

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023-2024

****Refer to Building Sections for additional information****

4.7 - ABSENCES

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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, whether in person or digitally, 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 synchronous digital courses shall be determined in the same manner as for District student attending courses in person.¹ Asynchronous digital courses required completion of assignments and login requirements as outlined by each instructor of the digital platform students are enrolling in for instruction. Students will have two zoom meetings that they must attend weekly and each course instructor will provide additional guidelines for attendance requirements for digital learners.

In recognition of the need for students to regularly attend school, the district's policy governing student absences is as follows.

"The public schools of any school district in the state shall be open and free through completion of the secondary program to all person in this state between the ages of five (5) and twenty-one (21) years whose parents, legal guardians, or other persons having lawful control of the persons under an order of court reside within the school district and to all persons between those ages who have been legally transferred to the district for educational purposes".

Procedures listed below will be followed concerning absences from school in the Greene County Tech School District unless there are extenuating circumstances that warrant other actions. Procedures listed below will be followed concerning absences from school in the Greene County Tech School District unless there are extenuating circumstances that warrant other actions.

Each student will be allowed a maximum of six (6) excused absences per semester. The first (6) may be excused parent/professional notes. After six (6) absences, a professional note will be accepted for the following reasons:

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. Professional notes may include:

1. The student's illness or when attendance could jeopardize the health of other students. A maximum of six (6) 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
2. Death or serious illness in their immediate family;³

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;⁴
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 wavier or whose immunizations are not up to date.⁵
12. Absences due to conditions related to pregnancy or parenting, including without limitation:
 - Labor, delivery, and recovery;
 - Prenatal and postnatal medical appointments and other medically necessary, pregnancy-related absences;
 - The illness or medical appointment of a child belonging to a parent who is enrolled at a District school;
 - A legal appointment related to pregnancy or parenting, including without limitation:
 - Adoption;
 - Custody; and
 - Visitation;
 - A reasonable amount of time to accommodate a lactating student's need to express breast milk or to breastfeed the student's child on the District's campus; and
 - At least ten (10) school days of absences for both a parenting mother and a parenting father after the birth of a child.⁶

Students who are assigned in school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.

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.⁷

Up to one (1) time during each scheduled election, a student shall not be considered absent from school for the time the student accompanies the student's parent when the parent is exercising the parent's right to vote in a scheduled election.

In order for the absence to be considered excused, the student must:

- a. Bring a written statement to the principal or designee upon the student's return to school from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence;
- b. If the student is attending the District's courses digitally, upload a written statement from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence through the District's digital course management platform for review by the principal or designee, or
- c. Provide documentation as proof of a student's participation in an activity or program scheduled and approved by the 4-H program that is scheduled by a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity of program.

A written statement presented or uploaded for an absence having occurred more than two (2) school days (48 hours) prior to its presentation or upload will not be accepted.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF ABSENCES:

1. Must be in written form and delivered to the homeroom teacher/principal's office within 48 hours of the students' return to school (telephone calls regarding absences will not be accepted as documentation).
 2. Documentation from a doctor, dentist, psychological counselor, or legal appointment must specify the time of the appointment. If the student is able to return to school on that day, such absences may be considered excused for a partial day but not for an all-day absence.
 3. If a chronic illness or situation exists which will require excessive absenteeism, a professional letter with a descriptive explanation will need to be provided at the beginning of each school year.
 4. If it is discovered that documentation from a professional has been altered, the day(s) in question will be considered UNEXCUSED and the proper authorities will be notified.
- ANY ABSENCE NOT DESCRIBE ABOVE OR DOES NOT MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE DEFINED AS UNEXCUSED.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Absences that are not defined above do not have an accompanying note from the parent or legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, person standing in loco parentis, the student's treating physician, or a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program; or have an accompanying note that is not presented or uploaded within the timeline required by this policy, shall be considered as

unexcused absences. Students with (13)⁸ 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 the unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

Students who are suspended out of school (or if an absence is determine unexcused based on absence guidelines) then students will NOT be allowed to make up work. Work missed while a student is expelled from school may NOT be made up for credit.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances as described above, the following notifications will be made to parents/legal guardians, persons with lawful control of the student or person standing in loco parentis:

1. Days missed due to expulsion or out-of-school suspension.
2. On the sixth (6th) absence, the principal's office will contact the parent by regular mail.
3. On the ninth (9th) absence, a letter will be sent by the principal's office by regular mail and or the school's social worker will contact the parent/guardian by telephone or through a home visit regarding excessive absenteeism.
4. On the tenth (10th) absence, a certified letter may be sent by the principal's office and the school's social worker will conference with the student and or parents/guardians.
5. When a student exceeds ten (10) absences in a semester, the student will be referred to the Building Intervention Committee (SAT TEAM).
6. After the 11th absence, the school will report excessive absenteeism to the court system through a family in Need of Services (FINS) action in circuit court. This provides the court time to instruct the student not to miss any more days of school.

Absences not defined above or not having an accompanying note from the parent or legal guardian, persons with lawful control of the student or person standing in loco parentis shall be considered as UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. At the discretion of the principal after consultation with persons having knowledge of the circumstances of the unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Parents, legal guardians, person with lawful control of the student or person standing in loco parentis will be notified that the students with 13 unexcused absences in a course in a semester shall not receive credit for that course and the student will received an F on his/her permanent record. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.¹¹

Days missed due to out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be unexcused absences.¹¹

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.¹⁰

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 code.

(The student's parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as authorized under subdivision (a) (6) (A) of this section [9(a) (5) (A) of 6-18-222] but not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) plus costs of court and any reasonable fees assessed by the court.

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-4-302, A.C.A. § 6-18-209, A.C.A. § 6-18-213, A.C.A. § 6-18-220, A.C.A. § 6-18-222, A.C.A. § 6-18-229, A.C.A. § 6-18-231, A.C.A. § 6-18-234, A.C.A. § 6-18-235, A.C.A. § 6-18-507(g), A.C.A. § 6-18-702, A.C.A. § 6-28-114, A.C.A. § 7-4-116, A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f), A.C.A. § 27-16-701; Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules governing Distance Learning

(Includes old school board policy JB, JBD, JBE)

Date Adopted: June 2007

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