger immediate enrollment, school-of-origin, transportation, liaison, dispute, and privacy protections. Refer immediately; do not delay access for typical records or residency proof.
Foster care	Educational stability, best-interest, immediate enrollment, records, and transportation coordination may apply. Notify the district point of contact; do not shift interagency burdens to the caregiver.
Health / pregnancy / parenting	Balance health and safety with access. Coordinate nurse, homebound, 504/IEP, and Title IX review. Use comparable documentation standards.
Language access	Important information must be communicated in a language the parent understands. Provide qualified interpretation/translation at no cost; do not use the student or sibling for sensitive discussions.
Bullying / harassment / safety	Investigate promptly, create a safety and re-entry plan, and route Title VI/IX or other complaints. Do not label school avoidance as defiance without review.
Discipline	Review whether suspension, exclusion, placement delay, or re-entry practice contributed to missed time. Suspension remains identifiable and is not relabeled as truancy.
FERPA / confidentiality	Attendance records and reasons are protected education records. Access is role-based and purpose-limited. Keep diagnosis, housing detail, and case narrative out of routine alerts.
Due process / correction	Provide understandable notice, access to the underlying record, correction opportunity, and applicable appeal rights before major consequences.

Protected-status check before formal escalation

- Attendance, enrollment, schedule, day/period, code, and denominator accuracy.
- Notice in the preferred language and accessible format; varied two-way contact attempts.
- Student and family explanation and opportunity to correct the record.
- McKinney-Vento, foster care, IDEA, Section 504, health plan, pregnancy/parenting, language access, and transportation review.
- Bullying, harassment, mental health, safety, school avoidance, discipline, housing, food, caregiving, work, and technology barriers.
- Supports offered; ETSD commitments completed; family response; equity review; all state prerequisites.

Practices ETSD schools must avoid

- Removing a student from instruction as a routine consequence for absence or tardiness.
- Public explanations, shaming, sarcasm, automatic zeros without recovery opportunity, or exclusion from essential services.
- Perfect-attendance incentives that disadvantage health/disability/access needs or encourage attendance while contagious.
- Court, law-enforcement, child-welfare, credit-denial, retention, or withdrawal action based on unverified data or absence alone.
- Threats involving immigration, child removal, or consequences not authorized by law or policy.
- Repeated automated messages as a substitute for meaningful engagement.



10. SAO Referral and Formal Escalation

Referrals are time-sensitive legal reports supported by verified records and ongoing intervention.

Authorized referral sequence

Threshold	Required action
3 cumulative absences - any reason	No automatic SAO referral solely at this threshold. Contact family, document, begin intervention, and monitor.
5 cumulative unlawful absences	Submit referral through the MDE SAO Portal by the end of the next business day after the fifth unlawful absence becomes reportable.
8 cumulative unlawful absences	Submit a new referral with updated attendance, contacts, intervention, and barrier review.
12 cumulative unlawful absences	Submit a new referral and provide complete intervention documentation.
15 cumulative unlawful absences	Submit a new referral; review need for intensified support and all legal/protected factors.
20, 25, 30, etc.	Submit a new referral for every additional five unlawful absences.

Portal and access requirements

- Only trained, authorized ETSD personnel may submit referrals.
- Portal users must complete required MDE training, maintain MDE Guest User access, use multi-factor authentication, and protect credentials.
- The school principal remains accountable for the accuracy and timeliness of the referral even when a designee enters it.
- Save the confirmation/receipt in the controlled attendance evidence folder and record the submission date/time in the case log.
- Report student suspensions and expulsions to the SAO when they occur, using the current MDE-required method, while preserving the separate suspension/expulsion code in SAM Spectra.

Pre-referral quality gate

- Student is within compulsory-attendance coverage, unless the reporting requirement otherwise applies.
- Enrollment dates, calendar, day/period calculations, codes, and documentation are accurate.
- The unlawful count reaches the exact threshold and duplicate/referral history has been checked.
- Required family contact and school-based intervention have been documented.
- The student/family had a meaningful opportunity to explain and correct the record.
- Disability, health, homelessness, foster care, language, transportation, safety, discipline, pregnancy/parenting, and other protected factors were reviewed.
- The school considered whether its own transportation, scheduling, service, discipline, climate, or data failures contributed.
- Principal/designee approved the referral and the portal receipt is retained.

