

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1. GENERAL

The Fayette County Board of Education believes that regular attendance is important for students and to the School District. Regular attendance by students facilitates development of the skills and knowledge necessary to function in a democratic society. Therefore, the Board endeavors to secure, in compliance with Alabama law, the prompt and regular attendance of students and to secure their proper conduct, and to hold respective parents and guardians responsible and liable for a child's/children's non-attendance or improper conduct.

2. REQUIRED TO ATTEND/COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Every child between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) must attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term except that every child attending a church school is exempt from the requirements of the *Code of Alabama (1975) 16-28-3*, provided such child complies with the enrollment and reporting procedure specified in the *Code of Alabama (1975) 16-28-7* of the code. **It is the policy of the Fayette County Board of Education that children enrolled in a private school, church school, or instructed by a private tutor must provide appropriate documentation to the Superintendent within 10 days after the beginning of school or upon withdrawal from school or upon residency in Fayette County.**

3. EXPLANATION REQUIRED

Every parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child required to attend public school, private school, or church school, shall as soon as practical explain the cause of any absence of the child under his control or charge which was without permission of the teacher. Failure to furnish such explanation shall be admissible as evidence of such child being a truant with the consent and connivance of the person in control or charge of the child, unless such person can show to the reasonable satisfaction of the court that he had no knowledge of such absence and that he had been diligent in his efforts to secure the attendance of such child. *Code of Alabama (1975) 16-28-15*

A good cause or valid excuse, as used in this section, exists when on account of sickness or other condition attendance was impossible or entirely inadvisable or impracticable or when, by virtue of the extraordinary circumstances, the absence is generally recognized as excusable. *Code of Alabama (1975) 16-28-13*

4. ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Roll will be checked daily and each absence recorded. Students must be in attendance one-half of the instructional day to be counted and reported present as specified in the *Code of Alabama (1975) 16-28-8*. Students are not permitted to be absent from school without a valid excuse. Absences will be designated as excused or unexcused.

- a. **Excused Absences** - will be permitted for the following reasons:
 - Personal illness
 - Hospitalization

Emergency
Death in immediate family
Court subpoena
Religious holidays
Absences approved by the principal

b. Excuses

Documentation supporting an excused absence must be submitted within three (3) days after the student returns to school or the absence will be deemed to be unexcused. (*FCBOE Policy 6.1.4*)

Only five (5) parent notes will be accepted each semester as a valid excused absence. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a loss of academic credit or referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation.

c. School Participation Absences

Students who are away from school because of participation in official school-sponsored activities shall be marked present and allowed to make up missed work.

Students who are absent from school for an excused or unexcused reason shall not participate in any school extracurricular or co-curricular activities that day (athletic contest, cheerleading, scholars bowl, etc.).

d. Make-up Work – Excused Absences

If a student is absent for any excused reason as defined above, the student shall be allowed to make up school work missed during said absence or absences. The student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher or teachers to arrange for make-up work. Said student shall contact the teacher or teachers to make up work within three (3) days after returning from said absence.

5. TRUANCY REPORTING

Truancy Definition

A parent, guardian, or other person having charge of any child officially enrolled in Alabama public schools (K-12) shall explain in writing the cause of any and every absence of the child no later than three (3) school days following return to school. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant each day he is absent. Seven (7) unexcused absences within a school year constitute a student being truant for the purpose of filing a petition with the Court. The Interagency Committee on Youth Truancy Task Force recommendations known as the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program timeline for reporting truancy shall define the truancy status of any student as follows:

a. 1st Truancy/Unexcused Absence (warning)

- 1) Parent/guardian shall be notified (**by letter**) by the school principal or his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the truancy.

- 2) Parent/guardian shall also be provided with a copy of Alabama's compulsory school attendance laws and advised of the penalties that can be applied and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.

b. 5th Unexcused Absence (conference)

- 1) The parent, guardian, or person having control of the child shall participate in the **Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program** provided by the Juvenile court at the Fayette County Courthouse.
- 2) Attendance at the **Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program** shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists.
- 3) Failure to appear at the **Early Warning Truancy Prevention** program shall result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent under *Code of Alabama. (1975), 16-28-12(c)* (failure to cooperate), or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.

c. 7th Unexcused Absence

- 1) The Attendance Officer will file a complaint/petition against the child and/or parent/guardian, if appropriate.

d. Child under probation

- 1) The school attendance officer should be notified by the juvenile probation officer of all children in the school system under probation supervision by the juvenile court as consistent with state statute.
- 2) Where a child under probation is truant, the school attendance officer should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

e. Suspensions are unexcused absences, but do not constitute unexcused absence total for truancy purposes.

f. Make-up Work – Unexcused Absences

Teachers shall not provide make-up work or examinations for students absent for unexcused reasons. Teachers shall not assign zeroes to students absent for unexcused reasons on an automatic basis; zeroes may be assigned to such students only when other students in general receive grades for homework, examinations, recitation, etc.

6. TARDIES

Students are required to attend school and each class on time each day. When a student is tardy at the beginning of the school day, the parent must check the student in at the school office or contact the school administrator.

Attendance at the middle and high school level will be taken each period of the day. Tardies are counted per period and daily as either excused or unexcused. Students with more than three (3) tardies are subject to discipline in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

7. ACADEMIC SANCTIONS – for excessive unexcused class absences

If a student has ten (10) class/course periods (5 for a semester course) **unexcused absences**, course credit will be withheld, unless it is deemed an emergency situation by the superintendent or school principal.

8. WITHDRAWAL FOR EXCESSIVE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Students who accumulate more than ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences or 12 total unexcused absences may be withdrawn from school. Parents will be notified of the pending withdrawal and given one (1) week to appear before the principal or Attendance Supervisor to show cause as to why the student should not be withdrawn.