

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

5.40

- I. It is the belief of the Henry County School System that there is a direct relationship between attendance and the performance of students in the school system. All students should attend school regularly and be on time for all classes in order to receive the greatest benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and individual responsibility. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and continue to successfully complete high school.
- II. Alabama State law requires that every child between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) years be in attendance at school. It shall be the policy of the Henry County Schools to enforce this law. (See also Policy 5.10 Enrollment/Admission, and Policy 5.41 Compulsory School Attendance Age.)
- II. Regular attendance is the actual attendance of a pupil during the school day as defined by law and regulations of the State Board of Education. A student who is absent or tardy without the principal's/designee's approval shall have his/her parent(s)/legal guardian report such absences or tardies to the school center in the manner prescribed by the Henry County School System *Attendance Policy*.
 - A. The *Attendance Policy* shall prescribe attendance requirements including, but not limited to, provisions for excused and unexcused absences, opportunities to make up work assignments, and reporting absences.
 - B. Students shall be excused from any examination, study, or work assignments for observance of a religious holiday or because the tenets of his/her religion forbid secular activity at such time. The school principal /designee shall implement this provision on an individual basis pursuant to Alabama statutes and State Board of Education rules.
 - C. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails himself/herself to the provisions of this rule.
 - D. Any absence not approved by the provision of this policy is an unexcused absence (i.e., work, truancy, or parental neglect). Students may not make up work if the absence is unexcused.
- III. Student attendance will be monitored on a daily basis and parents contacted as required by law.
- IV. A person designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate truancy problems.

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- A. 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 five (5) school days following return to school. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant each day he/she is absent. The child shall also be deemed truant for any absence determined by the principal to be unexcused based upon the State Department of Education's current School Attendance Manual.
- B. 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:
1. First truancy/unexcused absence (warning):
 - a. Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal or his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the truancy.
 - b. At the beginning of each school year, every parent/guardian shall be provided with a copy of Alabama's compulsory school attendance laws and advised of the penalties that can be applied and the procedure that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.
 2. No earlier than the third (3rd) unexcused absence:
 - a. The parent, guardian, or person having control of the child shall participate in the early warning program provided by the juvenile court.
 - b. Attendance at the early warning program is mandatory.
 - c. Failure to appear at the early warning court may result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent under Code of Alabama (1975) Section 16-28-12-C (failure to cooperate), or a truancy petition against the child, whichever is appropriate.
 3. No earlier than the seventh (7th) unexcused absence, a court complaint/petition against the child and/or the parent/guardian, if appropriate shall be filed by the attendance supervisor.
 4. For a child under probation, the following procedures shall be implemented:
 - a. When appropriate 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, Code of Alabama (1975) Sections 12-15-100 and 105.
 - b. Where a child under probation is truant, the school attendance officer should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

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- C. Lack of attendance shall result in loss of credit or school failure as follows:
 - 1. A student must be in attendance in each class 170 days or more of the total school year.
 - 2. Attendance policies for grades K-8 are based on the entire school year. Students may be failed (retained) whenever absences exceed ten (10) days per school year. Students in grades K-8 who miss more than ten (10) days in one school year will be given a grade of “F” unless extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the principal.
 - 3. Grades 9-12 operate on a semester basis. During either the first or second semester, a student may be failed (retained) whenever the total absences exceed five (5) days or three (3) days for all 9-weeks’ courses. Students in grades 9-12 who miss more than five (5) days or three (3) days for all 9-weeks’ courses will be given a grade FA (Failure due to absences) unless extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the principal.
 - 4. A kindergarten student who accumulates more than ten (10) absences in one school year may be withdrawn from the roll for the remainder of the school year.

- V. A written excuse will be required of all students, grade K-12) after each absence to be presented upon the day of return of the student to school.
 - A. The principal of the school or his/her designee will determine the excused or unexcused status of an absence. If an acceptable reason for excusing an absence is not presented with five (5) days of the return of the student to school, the absence will be coded unexcused.
 - B. Absences beyond ten (10) days per year will be excused only with the documentation of a physician, except as specified by Board policy.
 - C. The parent/legal guardian of a student in grades 9-12 may submit written documentation of absence up to five (5) days per semester. Absences beyond five (5) days per semester will be excused only with the documentation of a physician, except as specified by Board policy.

- VI. Student attendance for driver’s license purposes shall be processed as prescribed by law. (See Policy 5.42 Revocation of Driver’s License/Permit.)

- VII. Each Henry County school and the Henry County School System shall take appropriate action as required by Alabama statutes when a student has excessive absences or is truant.

- VIII. Any Henry County Student whose parents are employed by the military may be granted up to five (5) days of excused absence if either parent is experiencing a deployment of active duty.

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The conditions under which these absences may be excused are: (1) the absence is pre-approved; (2) the student is in good standing; (3) the student has had a prior record of good attendance; (4) missed work is completed and returned in a timely fashion; and, (5) the absence is not during standardized testing dates.

- IX. The enrollment and attendance of a child in a church or private school shall be filed with the Henry County Superintendent by the parent or legal guardian of the child on a form provided by the Superintendent. This form shall be countersigned by the administrator of the church or private school and returned to the Superintendent by the parent/legal guardian. When the child no longer attends the church or private school, the parents or legal guardian will direct the church/private school to notify the Henry County Superintendent that the child is not longer in attendance.

REFERENCES:

CODE OF ALABAMA

16-8-8, 16-28-3, 16-28-4, 16-28-6, 16-28-12,
16-28-16, 16-28-40, AAC §290-1-4-.01

HISTORY:

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FORMERLY: JBD, JB, JBE