SUPPORT CONTINUES AFTER REFERRAL

An SAO referral does not close the school case. ETSD continues same-day outreach, academic recovery, barrier removal, progress monitoring, and protected-program obligations.

MANDATED REPORTING

A child-protection report must be based on facts meeting the applicable abuse or neglect reporting standard - not on absence alone. Follow the District's mandated-reporting policy and Mississippi law.



11. Roles and Decision Rights

Responsibility is assigned; no task may be assumed to belong to “someone else.”

Role	Primary responsibility
Student / family	Report absence/tardy; provide accurate information and documentation; monitor portal; participate in problem-solving. Families are not responsible for ETSD data quality or service failures.
Teacher	Record observed attendance every class/block within 10 minutes; report roster/location conflicts; submit factual correction requests; support re-entry and essential make-up work.
Substitute	Use the live roster or approved emergency roster; take attendance every assigned class/block; deliver signed emergency records to the office before leaving.
Attendance office / clerk	Reconcile rosters and time; manage intake; contact families; determine routine codes; process corrections; run alerts and exception reports; maintain case evidence.
Counselor / social worker / parent liaison	Lead barrier conversations, Attendance Success Plans, Tier 2/3 coordination, community referrals, and student re-entry support.
School nurse	Manage confidential health information; document nurse disposition; coordinate health plans, homebound/504/IEP referrals, and safe return.
Principal	Accountable for daily completion, staff compliance, code approval, interventions, protected-program review, SAO referral approval, and monthly certification.
District Attendance/Social Worker/Parent Liaison	Monitor district alerts and daily compliance, calibrate schools, support interventions, review referral quality, and report unresolved deficiencies.
SAM Data Manager / MSIS contact	Configure calendars/codes/access, support audit trails, reconcile state extracts, test calculations, and manage post-lock data controls.
Program coordinators	Complete IDEA/504, McKinney-Vento, foster care, Title IX, language access, transportation, and other required reviews.
Superintendent / designee	Approve district procedures and extenuating circumstances as authorized; resolve cross-school issues; ensure policy alignment; report to Board.
School Attendance Officer	Receives statutory referrals, performs state duties, and directs follow-up under Mississippi law. The SAO does not replace school-level intervention.

Decision-rights matrix

Activity	Responsible	Accountable
Take classroom/period attendance	Teacher/Substitute	Principal
Determine routine excuse code	Attendance Office	Principal
Approve post-lock correction	Attendance Office / Data Manager	Principal / District as assigned
Begin Tier 2 support	Counselor / Liaison / Attendance Team	Principal
Conduct protected-program review	Relevant Coordinator / Team	Principal / District Coordinator
Submit SAO referral	Authorized Portal Submitter	Principal
Approve extenuating-circumstance exception	Superintendent/designee	Superintendent
Certify monthly school data	Attendance Office prepares	Principal
Certify district/state extract	SAM Data Manager / MSIS	Superintendent/designee

ONE OWNER PER CASE

Every Tier 2 or Tier 3 case has one named staff owner, one next action, one due date, one review date, and one success measure.



12. Data Governance and Compliance Evidence

SAM Spectra is the official record; evidence supports the record and demonstrates timely action.

One authoritative attendance record

SAM Spectra is ETSD's official attendance record. ParentSquare messages, emails, telephone logs, paper notes, Google Drive files, nurse records, transportation logs, and teacher records are intake or evidence sources - not parallel attendance databases.

District attendance evidence folder

Folder	Required contents
01 Daily Exceptions	Missing rosters, present/absent conflicts, late/checkout exceptions, unresolved items, daily principal review.
02 Three-Absence Interventions	Notices, contact evidence, barrier review, owner, next action.
03 Attendance Success Plans	Tier 2/3 plans, reviews, ETSD action evidence, academic recovery.
04 SAO Referrals	Threshold calculation, referral packet, portal receipt, updated submissions.
05 Corrections and Appeals	Requests, evidence reviewed, old/new value, approval, family notice.
06 Protected-Program Reviews	Access-limited evidence or cross-reference; do not duplicate confidential IEP/504/health records.
07 Monthly Certifications	Principal certifications, audit samples, state-extract reconciliation.
08 Training and Access	Training rosters, portal access approvals, MFA confirmation, role changes, inactive-account review.

