

# Lawrence County Board of Education

Monitoring:

**Review: Annually, in March**

Descriptor Term:

## **Attendance**

Descriptor Code:

**6.200**

Revised Date:

**06/26/25**

Rescinds:

**6.200**

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**06/22/23**

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The Lawrence County School System believes attendance is vital to one's educational experience and future financial earnings. Tennessee requires compulsory education for all students until their graduation. The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

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(s)/guardian(s).<sup>3</sup>

Absences shall be classified as absent. Absences are not excused or unexcused. Special arrangements should be made with the principal or his/her designee regarding an ongoing diagnosed medical issue requiring multiple absences for the student during a specified time or for the duration of the academic year. The principal may waive an absence for the following:

1. Death in the family;
2. Religious observances;<sup>5</sup>
3. Chronic illness verified by a licensed medical provider practicing in Tennessee. Pregnancy related issues, physician visits, birth are considered chronic illness.

4. Summons, subpoena, or court order;
5. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control; or
6. School endorsed activities.
7. Military events including deployment, return, special recognitions, and the like.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:<sup>6</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. A written waiver request process is publicized at each school for students and parents of chronically ill students. Parents are expected to contact the principal when a student is treated for a chronic illness.
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.
6. *Students are afforded an opportunity to make-up time for missed classes due to absences. This is to allow students who are passing, but are eligible for retention and subject failure. Attendance make-up does not remove absences from the attendance record.*

## TRUANCY

### *General*

Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be considered present for school attendance purposes. 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)/guardian(s) and the school system provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.<sup>7</sup>

### *Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan*<sup>8</sup>

#### **Tier 1**

Tier I of the progressive truancy plan shall apply to all students within the district and include school-wide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance such as, but not limited to, connecting with students and parents, creating a welcoming school climate, handouts to students and families, analyzing school and student data for attendance patterns, recognizing attendance issue early, daily announcements about good attendance, information in the newsletter/newspaper, and on social media. These supports must be published annually to parents and students prior to the start of the school year. In addition, schools will begin intervention for student absenteeism beginning with the third (3) absence.

## **Tier II**

Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the student accumulates five (5) absences where no attendance plan has been arranged with the principal of the school, but before referral to juvenile court, and includes the following:

1. A conference with the student and the student's guardian(s);
2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the Attendance Supervisor/designee. The contract shall include:
  - a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
  - b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
  - c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court; and
3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.
4. A school employee shall also conduct an individualized assessment detailing the reasons a student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.
5. Referral made to the School-Based Social Worker and/or the School-Based Therapist.

## **Tier III**

Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the student accumulates eight (8) absences and no attendance plan has been arranged with the principal of the school and shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful. Tier III shall consist of the following interventions: participation in school-based community services, a written report by the student on the causes of the truancy issues and how you are going to improve your attendance, youth mentor program, and/or before/after school detention and Saturday school when available. The interventions shall address students' needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be

approved by the Director of Schools/designee. With the variation in grade configurations, school administration has the autonomy to adjust to meet the needs of their students.

**Eight (8) absences will result in a referral to Lawrence County Juvenile Court for truancy following the implementation of all three tiers listed above.**

If Tier 2 or Tier 3 is unsuccessful with a student and the school can document that the student's parent or guardian is unwilling to cooperate with the truancy intervention plan, then a referral may be made to Lawrence County Juvenile Court without first having to implement subsequent intervention tiers, if any. Evidence that a parent/guardian is unwilling to cooperate can include, but is not limited to, a parent/guardian's failure or refusal, on multiple occasions, to attend conferences with school staff, return telephone calls, attend follow-up meetings, enter into an attendance contract, or actively participate in any of the tiers of the truancy intervention plan.

Tardiness and early checkout accumulate into days absent. Three tardies is considered an absence and three early checkouts are considered an absence unless the principal of the school has previously approved an attendance plan. Students attending school outside of their zone who become attendance or behavioral issues, may be required to attend their zoned school. A student who amasses eight (8) absences without an attendance plan on file with the administration, are subject to enroll in their zone.

**CONTINUED ABSENCES PROCEDURE OF TWELVE (12) OR MORE ABSENCES**

A student who accumulates **twelve (12)** absences where no attendance plan has been arranged with the principal of the school may lose the privilege of attending school sanctioned events, including field trips, special programs, prom, graduation, clubs and organizations, athletic participation and events and any additional sanctioned events by the school or district.

A student who accumulates **fourteen (14)** absences and no attendance plan has been arranged with the principal of the school, shall lose the privilege of attending school sanctioned events, including field trips, special programs, prom, graduation, clubs and organizations, athletic participation and events and any additional school sanctioned events. A student with fourteen (14) absences in an academic year will be petitioned to court for a second time.

