

----- Attendance and Tardies -----

Addendum in Response to Covid-19 State Definitions and Requirements

Due to Covid-19 state and health guidelines, the DESE has amended the definition of an “absence” to reflect remote, off-site and virtual learning. This definition replaces the previous definition set forth in COM-18-093 for state reporting purposes.

A student is absent if the student is not:

- 1. Present for onsite instruction provided by the district,*
- 2. Participating in a planned district-approved activity, or*
- 3. Engaged in scheduled instruction at an off-site location, including remote learning.*

ABSENCES (4.7)

If any student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan conflicts with this policy, the requirements of the student's IEP or 504 Plan take precedence.

Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Important as that is, students' regular attendance at school is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept responsibilities they will face as an adult. Interactions with other students and participation in the instruction within the classroom enrich the learning environment and promote a continuity of instruction which results in higher student achievement.

Absences for students enrolled in digital courses shall be determined by the online attendance and time the student is working on the course rather than the student's physical presence at school. Students who are scheduled to have a dedicated period for a digital class shall not be considered absent if the student logs the correct amount of time and completes any required assignments; however, a student who fails to be physically present for an assigned period may be disciplined in accordance with the District's truancy policy.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences are those where the student was on official school business or when the absence was due to one of the following reasons and the student brings a written statement to the principal or designee upon his/her return to school from the parent or legal guardian stating such reason. A written statement presented for an absence having occurred more than five (5) school days prior to its presentation will **not** be accepted.

1. The student's illness or when attendance could jeopardize the health of other students. A maximum of three (3) such days are allowed per semester unless the condition(s) causing such absences is of a chronic or recurring nature, is medically documented, and approved by the principal.
2. Death or serious illness in their immediate family;
3. Observance of recognized holidays observed by the student's faith;
4. Attendance at an appointment with a government agency;
5. Attendance at a medical appointment;
6. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal;
7. Participation in an FFA, FHA, or 4-H sanctioned activity;
8. Participation in the election poll workers program for high school students.
9. Absences granted to allow a student to visit his/her parent or legal guardian who is a member of the military and been called to active duty, is on leave from active duty, or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. The number of additional excused absences shall be at the discretion of the superintendent or designee.
10. Absences granted, at the Superintendent's discretion, to seventeen (17) year-old students who join the Arkansas National Guard while in eleventh grade to complete basic combat training between grades eleven (11) and (12).
11. Absences for students excluded from school by the Arkansas Department of Health during a disease outbreak because the student has an immunization waiver or whose immunizations are not up to date.

Students who serve as pages for a member of the General Assembly shall be considered on instructional assignment and shall not be considered absent from school for the day the student is serving as a page.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Absences not defined above or not having an accompanying note from the parent; or legal guardian; person having lawful control of the student; or person standing in loco parentis, presented in the timeline required by this policy, shall be

considered as unexcused absences. Students with ten (10) unexcused absences in a course in a semester may not receive credit for that course. At the discretion of the principal after consultation with persons having knowledge of the circumstances of unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

When a student has three (3) unexcused absences, his/her parents, legal guardians, persons with lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be notified⁶. Notification shall be by telephone by the end of the school day in which such absence occurred or by regular mail with a return address sent no later than the following school day.

Whenever a student exceeds eight (8) unexcused absences in a semester, the District shall notify the prosecuting authority and the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.

It is the Arkansas General Assembly's intention that students having excessive absences be given assistance in obtaining credit for their courses. Therefore, at any time prior to when a student exceeds the number of unexcused absences permitted by this policy, the student, or his/her parent, legal guardian, person with lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis may petition the school or district's administration for special arrangements to address the student's unexcused absences. If formal arrangements are granted, they shall be formalized into a written agreement which will include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement's requirements. The agreement shall be signed by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis, and the school or district administrator or designee.

Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.

Days missed due to out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be unexcused absences.

The District shall notify the Department of Finance and Administration whenever a student fourteen (14) years of age or older is no longer in school. The Department of Finance and Administration is required to suspend the former student's operator's license unless he/she meets certain requirements specified in the statute.

MAKEUP WORK

Students in grades K-4 will make up ALL assignments missed due to absences.