File naming and evidence standards

- Use: SCHOOL_StudentID_YYYY-MM-DD_DocumentType (example: CMS_123456_2026-09-08_3AbsenceIntervention).
- Use student ID rather than full name in filenames whenever practical.
- Scan legibly, orient pages correctly, and verify that the entire document is captured before filing.
- Store only finalized evidence; drafts belong in a working area and are not substituted for the official record.
- Do not place diagnoses, immigration information, detailed housing circumstances, or unnecessary sensitive narrative in general attendance folders.
- A legal hold, complaint, audit, investigation, or litigation notice overrides routine destruction.

Access and change controls

- Use named accounts and least-privilege access. Shared credentials are prohibited.
- Remove access promptly when staff change roles or separate from ETSD.
- Review inactive accounts and portal permissions at least quarterly.
- Post-lock changes require authorization and an immutable old/new-value audit trail.
- The Data Manager reconciles SAM Spectra totals to official state submissions before certification.
- Public and Board reporting is aggregated; never publish individual attendance cases or personally identifying narratives.

AUDIT TRUTH OVER APPEARANCE

A complete record may show a missed deadline, failed contact, or school process error. That is preferable to an inaccurate "perfect" file. ETSD uses deficiencies to correct systems, not to conceal them.



13. Metrics, Meetings, and Accountability

Data is used to trigger support and improve systems - not to blame students or families.

Measure	Definition / use
Attendance rate	Present membership days divided by enrolled membership days.
Absence rate	Absent membership days divided by enrolled membership days.
Chronic absence	10% or more of current enrolled days missed for any reason.
Rolling risk	5-day and 20-day absence rate, consecutive days, sudden change, recurring day/period/course/route pattern.
Instructional time	Tardy/early-checkout frequency and minutes; secondary period absence.
Operational quality	Roster timeliness, same-day outreach, pending-code age, correction turnaround, successful family contact.
Intervention fidelity	Plans started on time, ETSD actions completed, reviews held, interpretation/access provided.
Improvement	Attendance/access change after 10, 20, and 40 instructional days.
Equity	Rates, services, coding, and formal actions by approved student groups; investigate disparities.

District performance targets

Target	Measure
98%	Class/block attendance entered within 10 minutes.
100%	Class/block attendance entered within 20 minutes or principal escalation documented.
100%	Unexpected unreported daily absences receive same-day outreach.
100%	SAO referrals submitted by the end of the next business day at each required threshold.
< 0.5%	Attendance records remain pending beyond two school days.
95%	Tier 2 outreach begins within two school days of alert.
90%	Correction requests resolved within three school days when evidence is available.
100%	Post-lock changes contain the complete audit trail.

Meeting cadence

Cadence	Forum	Focus
Daily - 10 minutes	Office/principal exceptions huddle	Missing rosters, unaccounted students, conflicts, pending safety cases, outreach gaps.
Weekly - 30 to 45 minutes	School attendance team	New Tier 2/3 students, due actions, family/student voice, improvement, systemic barriers, referrals due.
Monthly	Principal data review and certification	School trends, subgroup patterns, code quality, correction/referral timeliness, audit sample.
Quarterly	District attendance network	Cross-school calibration, legal/policy issues, resources, SAM/state-reporting quality, equity review.
Semester	Executive / Board aggregate review	Progress, implementation, chronic absence, resource decisions; no student-level public reporting.
Annual	Policy and system audit	Codebook, access, retention, letters, training, vendors, legal updates, contact accuracy.

CASE-MEETING CLOSE

Every discussion ends with verified facts, barrier hypothesis, student/family perspective, smallest useful action, owner, due date, review date, and success measure.



Audit controls

- Daily: missing rosters, invalid states, present/absent conflicts, unlocated students, outreach gaps, impossible times, and referral deadlines.
- Weekly: aged pending/other/unknown codes, unusual class patterns, late corrections, consecutive absence, withdrawal/attendance conflicts, and intervention due dates.
- Monthly: principal certification, membership/calendar reconciliation, sample documentation-to-code match, state-extract comparison, post-lock overrides, and subgroup review.
- Quarterly/annual: role-based access, inactive accounts, change-log samples, vendor/data-sharing agreements, retention/legal holds, translation/accessibility, statutory notices, and equity outcomes.

WRITTEN REDUCTION-PLAN TRIGGER

If any school exceeds a 10% chronic-absence rate for a grade level or student subgroup, ETSD prepares a written reduction plan with evidence-based practices, implementation timeline, family/community engagement, and progress metrics; submits it to the Board; and posts it on the district website.



