

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ATTENDANCE POLICY

CHANGE 1. Remove “Absentee Procedures for Five (5) or Fewer Parental Notifications” and “Absentee Procedures After Five (5) Parental Notifications” down to line 18 (p.2) of the current policy. Replace with:

Excused/Unexcused Absences

Absences from school shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the school principal or his/her designee. For students in grades K-8, schools will accept five (5) parental notes per school year for excused absences without third (3rd) party confirmation. Due to block scheduling for students in grades 9-12, schools will accept three (3) parental notes per semester for excused absences without third (3rd) party confirmation. Once the above applicable limits have been reached, absences will only be excused if corroborated by a third (3rd) party, *i.e.*, doctor’s statement, funeral home director, court, etc.

Acceptable third party documentation shall include:

1. A funeral home statement in the event of a death of a parent, guardian, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or any member of the immediate household;
2. A doctor’s statement written due to the student’s personal illness, hospitalization, or appointment;
3. A doctor’s statement verifying the student’s need to miss due to the illness or confinement of a parent, guardian, or sibling;
4. Corroboration from a court official due to a court appearance;
5. A written statement from a church leader in the event of a church trip or religious observance¹; or
6. Documentation affirming a parent/guardian is being deployed (one day) into active military service or returning (one day) from active military service.²

The principal or his/her designee shall also excuse absences due to:

1. Failure of the bus to make its route due to weather conditions or mechanical problems;
2. Circumstances, which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control; and
3. School trips, contests, conventions, 4-H Club activities, or competitive events.

Change #2. Modify the “Time-for –Time Requirements for Students in Grades 9-12” to the following:

Time-for-Time Requirements for Students in Grades 9-12:

Students on block scheduling complete courses in one (1) semester; therefore, attendance is crucial to academic success. An Attendance Point System shall be developed and implemented,

¹ TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.03 (15); TCA 49-6-2904

² TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.06(2)

as set forth below, and any student in grades 9-12 who accumulates more than fifty (50) points cannot receive credit for his/her courses unless he/she makes up the excess days on a time-for-time basis.

The Director of Schools and/or his/her designee shall develop an Attendance Point System and implement procedures that will assign point values to various types of absences. In addition, procedures shall be developed and implemented to allow opportunities for students to make up accumulated points. The Attendance Point System and procedures shall be reviewed annually and disseminated to parents and students through the student handbook, System website, and other relevant means.

Students who are denied credits for failure to comply with this policy shall not be permitted to attend summer school.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the director of schools on a case-by-case basis.

Change # 3. Alter the ‘Attendance Hearing’ section to the following:

ATTENDANCE HEARING

Grades K-8:

An attendance committee appointed by the principal will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist or to verify that the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted.³ The principal shall be responsible for notifying, in writing, the director of schools and/or his/her designee and the parents of the student of any action taken by the school.

Grades 9-12:

An attendance committee made up of the principal, the attendance supervisor, and the supervisor of instruction for grades 9-12 will conduct a hearing upon the request of the parent or student to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist to justify a full or partial exemption from the time-for-time provision of the attendance policy. The attendance supervisor shall be responsible for notifying, in writing the director of schools and/or his/her designee and the parents of the student of any action taken by the committee.

Any administrative decision regarding attendance may be appealed initially to the director of schools and ultimately to the Board. The appeal shall be in writing to the director of schools within five (5) days following the action or report of the action, whichever is later.

³ TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)