

Marion County Board of Education

Monitoring:

Descriptor Term:

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Attendance

6.200

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Rescinds:

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09/18/18

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement; therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. Continued unexcused tardiness and/or skipping classes/absences are considered a violation of compulsory attendance.

Only two types of absences are recognized by the Marion County Board of Education: excused and unexcused. Regardless of the reason for an absence, excused or unexcused, students are missing instruction time. Students and parents must accept full responsibility for regular school attendance by monitoring his/her excused and unexcused absences and tardies.

An absence is defined as missing more than 50% (3.5 hours) of the school day. Any student who is not in attendance during at least 50% (3.5 hours) of the school day are not allowed to participate in after school programs.

Tardiness includes late arrivals and early dismissals where the students misses less than 50% of the school day.

Chronic absenteeism includes excused and unexcused absences. Students who miss 10% or more of the school year are considered chronically absent. This is about 18 days. The state of Tennessee expects all students to maintain an attendance rate of 93%. This means that they should not miss more than 13 days per school year.

Students receiving Exceptional Education services may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan.

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

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

Excused Absences

Absolutely no absence will be excused without a parent, doctor's, dentist's, or other medical professional's note or some other form of documentation (see below).

- All excuses must be turned in within 3 days of student returning to school.
- Late check-ins and early check-outs are considered tardies. Five (5) tardies will accumulate into 1 day absent.
- Only 5 parents notes per semester (90 days) for personal illness will be accepted. Other absences for personal illness will require a doctor's or dentist's excuse.

Parent Notes:

- May be sent by email, fax, dropped off in school office, as long as the following information is included:
- Name of student, current date (within 3 days of child returning to school), date of absence, reason for absence, working phone number, and parent/guardian signature (on parent notes).
- Parent notes do not automatically “excuse” the absence for the student. All notes must meet the criteria below.

Doctor, Dentist, other Medical Professional Excuses:

- May be sent by email, fax, dropped off in school office, as long as the following information is included:
- Name of student, date and time of appointment
- Only dates specified on the note will be excused as medical
- Only doctor’s excused for the diagnoses and treatment of illnesses within the area of the doctor’s certification will be accepted
- Students who have office visits not involving an illness (ie: tests, physicals, visits to the dentist or health department) are expected to return to school and will be excused for reasonable travel time

The following shall be accepted by any certified employee of the Marion County Board of Education as an excuse for absences or tardies (late check-ins/early check-outs):

- Medical reason
 - Only five (5) days, whether consecutive or not, can be excused by a parent note in the first ninety (90) days of the school year and five (5) days, whether consecutive or not, can be excused by a parent note in the second ninety (90) days of the school year.
 - All other absences due to illness must be accompanied by a doctor’s or dentist’s excuse
- Death in the immediate family
 - Absences should not exceed three (3) days
 - Parent, guardian, step-parent, brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or any other family member that resides in the student’s house
 - Must provide obituary or funeral program
- Legal
 - Court order, attorney, subpoena, summons, truancy board, etc
 - Must provide documentation to student’s school
- Leaving for/returning from active military duty
 - Parent, guardian, sibling
 - One day excused
 - Must provide documentation to student’s school
- School Bus Transportation Issue
- Religious Observances
- School-sponsored activities or school-endorsed activities
 - Ie: college visits, field trips
- Visit to a parent/guardian during deployment cycle
 - Up to 10 excused cumulative absences per year
 - Must provide documentation to the schools as proof of parent/guardian’s deployment.

The building principal, or designee, in determining excused and unexcused absences, may use some discretion. The school office will need approved excused notes turned in and filed to aid the attendance supervisor in documenting attendance.

Make-Up Work

The length of time for completion of make-up work shall be two (2) days per day missed.

State Mandated Assessment

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

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

School Based Extra-Curricular Activities

State guidelines for students and schools say that students are expected to be in school 93% of the school year. This only allows for 13 absences per school year. Students with more than 13 absences may be denied school based extra-curricular activities (i.e.: field trips, ball games, dances, graduation activities, etc.). These decisions will be decided on a case by case basis by a school-based team comprised of Principal/Assistant Principal, school counselor, a member of the Marion County Board of Education Attendance office, teacher, and SRO.

Credit / Promotion Denial

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

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

Driver's License Revocation

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

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

Attendance Hearing

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

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

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

Unexcused Absences

- Unexcused absences are those absences which are not excused by the above criteria. If excused absences such as doctor's, dentist's, other medical professional's notes appear to be excessive (more than ten days), this may result in referral of the student to the Truancy Review Board for further review.
- **Because there are scheduled breaks throughout the year (i.e. Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break, Spring Break), family vacations and skip days will not be excused.**

Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan (3 or more unexcused absences)

Tier I: Three (3) unexcused absences

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive a letter from the Marion County Schools Attendance Office notifying them that the student has three (3) unexcused days on record from school. Letters will be mailed from the student's school by building attendance personnel.

Tier II: Five (5) Unexcused Absences

Mandatory In-School Meeting at the student's school with the following components:

1. Notification given for this meeting via letter and/or phone call. The meeting will go on with or without parent(s)/guardian(s). It is the parent's responsibility to keep current mailing address and phone number on file with the school office. Failure to provide the school with correct mailing address and phone number, not checking mail or answering phone / checking voicemail is not an excuse for missing the meeting.
2. A conference with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and student. Others in attendance may be, but are not limited to: a county wide social worker and/or Director of Attendance, assistant principal and/or principal, Juvenile Court representative, and school counselor.
Discussion of reasons for student's absences, lack of excuses, etc. This discussion may result in a referral to counseling, community-based services, or other services as needed to address the student's attendance problems.
3. A resulting attendance contract to be signed by the student; the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), principal and/or assistant principal, school counselor, social worker and/or Director of Attendance.
4. At least one follow-up contact (in person or by phone) to be scheduled (must be documented by school and/or Marion County Attendance Office).

****For students with disabilities, an IEP/504 team review should determine if the absences are a manifestation of the student's disability and, if so, are there accommodations in place to address the attendance issue.**

Tier III: Six (6) Unexcused Absences

Referral to Juvenile Court

(in attendance there may be but are not limited to: juvenile Judge, mental health and case management agencies, Juvenile Court Representative, Marion County District Attendance Office Personnel, assistant principal and/or principal, school counselor, School Resource Officer)

Notification is given for court appearance via letter from Marion County Juvenile Court. It is the parent's responsibility to keep current mailing address and phone number on file with the school office. Failure to provide the school with correct mailing address and phone number, not checking mail or answering phone / checking voicemail is not an excuse for missing a court appearance.

- Juvenile court will decide if students need additional interventions or service(s) placed in the home and/or whether petition/criminal action needs to be taken.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for any court costs.

District

Student attendance records shall be given the same 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.

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

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 person with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.

School

The principal, or designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that:

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

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

Legal References:

1. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.08(1)(a)
2. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.03(15); TCA 49-6-2904
3. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)
4. TCA 49-6-3006
5. TCA 49-6-3002
6. TCA 49-6-3007; 3008
7. TCA 49-6-3009; 3010
8. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.06(2)
9. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.08(1)(a); TCA 49-6-3006
10. TCA 49-6-3017(c)
11. TCA 10-7-504; USCA 1232g
12. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(1)(C)
13. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.03(15); TCA 49-6-2904 (b)(5)
14. Tennessee Department of Education, Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual (2017)
15. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-17
16. TCA 49-6-3017(c)

Cross References:

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