14. Communication Standards and Scripts

Supportive outreach and formal legal notices are separate communications with different purposes.

Communication standards

- Lead with care, belonging, accuracy, and connection to learning.
- State dates, counts, and the enrolled-day denominator; explain whether the measure includes all absences or only unlawful absences.
- Offer a correction route, language assistance, accessible format, and workable meeting method/time.
- Ask open questions and avoid labels such as “noncompliant,” “lazy,” “bad parent,” or “does not value education.”
- Separate supportive messages from legally required notices and limit voicemail/text details to protect privacy.
- Record the preferred language, channel, names, relationship terms, and best contact time.

3-absence early-support notice

TEMPLATE

We care about [student] and want [student] connected to school and learning. As of [date], [student] has been enrolled for [number] school days and has missed [number] days, or [percentage]%. This total includes excused and unlawful absences for early support. Please tell us if the record is wrong or if health, transportation, housing, caregiving, school climate, academics, or another issue is making attendance difficult. Contact [name/role] at [contact]. Language assistance and accessible meeting options are available.

Attendance planning meeting invitation

TEMPLATE

We would like to meet with you and [student] to build a practical attendance support plan. We will review the record, hear your perspective, identify barriers, and agree on supports and next steps. The proposed meeting is [date/time/method]. You may request an interpreter, accessible format, different time, phone/video option, or support person. Contact [name] at [contact].

When a family is frustrated

SUGGESTED WORDING

I hear that previous contacts felt blaming or did not address the problem. I am sorry that was your experience. Let's slow down, correct anything that is wrong, and focus on the support that would make the greatest difference now.

Record-correction acknowledgment

TEMPLATE

We received your request to review [date/period/status]. We will compare the attendance record with the available classroom, sign-in/out, transportation, activity, and other relevant evidence. We will notify you of the result and any appeal option. Discretionary escalation related to the disputed record will pause while the timely review is pending.

STATUTORY LETTERS REQUIRE APPROVAL

Do not alter or improvise state-required notice, court, credit, retention, or withdrawal language. Use only the current district-counsel/MDE-approved template and retain proof of delivery.



15. Training and 30-Day Launch Plan

This playbook becomes effective through role clarity, live practice, daily monitoring, and documented correction.

Role-based training minimums

Audience	Minimum	Core content
Teachers and substitutes	45 minutes	Every-class attendance, 10-minute deadline, 7:59 procedure, roster errors, missing-student safety, factual corrections, re-entry/make-up work.
Attendance office / clerks	90 minutes	Morning reconciliation, time calculations, excused/unlawful rules, documentation, coding, corrections, ParentSquare/phone logs, thresholds.
Counselors / liaisons / nurses	90 minutes	Barrier assessment, Tier 2/3, protected-program routing, confidentiality, success plans, re-entry.
Principals / assistant principals	2 hours	Legal thresholds, supervisory controls, referral approval, equity/rights review, audits, certification, policy conflict.
Portal submitters / data staff	MDE requirement plus district lab	MDE Guest User, MFA, SAO Portal, threshold calculations, receipts, SAM/state reconciliation, post-lock controls.

Scenario practice before authorization

- Late bus and after-7:59 arrival.
- Substitute with roster-access failure.
- Field trip/testing student marked absent.
- Three cumulative absences with transportation barrier.
- Fifth unlawful absence and next-business-day portal deadline.
- Medical documentation after the third illness absence.
- Housing instability / immediate McKinney-Vento referral.
- Incorrect period absence and post-lock correction.
- Suspension, homebound, dual-credit, and transfer/withdrawal edge cases.

30-day district launch

Phase	Deliverable
Days 1-3 - Authorize	Issue Superintendent directive; distribute controlled copy; identify school owners and portal submitters; verify JBD amendment agenda; confirm ParentSquare/SAM access.
Days 4-7 - Configure	Test calendars, 66% calculations, codes, 3/5/8/12/15/+5 alerts, chronic 10% report, exception reports, folder access, templates, and school contacts.
Days 8-10 - Train	Complete role-based training and scenario checks; obtain sign-in/competency evidence; correct access problems.
Days 11-15 - Live audit	Run daily compliance huddles; audit every late roster, unreported absence, pending code, and referral deadline; coach immediately.
Days 16-20 - Intervention calibration	Review all Tier 2/3 cases; verify student/family voice, ETSD commitments, protected-program routing, and academic recovery.
Days 21-30 - Certify and stabilize	Complete first monthly principal certification; district sample audit; correct systemic issues; report implementation status to Superintendent.

