

## 4.7—ABSENCES

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 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. 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; 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 seven (7) 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.

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 notified. 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 seven (7) 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.

Cross References:       4.8—MAKE-UP WORK  
                              4.57—IMMUNIZATIONS

## 5.11—DIGITAL LEARNING COURSES

Legal References:      A.C.A. § 6-4-302  
                                 A.C.A. § 6-18-107  
                                 A.C.A. § 6-18-209  
                                 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. § 6-18-507(g)  
                                 A.C.A. § 6-18-702  
                                 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 and  
                                 Digital Learning

Date Adopted: 7-10-2014

Last Revised: 7-9-2020

### **4.7A Absences**

Students in programs off-campus who only attend half a day of school on our campus will follow the policies set forth but they will apply to the periods on campus at Magazine Schools. (For example: a student is allowed six (6) unexcused absences before they lose credit per class; a parent note, therefore, excuses eight (8) class periods for a day missed for a typical student. For a WATC student it will cover the four periods they are on our campus.)