

ATTENDANCE POLICY

A.C.A. 6-18-202 Age and residence for attending public schools

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

Compulsory Attendance Policy

Every parent, guardian, or other person having custody of any child age five (5) through seventeen (17) on or before August 1 of that year who resides, as defined by policy within the District shall enroll and send the child to a District school with the following exceptions.

1. The child is enrolled in private or parochial school.
2. The child is being home-schooled.
3. The child will not be age six (6) on or before August 1 of that particular school year and the parent, guardian, or other person having custody or charge of the child elects not to have him/her attend kindergarten. A kindergarten waiver form prescribed by regulation of the Department of Education must be signed and on file with the District administrative office.
4. The child has received a high school diploma or its equivalent as determined by the State Board of Education.
5. The child is age sixteen (16) or above and is enrolled in a post-secondary vocational-technical institution, a community college, or a two-year or four-year institution of higher education.
6. The child is age sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) and has met the requirements to enroll in an adult education program as defined by A.C.A. § 6-18-201 (b).

Students should attend school unless illness or extenuating circumstance justifies an absence. Students are required to maintain prompt and regular attendance in accordance with school policy. Parents have the responsibility to monitor attendance and to familiarize themselves with policies pertaining to the educational program of the school.

Tardies

Elementary and Middle School late arrivals must be accompanied by the parent/guardian to be signed in. High school students that arrive 5 or more minutes late to school must sign in at office and bring a note from parent/guardian or staff member with reason for tardiness. Those who do not have a note or pass will be given an unexcused tardy.

Absences

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

Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Regular attendance at school is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept responsibilities they will face as adults. Interaction 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.

Excused Absences are defined as follows:

1. Those where the student was on official school business;
2. The absence was due to illness or a reason mentioned below, and the student brings a written statement to the principal from the parent or legal guardian within 2 days of the absence and stating such reason.;
3. If the student's illness could jeopardize the health of other students
4. Head lice infestation is excused for one day per occurrence;
5. Death or illness in the immediate family (immediate family members are student's spouse, child, parent or relative living in the same residence);
6. Observance of recognized holidays observed by their faith;
7. Attendance at an appointment with a government agency;
8. Attendance at a medical appointment;
9. Participation in an FFA, FHA, or 4-H sanctioned activities;
10. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal;
11. Participation in the election poll workers program for high school students;
12. 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;
13. 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);
14. 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;
15. Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.

16. High School Juniors and Seniors will be allowed 3 days excused absences to visit prospective colleges.

If the School Nurse has issued a recommendation for an excused absence from classes for the day, the same restriction shall prevail at night. In cases of extreme emotional distress, the Counselor may excuse absences, at which time the same restriction shall prevail at night.

Unexcused Absences

Absences not defined above or not having an accompanying note, e-mail, text, or telephone call from the parent or legal guardian to the school secretary, presented within 2 days of the absence, shall be considered unexcused absences. **The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed by ASD is ten (10) per semester.**

Students who miss up to three (3) unexcused days within a school year will have their parents/guardians contacted by the school. The office will notify the parents/guardians after the first unexcused absence.

The school counselor may be contacted to offer help to the student and/or student's parent or guardian; however, the office and building level administrator will be responsible for contacting the parent once the maximum number of absences have been accumulated.

When a student has had five (5) unexcused absences in a school year, the student is identified as a Chronic Truant and the student's attendance records will be flagged (CT). A letter will be sent from the school office to the parent notifying them of their child's absences and making them aware that on the 10th unexcused absence a FINS petition could be filed with the appropriate authorities. Teacher of Record will call a meeting to discuss attendance concerns along with parents/guardians and school personnel.

When a student has five (5) unexcused absences which is half the total unexcused absences permitted per semester, his/her parents, guardians and the student's LEA shall be notified. Notification shall be by telephone by the end of the school day in which such absence occurred or by regular mail sent no later than the following school day. School personnel will continue to work with the student and family to correct the attendance problem.

Excessive Unexcused Absences

When a student has had ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year, the student is identified as a Habitual Truant and the student's attendance records will be flagged (HT). If a student is enrolled in the Middle School or High School and is under the age of eighteen (18), the child will be referred to truancy court for a violation of compulsory school attendance. Students who are

determined to be in violation may be placed on probation by court and will be monitored more closely by the school counselor. If a student violates the terms of probation, the student will be referred back to court for additional action.

During any stage, the school counselor, designee, and administration are encouraged to work with families to remove barriers that prevent regular school attendance.

For anyone currently in high school, the course audit will be applied upon the student; should he/she miss at least 10 school days. The office will notify the parents/guardians every time once he/she misses school after the 5th absence.

When a student exceeds ten (10) unexcused absences in a semester, the district shall notify the student's parent and the student's LEA who will notify the local prosecuting authority, and the parent or guardian shall be subject to a civil penalty through a family in need of services (FINS) action in circuit court not to exceed \$500 plus cost of court and any reasonable fees assess by the court.

Students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences in a course in a semester may fail to 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.

At any time prior to a student exceeding the number of unexcused absences permitted by this policy, the student, or his/her parent or guardian 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 or guardian and the district administrator or designee.

Students receiving suspension will be charged with unexcused absence for the number of days serving out of school suspension.

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

Course Audit Policy

The maximum number of excused and unexcused absences allowed per class is 10 for classes that meet daily. A letter will be sent home after the 5th absence in a semester to notify parents/guardians that their son/daughter is reaching the maximum allowed by the Arkansas

School for the Deaf Attendance Policy. Subsequent letters will be sent home for every absence. After the 10th absence, a staffing will be called by the Teacher of Record. Student may be placed in audit status for the course(s) that apply. When a student is placed on audit status, he/she may not receive a credit at the end of the semester for that class. In instances where a student's excessive absenteeism is due to reasonable causes, i.e., serious/prolonged illness, serious/prolonged injury, family emergency, etc., the student will not be placed on audit status. However absences will still be monitored. A combination of absences due to non- school related reasons which cause the student to exceed the maximum allowed by this policy will result in the student being placed on audit status.

Absences for School Sponsored Activities

A student may be excused for school-sponsored activities. These absences are not recorded as an absence from school and the student has the right to complete all assignments made during his/her absences. Assignments must be completed within a reasonable time period as determined by the instructor of any classes missed.

No student may participate in any school activity (athletics, concerts, plays, etc.) or practice for such an event on a day when the student was absent for more than 2 periods. There may be extenuating circumstances for more than one-half day. This absence will be evaluated by the principal before the student can be declared an eligible participant of the school activity.

Absences for Medical Reasons

Act 1223 does not prohibit students from missing school for medical or dental treatment. If a student's treatment will require excessive absences, the student's parent or guardian may petition the school administration for special arrangements to address the student's absences. The petition must be made before the student accumulates the maximum number of absences (16) allowed under the policy; and allow exceptions as necessary to satisfy an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This policy will allow a student having excessive absences because of illnesses, accident, or other unavoidable reasons be given assistance obtaining credit for enrolled courses.