ANNUAL RESET

Before each school year, verify law and MDE guidance, Board policy, school calendars and bells, SAM codebook, ParentSquare routes, portal access, training rosters, forms, contacts, retention, and public/family materials.



Appendix A. Daily Reconciliation Checklist

Complete each school day; principal/designee reviews the end-of-day exception queue.

- ☐ Advance family reports and approved future absences reviewed.
- ☐ Transportation alerts, activities, placements, suspensions, enrollment, and schedule changes reviewed.
- ☐ Teachers and substitutes have live roster access.
- ☐ First-period/homeroom rosters submitted within 10 minutes.
- ☐ Missing rosters resolved and noncompliance documented.
- ☐ Present/absent and student-location conflicts resolved or escalated for safety.
- ☐ Every unexpected unreported daily absence received same-day human outreach.
- ☐ Late arrivals after 7:59 have office sign-in, exact time, and official pass.
- ☐ Early checkouts have authorization, exact time, and SAM update.
- ☐ All required class/block attendance submitted and unexplained period absences reconciled.
- ☐ Approved activities, nurse visits, testing, transportation, and placements reconciled.
- ☐ Pending, unknown, other, impossible-time, and correction exceptions assigned to an owner.
- ☐ SAO thresholds checked and any due referral submitted/approved.
- ☐ End-of-day exception report reviewed by principal/designee.
- ☐ Evidence filed using district naming standard; no missing item recreated or backdated.

School / date	_____
Attendance clerk / designee	_____
Open exceptions and owners	_____ _____
Principal/designee review	Name: _____ Time: _____ Initials: _____



Appendix B. Three-Absence Intervention Record

Required at three cumulative absences, whether excused, unlawful, or combined.

Student / ID / grade / school	_____
Enrolled days / days missed / rate	_____
Absence dates and classifications	_____ _____
Record verified by / date	_____
Parent/guardian contact attempts	Date/time/channel/language/outcome: _____ _____
Student / family perspective	_____ _____
Barrier(s) identified	☐ Transportation ☐ Health ☐ Housing ☐ Safety ☐ Academic ☐ Disability/access ☐ Caregiving ☐ School climate ☐ Other: _____
School-based intervention begun	_____ _____
Owner / due date / review date	_____
Notice sent / delivery evidence	_____
Principal review	Name: _____ Date: _____ Initials: _____

THRESHOLD REMINDER

The 3-absence intervention is not the 5-unlawful SAO referral. Continue monitoring and submit the statutory referral when the verified unlawful count reaches 5.



Appendix C. Attendance Success Plan

Use for Tier 2/Tier 3 support. Limit the plan to a few high-impact actions with clear ownership.

Student / grade / school / plan dates	-----
Strengths, interests, trusted adults	----- -----
Enrolled days / days missed / rate / pattern	----- -----
Student perspective	----- -----
Family perspective	----- -----
Priority barriers	-----
Goal for next 10 / 20 days	-----
ETSD actions / owner / due date	1. ----- 2. ----- 3. -----
Student/family/partner actions	----- -----
Immediate next-school-day step	-----
Communication method / frequency	-----
Academic recovery / re-entry support	----- -----
Protected-program review / referral	-----
Review date / measures / adjustment rule	-----



Acknowledgments

Student: _____ Family: _____ ETSD: _____ Date: _____



Appendix D. Attendance Correction Request

Use for family, student, teacher, or staff requests. Preserve the original value and full audit trail.

Student / ID / school / grade	_____
Date / class or period	_____
Current status / requested status	_____
Reason / supporting information	_____ _____
Preferred contact / language	_____
Submitted by / date / channel	_____
Sources reviewed	☐ Teacher record ☐ Sign-in/out ☐ Transportation ☐ Activity roster ☐ Nurse ☐ Placement ☐ ParentSquare/call log ☐ Other: _____
Finding / rationale	_____ _____
Old value / new value	_____
Authorized by / timestamp	_____
SAM audit trail confirmed	☐ Yes ☐ No By: _____ Date: _____
Family notified / appeal route	_____



Appendix E. Outreach Log

Record only what is needed for attendance support. Sensitive details belong in the appropriate confidential record.

Date / time	Staff / channel	Language	Outcome / support / next action
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Student / ID / school: _____

PRIVACY REMINDER

Do not record diagnoses, immigration information, detailed housing circumstances, accusations, or unnecessary sensitive narrative in the general outreach log. Use neutral, factual language.



