

Lawrence County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in March	Descriptor Term: Attendance	Descriptor Code: 6.200	Revised Date: 06/22/23
		Rescinds: 6.200	Issued: 08/18/22

1 Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore, students are expected to be present
2 each day school is in session. The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative
3 procedures to implement this policy.

4 The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:¹

- 5 1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
- 6
- 7 2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance
8 requirements;
- 9
- 10 3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
- 11
- 12 4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or
13 reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
- 14
- 15 5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license
16 withdraws from school.²

17 Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only
18 authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information
19 without the consent of the student or parent(s)/guardian(s).³

20 Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee.

21 Excused absences shall include:⁴

- 22 1. Personal illness/injury;
- 23
- 24 2. Illness of immediate family member;
- 25
- 26 3. Death in the family;
- 27
- 28 4. Extreme weather conditions;
- 29
- 30 5. Religious observances;⁵
- 31
- 32 6. Pregnancy;

- 1
- 2 7. Summons, subpoena, or court order;
- 3
- 4 8. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the
- 5 student has no control; or
- 6
- 7 9. School endorsed activities.

8 The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:⁶

- 9 1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
- 10
- 11 2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent
- 12 for the majority of the day;
- 13
- 14 3. All student absences are verified;
- 15
- 16 4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness; and
- 17
- 18 5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

19 **TRUANCY**

20 *General*

21 Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that
22 attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled
23 school day in order to be counted present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a
24 specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be
25 considered present for school attendance purposes. If a student is required to participate in a remedial
26 instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s)
27 and the school system provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be
28 reported in the same manner.⁷

29 A student who is absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of
30 Schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's
31 absence. If a parent does not provide documentation within adequate time excusing those absences, or
32 request an attendance hearing, then the Director of Schools shall implement the progressive truancy
33 intervention plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

34 *Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan*⁸

35 **Tier 1**

36 Tier I of the progressive truancy plan shall apply to all students within the district and include school-
37 wide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. such as but not limited to,

1 connecting with students and parents, creating a welcoming school climate, handouts to students and
2 families, analyzing school's data for attendance patterns, catching problems early, daily
3 announcements about good attendance, information in the newsletter/newspaper, and on social media.
4 These supports must be published annually to parents and students prior to the start of the school
5 year.

6 Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the student accumulates five (5)
7 unexcused absences, but before referral to juvenile court, and includes the following:

- 8
9 1. A conference with the student and the student's guardian(s);
- 10 2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the
11 parent(s)/guardian(s), and the Attendance Supervisor/designee. The contract shall include:
 - 12 a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
 - 13 b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
 - 14 c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional
15 disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court; and
- 16 3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.
- 17 4. A school employee shall also conduct an individualized assessment detailing the reasons a
18 student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling,
19 community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.
- 20 5. Referral made to the School-Based Social Worker and/or the School-Based Therapist.

21
22 Tier III shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful. Tier III shall
23 consist of the following interventions: participation in school-based community services, a written report
24 by the student on the causes of the truancy issues and how you are going to improve your attendance,
25 youth mentor program, and/or before/after school detention. The interventions shall address students'
26 needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of
27 Schools/designee.

28
29 **Ten unexcused absences will result in a referral to Lawrence County Juvenile Court for truancy**
30 **following the implementation of all three tiers listed above.**

31
32 If Tier 2 or Tier 3 is unsuccessful with a student and the school can document that the student's parent
33 or guardian is unwilling to cooperate with the truancy intervention plan, then a referral may be made to
34 Lawrence County Juvenile Court without first having to implement subsequent intervention tiers, if
35 any. Evidence that a parent/guardian is unwilling to cooperate can include, but is not limited to, a
36 parent/guardian's failure or refusal, on multiple occasions, to attend conferences with school staff,
37 return telephone calls, attend follow-up meetings, enter into an attendance contract, or actively
38 participate in any of the tiers of the truancy intervention plan.

1 Tardies and early checkout accumulate into days absent. Three tardies is considered an absence. Three
2 early checkouts are considered an absence.

3 **NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY⁹**

4 A principal/designee may excuse a student to participate in non-school sponsored extracurricular
5 activities. The principal shall document the approval in writing and shall excuse no more than ten (10)
6 absences each school year. No later than seven (7) business days prior to the student's absence, the
7 student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation along with a
8 written request for the excused absence from the student's parent/guardian. The request shall include
9 the following:

- 10 1. Student's name and personal identification number;
- 11
- 12 2. Student's grade;
- 13
- 14 3. The dates of the student's absence;
- 15
- 16 4. The reason for the student's absence; and
- 17
- 18 5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.

19 **RELEASED TIME COURSE¹⁰**

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

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

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

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

31

32 **MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN⁹**

33 School principals shall provide students with five (5) days excused absence prior to the deployment of
34 and five (5) days excused absence upon the return of a parent or custodian serving active military service.

35 Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a
36 parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as

1 proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork
2 missed during these absences.

3 **MAKE-UP WORK**

4 All missed class work or tests from an excused absence may be made up in a timely manner.

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

6 **STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT**

7 Students who are absent the day of the scheduled EOC exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or
8 must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused
9 absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Excused
10 students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam.

11 Students who have an unexcused absence shall receive a failing grade on the EOC exam which shall be
12 averaged into their final grade.

13 **CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL**

14 Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance
15 may not be the sole criterion.¹⁰ If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following
16 shall occur:

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

21 **DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION²**

22 A student who has more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) unexcused absences during any
23 semester shall be ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license.

24 **ATTENDANCE HEARING¹¹**

25 Students with excessive (more than five (5) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion
26 denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the
27 principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided
28 written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee.
29 The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist to excuse an
30 absence(s) or to determine if the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass
31 the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall
32 send written notification to the Director of Schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student
33 of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise

- 1 parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of
- 2 Schools/designee.

- 3 The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.
- 4 Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's
- 5 parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record.
- 6 Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee.
- 7 The action of the Board shall be final.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-3006
2. TCA 49-6-3017(c); Public Acts of 2022, Chapter No. 878
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 49-6-3019
10. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7); TCA 49-6-3002(b)
11. 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