

Cocke County Board of Education

Monitoring:

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Descriptor Term:

Attendance

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

The Attendance Supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:¹

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 student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.²

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of 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(s)/guardian(s).³

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee. Excused absences shall include:⁴

1. Personal illness/injury;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances;⁵
6. Pregnancy;

7. School endorsed activities;
8. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
9. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control.
10. Five parent notes per year will be accepted from the parent/guardian, but used by the school system if necessary, to excuse the first accrued absences not covered by the reasons listed above.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:⁶

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 are submitted for absences and tardiness; and
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

TRUANCY

Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be considered present for school attendance purposes. 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)/guardian(s) and the school district provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.⁷

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

*Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan*⁸

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy intervention plan will be implemented.

Tier I

Tier I of the progressive truancy intervention plan shall include the following:

1. Letters to all students at the beginning of each school year;
2. Letter, call or some form of communication to student, parent or guardian when three unexcused absences occur.
3. Letter, call or some form of communication to student, parent or guardian when four (4) unexcused absences occur.
4. Letter, call or some form of communication to student, parent or guardian when five (5) unexcused absences occur.

Tier II

Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall include, but are not limited to the following:

At the fifth unexcused absence, the attendance clerk calls student into office to talk to student about absences and gives them three (3) days to have parent, guardian, or other person in parental relation to contact school to set up a parental conference, or a conference call meeting in which the parent and student are able to meaningfully participate.

1. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and an attendance supervisor or designee. The contract shall include:
 - a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student.
 - b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
 - c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court; and
 - d. Give parent a copy of the contract and attendance report
3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.

Under this tier, a school employee shall conduct an individualized assessment detailing the reasons a student has been absent from school. The employee may refer the student to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

(Family Resource, Coordinated Health School Nurse, RTI, etc.)

4. If a student does not show up for the conference:

5. After at least two attempts to meet with the student the student will be subject to Tier III

Tier III

This tier shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful.

Truancy Board referral

These interventions shall be determined by a team, (Truancy Board) formed by the district. The interventions shall address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be (Truancy Board). approved by the Director of Schools/designee.

Make referral to TN Dept. of Children's Services FCIP (if needed).

Make referral to any other community-based services (if needed).

Contract will be aimed at addressing student's attendance problems.

1. If a student or parent does not show up for the Truancy Board:

After at least two attempts to meet with the student or parent the school may document that the student's parent or guardian is unwilling to cooperate in the truancy intervention plan. The director of schools or designee may report the student's absences to the appropriate judge.

If student, parent/guardian fails to comply with Tier III:

1. Referral to Juvenile court

2. Accompanied by a statement from the student's school certifying that the school applied the progressive truancy interventions adapted to the student, and the progressive truancy interventions failed to meaningfully address the student's school attendance.

Truancy Board will examine any available information and afford the student and parent/guardian the opportunity to enter an attendance contract with them.

Transfer Students and Truancy Tracking

The district shall request attendance records for students enrolling after the start of the school year from the previous public school district. Unexcused absences accumulated at a previous district for the current school year shall be factored into the student's placement on the truancy intervention plan tiers, if applicable.⁹

NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY¹⁰

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

1. Student's name and personal identification number;
2. Student's grade;
3. The dates of the student's absence;
4. The reason for the student's absence; and
5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.

RELEASED TIME COURSE¹¹

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

Students shall only be permitted to attend courses provided by entities that certify in writing that they have complied with the background check requirements outlined in state law.¹² The student shall submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian prior to participation in the released time course. The principal/designee shall document the approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal/designee as proof of the student's participation in the released time course.

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

Upon submission of the student's transcript from the entity that provided the released time course, the student may be awarded one-half (1/2) unit of elective credit.

The Director of Schools shall develop procedures with secular criteria for determining whether credit shall be awarded.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during absences. Make-up work should be completed in a time period designated by the teacher and noted in the course syllabus posted on the school website. The time allowed for make-up work will be no less than 5 school days. The building administrator may modify extenuating circumstances.

1 STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT

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

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

8 CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL

9 Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance
10 may not be the sole criterion.¹³ If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following
11 shall occur:

- 12 1. The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be advised if the student is in danger of
13 credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism; and
14
- 15 2. Procedures in due process will be made available to the student when credit or promotion is
16 denied.

17 DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION²

18 More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any
19 semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license or to obtain such if of age, and
20 is dropped from enrollment. In order to qualify for reclaiming a permit or license, student must be
21 enrolled in school, maintain attendance requirements, and cooperate with the Tennessee Department of
22 Safety.

23 ATTENDANCE HEARING¹⁴

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

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

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2 Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's
3 parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record.
4 Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee.
5 The action of the Board shall be final.
- 6 The Director of Schools/designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and
7 disseminated to all students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrative staff.

Legal References

1. [TCA 49-6-3006](#)
2. [TCA 49-6-3017\(c\)](#)
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. [Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 844](#)
10. [TCA 49-6-3022](#)
11. [TCA 49-2-130](#)
12. [TCA 49-2-130\(i\)](#)
13. [TCA 49-2-203\(b\)\(7\)](#); [TCA 49-6-3002\(b\)](#)
14. [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
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Student Records 6.600