Appendix F. Tier 3 Case-Review Record

Each review ends with one smallest useful next action, one owner, one due date, and one measure.

- Is the attendance and enrollment record complete and accurate?
- What changed since the last review?
- Did ETSD complete every promised action?
- Which barriers and strengths does the student/family identify now?
- Is the student receiving required instruction, services, modifications, and transportation?
- Are discipline, course placement, safety, or school climate contributing?
- Should the case remain Tier 3, step down, or continue into a legally required process?

Student / ID / school / review date	_____
Lead contact / case manager	_____
Student/family voice	_____ _____
Barrier hypothesis / evidence	_____ _____
IEP/504/health/McKinney/foster/language /safety review	_____ _____
ETSD commitments completed?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially Evidence / due: _____
Attendance/access change	10-day: _____ 20-day: _____ Current rate: _____
Next action / owner / due date	_____
Review date / success measure	_____
Team members / signatures	_____ _____



Appendix G. SAO Referral Quality Gate

Complete before every 5/8/12/15/+5 referral. Attach or cross-reference supporting evidence.

- ☐ Verified compulsory-age coverage or other reporting applicability.
- ☐ Verified enrollment dates, calendar, schedule, attendance calculations, classifications, and exact threshold.
- ☐ Checked prior referrals to prevent duplicate or skipped threshold submissions.
- ☐ Unlawful absence dates and supporting documentation clearly identified.
- ☐ 3-absence contact/intervention and all later engagement efforts documented.
- ☐ Parent/guardian received the underlying record and correction route in an understandable format.
- ☐ Student/family perspective and varied two-way contact attempts documented.
- ☐ Meaningful supports matched to barriers; ETSD completed or documented its own commitments.
- ☐ IDEA/504/health/McKinney-Vento/foster-care/Title IX/language/safety/transportation review completed.
- ☐ Equity and least-restrictive-response review completed.
- ☐ Principal approved the referral and portal submitter is authorized/trained.
- ☐ Referral submitted by end of next business day; portal receipt saved and logged.

Student / ID / school	_____
Referral threshold / unlawful count	☐ 5 ☐ 8 ☐ 12 ☐ 15 ☐ 20 ☐ 25 ☐ Other: ____
Threshold reached date / deadline	Reached: _____ Due by: _____ Submitted: _____
Authorized submitter / portal receipt	_____
Principal approval	Name: _____ Date/time: _____ Initials: _____
District review / exception	_____



Appendix H. Attendance Evidence Folder Checklist

Use for school self-audit, district monitoring, and preparation for MDE review.

Evidence category	Required artifacts
Daily attendance	Class/block rosters; missing-roster reports; location conflicts; late/checkout logs; approved activity rosters.
Same-day outreach	Call/ParentSquare logs; preferred language/channel; outcome; safety escalation when applicable.
Three-absence intervention	Verified count; family contact; notice; barrier review; owner; intervention started.
Tier 2 / Tier 3	Success Plan; student/family voice; supports; ETSD actions; reviews; academic recovery.
Protected programs	Evidence of referral/review or confidential cross-reference; no duplicate sensitive records.
SAO referrals	Threshold calculation; principal approval; portal receipt; prior referral history; updated evidence.
Corrections	Request; sources reviewed; old/new code; authorization; timestamp; family notice.
Monthly certification	Principal certification; sample audit; SAM/state reconciliation; corrective-action log.
Training/access	Role-based training; substitute instructions; portal training/MFA; access approvals; inactive-account review.

Audit sampling questions

- Does the evidence match the SAM Spectra code and timestamp?
- Could an independent reviewer recompute the 66% day and unlawful threshold?
- Was the family contacted and supported before formal escalation?
- Did the school complete its own promised action?
- Was any document recreated, backdated, or signed by an unauthorized person?
- Were student rights, language access, disability, housing, health, safety, and other protected factors reviewed?
- Did the principal identify and correct recurring staff or system failures?



Appendix I. Monthly Principal Attendance Certification

Due to Central Office by the district-established monthly deadline.

