Jackson-Madison County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in April	**Attendance**	**6.200**	**07/12/12**
		Rescinds: **6.200**	Issued: **11/13/08**

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement and therefore, students are expected to be present each day that school is in session.

The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program, which shall include:[1]

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
3. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license;
4. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license drops out of school;[2] and
5. Notifying the proper legal authorities when a student violates state compulsory attendance laws.

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal or his/her designee. Excused absences shall include:

1. Personal illness;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances;[3]
6. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control;
7. Parents of elementary, intermediate or middle school students will be allowed two (2) discretionary days per year; or
8. A one-day absence is provided for students when their parent or custodian is deployed into active military service. A one-day excused absence is also provided for students when the parent or custodian returns from active military service. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during the excused absences.[4]

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:[5]

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. School personnel will verify with parents/legal guardians each day the student is absent;
4. Written excuses from a parent or legal guardian are submitted for absences and tardiness;
5. The principal may require verification from an official or other source to justify excessive absences;

6. After each separate accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences, notification will be sent to parents/guardians. After ten (10) unexcused absences and every five (5) unexcused absences thereafter, notification will be sent to parents/guardians and legal authorities (juvenile judge, district attorney general, sheriff, and police chief);
7. Students who are withdrawn from school are tracked and coded correctly; and
8. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

Truancy is defined as an unauthorized absence for an entire school day, a major portion of the school day or the major portion of any class, study hall or activity during the school day for which the student is scheduled.

The Board shall determine annually and include in the school calendar a plan for using the three (3) abbreviated school days and the procedures for making up missed instructional days. In addition, the Board shall determine annually whether to use flexible scheduling for kindergarten students.

Students participating in school-sponsored activities whether on- or off-campus shall not be counted absent. In order to qualify as "school-sponsored", the activity must be school-planned, school-directed, and teacher supervised. Mass exodus or early dismissal or late arrival of all students or any segment of students shall not be permitted for any reason except for emergencies such as inclement weather or other unavoidable situations, unless instruction time is made up in full.[6]

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.[7]

ATTENDANCE POLICY SPECIFIC TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

Students under eighteen (18) years of age, who lack a diploma or certificate of graduation from high school, must be enrolled in school and making satisfactory progress in order to obtain or retain a driver's permit or license.[2] For the purposes of this section only, satisfactory progress is defined as having no more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) total unexcused absences in a semester **and** passing at least two (2) full units per semester (3 courses in middle grades).

1. Upon request, the school will provide a qualifying student with Proof of Attendance/Progress, to be presented to the Tennessee Department of Safety in obtaining a driver's license or permit.

2. Each semester the school will identify any student with more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) total unexcused absences. The school will provide notice to the parents of the student, to the Attendance Supervisor and to the Tennessee Department of Safety.

3. The school's Attendance Review Board may determine if extenuating circumstances exist beyond the control of the student, verifying that a student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to retain or obtain a driver's license or permit. For the purposes of a driver's license or permit eligibility, suspension from school, expulsion or incarceration is not a circumstance beyond the control of the student.

In order to qualify for reclaiming a suspended driver's license or permit, a student must pass at least two (2) courses or the equivalent (3 courses in middle grades) at the conclusion of a grading period.

GRADES K-8

1. Attendance records as they relate to skills mastery may be used in determining the awarding of grades or the passing of a course or promotion and retention.

2. All missed assignments or tests (whether from excused or unexcused absences) may be made up. The teacher is responsible for providing all missed assignments. The student or parent/guardian may make the request for make-up work during the period of absence, or on the day the student returns to school. A teacher's instructional time may not be interrupted by these requests; however, information regarding make-up work will be provided within two (2) days. The student will have a minimum of two (2) days per day absent to complete the make-up work.

3. Each school will establish an Attendance Review Team for intervention purposes. This team will consist of the principal (or designee), counselor, and a minimum of one teacher.

   This team will review a student's attendance record after a maximum of ten (10) absences and/or tardies and discuss intervention strategies to reduce absenteeism. When appropriate, the team will refer parents to community resources to assist in alleviating problems creating truancy.