A student who accumulates **ten percent (10%)** of the available school days or 17.5 days and no attendance plan has been arranged with the principal of the school shall fail the grade and subjects due to absences regardless of the academic grade earned in his/her courses. A student who fails a grade for absences shall attend summer school at his/her expense to cover the cost of additional staffing for summer school and/or repeat the grade and subjects the following year. Cost for summer school staffing will be determined at the district level. Additional consequences for students reaching and exceeding chronic absenteeism rates and failed a grade due to such is subject to restrictions by the school for the following year until the student demonstrates successful compliance with attendance requirements.

**NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY<sup>9</sup>**

A principal/designee may excuse a student to participate in non-school sponsored extracurricular activities. The principal shall document the approval in writing and shall excuse no more than five (5) absences each school year. No later than seven (7) business days prior to the student's absence, the student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation along with a written request for the excused absence from the student's parent/guardian. The request shall include the following:

1. Student's name and personal identification number;
2. Student's grade;
3. The dates of the student's absence;
4. The reason for the student's absence; and
5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.
6. The signature and approval of the student's teachers.

**RELEASED TIME COURSE<sup>10</sup>**

A principal/designee may excuse a student to attend a course in religious moral instruction for up to one (1) class period per school day. Students shall not be excused during any class which requires an examination for state or federal accountability purposes.

The student shall submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian prior to participation in the released time course. The principal/designee shall document the approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal/designee as proof of the student's participation in the released time course.

The district shall not be responsible for transporting students to and from the place of instruction.

Upon submission of the student's transcript from the entity that provided the released time course, the student may be awarded one (1) unit of elective credit. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures with secular criteria for determining whether credit shall be awarded.

**MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

School principals shall provide students with five (5) days excused absence prior to the deployment of and five (5) days excused absence upon the return of a 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.

## 1 **MAKE-UP WORK**

2 All missed class work or tests from an absence may be made up in a timely manner as determined by the  
3 school. The process will differ from school to school.

4 All missed class work or tests from an absence may be made up at the Principal's discretion.

## 5 **STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT**

6 Students who are absent the day of the scheduled TCAP/EOC exams must present a signed doctor's  
7 excuse or must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an  
8 approved absence. Students who have a pre-approved absence(s) will be allowed to take a make-up  
9 exam within the state approved testing window. Absent students with no attendance plan arranged with  
10 the principal of the school, will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC  
11 exam.

12 Students who have an absence and did not satisfy state mandated testing requirements shall receive a  
13 zero (0) on the EOC exam which shall be averaged into their final grade. Failure to satisfy state-  
14 mandated testing, may result in additional consequences by school administration.

## 15 **CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL**

16 Credit/promotion denial determinations shall include student attendance; however, student attendance  
17 may not be the sole criterion.<sup>12</sup> If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following  
18 shall occur:

- 19 1. The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be advised if the student is in danger of  
20 credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.  
21
- 22 2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

## 23 **DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION<sup>2</sup>**

24 A student who has more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) absences during any semester or  
25 cumulative for an academic year shall be ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license. The school shall  
26 report the student to the district Attendance officer who will take the necessary steps to revoke the  
27 student's driver's license or permit. Previous attendance issues in preceding grades may be considered  
28 by the student's current school before issuing attendance compliance.

## 29 **ATTENDANCE HEARING<sup>13</sup>**

30 Students with excessive absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity  
31 to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the principal. If the student/parent(s)/guardian  
32 chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided written or actual notice  
33 of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will  
34 conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist to reconsider an absence(s) or to  
35 determine if the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or be  
36 promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send written

- 1 notification to the Director of Schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action  
2 taken regarding excessive absences. The notification shall advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to  
3 appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of Schools/designee.
- 4 The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.  
5 Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's  
6 parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record.  
7 Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee.  
8 The action of the Board shall be final.

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**Legal References**

1. [TCA 49-6-3006](#)
2. [TCA 49-6-3017\(c\)](#)
3. [20 USCA § 1232g](#)
4. [TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17\(5\)](#); [State Board of Education Policy 4.100](#)
5. [TCA 49-6-2904\(b\)\(5\)](#)
6. [TCA 49-6-3007](#)
7. [TCA 49-6-3021](#)
8. [TCA 49-6-3007](#); [TCA 49-6-3009](#)
9. [TCA 49-6-3022](#)
10. [TCA 49-2-130](#)
11. [Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 401](#)
12. [TCA 49-2-203\(b\)\(7\)](#); [TCA 49-6-3002\(b\)](#)
13. [TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17\(7\)](#)

**Cross References**

School Calendar 1.800  
Extracurricular Activities 4.300  
Interscholastic Athletics 4.301  
Field Trips/Excursions/Competitions 4.302  
Reporting Student Progress 4.601  
Promotion and Retention 4.603  
Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs, & Holidays 4.803  
Voluntary Pre-K Attendance 6.2011  
Homeless Students 6.503  
Students in Foster Care 6.505  
Students from Military Families 6.506  
Student Records 6.600