School / month / school year	_____
Enrollment total / instructional days	_____
Attendance rate / chronic absence rate	_____
Rosters on time within 10 minutes	_____ % 20 minutes: _____ %
Unreported absences with same-day outreach	_____ / _____ = _____ %
Pending codes older than two days	_____
3-absence interventions due / completed	Due: _____ Completed: _____ Exceptions: _____
SAO referrals due / submitted on time	Due: _____ On time: _____ Late/open: _____
Correction requests / average turnaround	_____
Tier 2 / Tier 3 cases reviewed	_____
Audit sample size / error rate	_____
Staff noncompliance and corrective action	_____ _____
Systemic barriers / district support needed	_____ _____

I certify that the school's attendance records, interventions, corrections, referral history, and supporting evidence have been reviewed; known deficiencies are disclosed; and no record has been recreated, concealed, or backdated.

Principal signature / date	_____
Attendance clerk/designee / date	_____
District reviewer / date	_____



Appendix J. Substitute Attendance Quick Guide

Provide this page with every substitute assignment and emergency roster packet.

FIRST RULE

You are responsible for attendance in every assigned class or block, even when technology is unavailable. Never assume all students are present and never copy another period.

When SAM Spectra is available

1. Open the live roster and compare it to students physically present.
2. Submit attendance within the first 10 minutes.
3. Mark an unknown or missing student absent/missing; do not guess the reason.
4. Notify the office immediately about a roster error or student-location conflict.
5. Repeat for every assigned class/block.

When technology or roster access fails

1. Call the office immediately and obtain the approved emergency roster - do not create your own list from memory.
2. Record class/block, date, bell time, student status, your printed name, signature, and the time completed.
3. Send the signed roster to the office immediately after the class and before leaving the campus.
4. The attendance office enters the record with source and timestamp; the substitute does not backdate or alter SAM access.

Safety and student movement

- A student shown present but not in the room is a safety issue. Notify the office immediately.
- Do not release a student based on a phone message, text, or another student's statement. The front office handles checkout.
- A student arriving late must have an official office pass after 7:59 a.m.
- Do not publicly question a student about an absence or medical/personal reason.

Substitute name / date	_____
Teacher / room / classes	_____
Roster access issue reported to / time	_____
All rosters delivered / confirmed	☐ Yes ☐ No Office initials: _____ Time: _____



Appendix K. Special-Situation Quick Matrix

Use the district codebook and consult the principal/Data Manager when a situation is not listed.

Scenario	Required response
Verified district bus delay	Actual arrival; office pass; approved reason as applicable; no unlawful status caused by district delay.
Medical appointment	Actual time; supporting documentation; calculate 66%; coordinate make-up work.
Illness after third illness absence	Medical-provider documentation required under the current statutory rule; route sensitive information confidentially.
School activity / athletics / field trip	Authorized roster; educational activity/present code when permitted; no absence for exam-exemption purpose.
Suspension	Suspension code; instructional access and make-up; not relabeled as unlawful absence.
Anxiety / school avoidance	Private conversation; safety/mental-health review; pattern by class/time; 504/IDEA consideration; supported re-entry.
Housing instability	Immediate McKinney-Vento liaison referral; protect enrollment and transportation; do not wait for usual documents.
Caregiving / work	Listen without judgment; resource referral; lawful schedule/program review; do not promise unavailable services.
Repeated class cutting	Course-specific investigation and plan; whole-day status calculated separately.
Family declines meeting	Offer other times, methods, locations, interpretation, and a shorter conversation; continue student support.
Wrong record	Apologize for concern; open correction workflow; resolve promptly; preserve audit trail.
Transfer claimed but unverified	Maintain accurate membership until authorized exit is verified; do not backdate.
Student location conflict	Immediate safety protocol; attendance classification follows after student is located.



Appendix L. Contact and Escalation Routing

Verify names, roles, and contact details during the annual reset and whenever personnel change.

Function	Primary contact	Route
Central Office / Superintendent	Raymond Russell, Superintendent	411 East Chestnut Street, Charleston, MS 38921 662-647-5524 rrrussell@etsdk12.org
Board Clerk / Administrative Support	Monica Hall	662-647-5524 mhall@etsdk12.org
District Attendance / Social Work / Parent Liaison	Shaquita Prince	Route through Central Office; districtwide compliance and intervention support
SAM Data Manager / MSIS Primary Contact	Yarkiema Doss	662-647-5524 ydoss@etsdk12.org
McKinney-Vento / Foster Care Point of Contact	Jasmine Roberson	662-647-5524 jroberson@etsdk12.org
Special Education / IDEA	Tina Suggs / Special Education Department	Route through Central Office 662-647-5524
Section 504 / Title IX / language access / records appeal	District-designated coordinator	Route through Central Office 662-647-5524
Technology / access support	Darren Cleark, Technology Director	662-647-4643 dcleark@etsdk12.org
Charleston Elementary School	School Office	412 East Chestnut Street 662-647-2679
Charleston Middle School	School Office	1117 Oak Grove Road 662-647-2115
Charleston High School	School Office	310 North Cossar Street 662-647-5359
Alternative Learning Center	Program Office	411 East Chestnut Street 662-647-5359
School Attendance Officer	MDE-assigned SAO	Use current MDE contact roster and SAO Portal; do not rely on an outdated local list