4. Any administrative decision regarding attendance may be appealed to the director of schools and ultimately to the Board. The appeal may be made in writing to the director of schools within five (5) school days following the action or the report of the action, whichever is later.

GRADES 9 - 12

A. High School Attendance Incentives

This incentive plan allows students to be exempt from the class final exam if they have maintained a specified balance of number of absences and class average. The purpose of the plan is to ensure students maximum instruction.

1. A parent(s)/guardian(s) may decline to allow their child(ren) to participate in the incentive program by providing a letter stating that preference to the principal within the first two (2) weeks of the term.

2. **This plan is handled class by class and does not exempt the student from any End of Course Testing.**

3. • For purposes of this policy an absence is any day the student is not in a class due to an **excused/unexcused absence or suspension.**
   • School related absences (i.e. field trips) are not counted as absences for this policy.
   • In-school Suspension (ISS) is not an absence because the student is at school.
   • Three (3) tardies to a class = 1 absence.
   • Any student who misses more than eight (8) days in a semester or five (5) days in a quarter class **must pass** the final exam and have a passing average in order to earn credit for the class. This will indicate that the student has mastered the material.
   • STUDENTS WILL STILL HAVE THE OPTION TO TAKE THE EXAM IN ANY CLASS IF THEY CHOOSE TO DO SO; however, this final exam grade will not be calculated in the final course average if it lowers the final grade.

   At the end of the grading period, teachers will notify students eligible for exemption in their class by a date established by a district attendance committee.

4. Semester Classes

   A student who misses no more than:

   5 days and has an A average in a class
   4 days and has a B average in a class
   3 days and has a C average in a class would be exempt from the exam in that class.

5. Quarter Classes

   A student who misses no more than:

   3 days and has an A average in a class
   2 days and has a B average in a class
   1 day and has a C average in a class would be exempt from the exam in that class.

B. Make-up Work

All missed assignments or tests (whether from excused or unexcused absences) may be made up. The teacher is responsible for providing all missed assignments. The student or parent/guardian may make the request for make-up work during the period of absence, or on the day the student returns to school. A teacher's instructional time may not be interrupted by these requests; however, information regarding make-up work will be provided within two (2) days. The student will have a minimum of two (2) days per day absent to complete the make-up work.

C. Attendance Incentives

Students with perfect attendance will have five percent (5%) of the final exam score added to their exam grade. (Example: final exam score of 80 x 5% = 84 final exam grade.) This incentive applies to End of Course Tests and final exams.

D. Tardiness

Tardy is defined as being a late arrival or an early dismissal from a class period. Three tardies will be one absence. Students who miss more than 45 minutes of a 90 minute class will be counted absent.

E. School Related Absences

1. Students will be allowed two (2) college days to be taken at their discretion beginning the second term of the junior year. These days are excused absences. Students must have prior approval of the principal.

   In addition, during their senior year, students will be allowed to participate in the annual College/Career Day.

2. All club meetings, pep sessions, assemblies or other group meetings, workshops and athletic events will be held before school, after school or during a regularly scheduled activity period.

3. Teachers will make every possible effort to restrict field trips to the ninety-minute period in which the students are in that teacher's class.

4. Teachers will limit their requests for activities which cannot be confined to their own class time. Principals will grant approval only to those activities which are educationally sound and which must occur within the school day.

5. A teacher may request that a student be disallowed from school-related absences if the total absences for that student exceed ten (10) per term. The principal and/or his designee will determine eligibility for school-related absences after such a request is filed.

6. Students will not be penalized for absences due to school-related activities that are approved by the principal.

Legal References:

1. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.08(1)(a); TCA 49-6-3006
2. TCA 49-6-3017; TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)
3. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.03(15); TCA 49-6-2904
4. Public Acts 2006, Chapter No. 552
5. TCA 49-5-3007
6. Attendance Accounting Procedural Manual, Minimum Standards and Guidelines, State Department of Education
7. TCA 10-7-504; 20 U.S.C. § 1232g

Cross References:

Extracurricular Activities 4.300
Reporting Student Progress 4.601
Promotion and Retention 4.603
Graduation Requirements 4.605
Recognition of Religious Beliefs 4.803
Student Records 6.600