Students in grades 5-12 who miss school due to an excused absence shall be allowed to make up the work they missed during their absence. It is the responsibility of the **student** to arrange for all make-up work with his/her teacher(s). Make-up work is allowed at a rate of one day for each day missed or as required/permitted by the student's Individual Education Program or 504 Plan.

Work missed due to unexcused absences can be made up. Out-of-school suspensions are considered unexcused absences.

Work may not be made up for credit for absences in excess of the number of allowable absences in a semester **unless** the absences are part of a signed agreement as permitted by policy 4.7—

ATTENDANCE MISSED DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Mountainburg Public Schools utilizes Alternate Methods of Instruction (AMI) for up to five (5) days of cancelled classes. AMI allows students to continue learning on days when classes are interrupted due to illness, bad weather, or other extenuating circumstances. Students complete assignments made available in advance and turn them in upon the return to classes. Information about how to access assignments will be sent home and made available on the school website at www.mountainburg.org

TARDY POLICY (4.9)

Promptness is an important character trait that the District staff is encouraged to model and help develop in our students. Promptness is the responsibility of each student. Students who are late to class show a disregard for both the teacher and their classmates which compromises potential student achievement.

Grades K-4

Tardiness and Early Check Outs will be documented. After five (5) tardies or early check outs, students will be ineligible for perfect attendance and parent contact will be made by the attendance committee. Students are defined as tardy if they arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. Arriving at school after 8:15 will result in an absence for ½ day. When a student is late getting to school, they must come to the office and sign in; otherwise, they may be counted absent all day. If a student checks out of school before 3:00 p.m., he/she will be marked absent for ½ day.

Grades 5-12

Arriving late to school or to class constitutes a tardy. If a student arrives late to class, he/she must have approval from a faculty/staff member to receive an excused tardy. A student who arrives after the bell rings will be considered tardy for that period. A student who arrives more than 20 minutes late or leaves more than 20 minutes early will be considered absent for that period. When a student is late for school, they must sign in at the office; otherwise, they may be counted absent. Repeated tardies at the beginning of the school day can be construed as truancy.

Consequences for Tardies:

Tardy # 1, # 2, #3: Warning, counseled by teacher.

Tardy # 4: Teacher assigns 1 day of lunch detention

Tardy # 5: Teacher assigns 1 day of lunch detention and sends student to the Principal's office. Communication is made to parents.

Tardy # 6, # 7: Teacher assigns 1 day of lunch detention.

Tardy #8: Student receives referral and ISD. Any subsequent tardy will result in a mandatory parent conference.

CLOSED CAMPUS (4.10)

All schools in the District shall operate closed campuses. Students are required to stay on campus from their arrival until dismissal at the end of the regular school day unless given permission to leave the campus by a school official. Students must sign out in the office upon their departure. Students who are being checked out for lunch must have a parent present. Notes and phone calls will not be accepted.

OUTSIDE FOOD Food brought to school by parents can only be for their child. Because of food allergies, it cannot be shared with other students. Food deliveries in excess will not be accepted at lunch.

Parents, guardians and those listed on the student contact sheet filed in the office are allowed to eat only with their student(s). The mentioned visitors may not congregate or visit with other student(s). Visitors in the middle school are allowed to eat lunch with their student(s) but may not go to the playground with them.

----- Academic Policies and Procedures -----

EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY (4.11)

No student in the Mountainburg School District shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity sponsored by the District. The District has a limited open forum granting equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other youth groups.

Inquiries on non-discrimination may be directed to the Equity Coordinator, who may be reached at 479-369-2121 or at debbie.pinkerton@mountainburg.org. For further information on notice of non-discrimination or to file a complaint, visit; <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm>; for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

SMART CORE CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (4.45)

All students are required to participate in the Smart Core curriculum unless their parents or guardians, or the students if they are eighteen (18) years of age or older, sign a *Smart Core Waiver Form* to not participate. While Smart Core is the default option, a *Smart Core Information Sheet* and a *Smart Core Waiver Form* will be sent home with students prior to their enrolling in seventh (7th) grade, or when a seventh (7th) through twelfth (12th) grade student enrolls in the district for the first time and there is not a signed waiver form in the student's permanent record. This policy is to be included in student handbooks for grades six (6) through twelve (12) and both students and parents must sign an acknowledgement