EMERGENCY RULE

For an immediate student-location or safety concern, use the school safety/emergency protocol first. Attendance classification and routine outreach follow after the safety response is underway.



Appendix M. Legal and Operational Source Notes

This playbook is an implementation aid. District counsel and authorized program leaders should validate formal notices and policy changes.

Source	Use in this playbook
Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-91, as amended by Senate Bill 2103 (2026).
MDE implementation guidance	Mississippi Department of Education, "Important Attendance Law Updates Available for K-12 Leaders," July 27, 2026; associated SAO procedures, flow charts, and attendance playbook.
ETSD family-facing rules	ETSD Student & Family Handbook 2026-2027, Section 3, "Attendance: Every Day Matters."
ETSD policy alignment	ETSD Student Handbook Policy Alignment Memo 2026-2027; Policy JBD amendment required to remove outdated 63% and automatic F/60 language.
Federal protections	IDEA and 34 C.F.R. Part 300; Section 504/ADA; McKinney-Vento; Title IX; FERPA; applicable foster-care educational-stability requirements.
Health and attendance	Current public-health guidance and individualized school health/504/IEP/homebound decisions.

Online references

- ETSD website: <https://www.etsd.k12.ms.us/>
- MDE attendance law implementation update: <https://msachieves.mdek12.org/important-attendance-law-updates-available-for-k-12-leaders/>
- Mississippi Senate Bill 2103 (2026): <https://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2026/html/SB/2100-2199/SB2103SG.htm>
- U.S. Department of Education - Chronic Absenteeism: <https://www.ed.gov/teaching-and-administration/supporting-students/chronic-absenteeism>
- U.S. Department of Education - Student Privacy: <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/>
- IDEA regulations: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/>

LEGAL REVIEW REQUIRED

Formal statutory letters, court-referral language, credit/retention consequences, withdrawal rules, and any new policy-level requirement must be approved by district counsel and the authorized policy owner before publication or use.



Appendix N. Approval, Finalization Checklist, and Revision History

Complete before Board adoption or public distribution as a final controlled edition.

- ☐ Policy JBD amendment and locally tailored documentation/family-engagement policy adopted no later than November 1, 2026; obsolete 63% and F/60 language removed.
- ☐ Board adoption/effective date inserted and signed minutes retained.
- ☐ SAM Spectra 66% calculation and 3/5/8/12/15/+5/chronic alerts tested with sample students.
- ☐ ParentSquare routes, family notice templates, preferred-language support, and school contact information verified.
- ☐ Authorized SAO Portal submitters completed training, MDE Guest User access, MFA, and school/district folder access.
- ☐ School bells, 7:59 procedure, substitute workflow, exception reports, and monthly certification schedule published.
- ☐ District folder permissions, naming convention, retention, and legal-hold procedures verified.
- ☐ Role-based training completed and evidence retained for every campus and Central Office.
- ☐ Final DOCX/PDF accessibility, hyperlink, page-number, and print review completed.

Approval

Superintendent	Raymond Russell Signature: _____ Date: _____
Board President	Bryant Watson Signature: _____ Date: _____
Board action	Agenda date: _____ Minute reference: _____
Effective date	_____
Policy JBD revision date	_____

Revision history

Version	Date	Summary	Status
0.9	August 31, 2026	Initial general attendance playbook draft with district-confirmation placeholders.	Draft
1.0	August 31, 2026	Remastered ETSD administrative edition: Mississippi 2026 standards; SAM Spectra/ParentSquare workflows; every-block and 7:59 controls; SAO Portal; forms; audit and implementation tools.	Board review / implementation

CONTROLLED-COPY NOTICE

The district-controlled electronic copy is the official administrative edition. Printed copies are uncontrolled unless stamped with the current version and date.