

Bristol Tennessee City Schools

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in May	Descriptor Term: Attendance	Descriptor Code: 6.200	Issued Date: 07/16/18
		Rescinds: 6.200	Issued: 01/15/18

1 GENERAL

2 Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore, students are expected to be present
3 each day school is in session.

4 The attendance director shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:¹

- 5 1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
- 6 2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance
7 requirements;
- 8 3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
- 9 4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or
10 reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
11
- 12 5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license
13 withdraws from school.²

14 Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only
15 authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information
16 without the consent of the student or parent(s)/guardian(s).³

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

- 19 1. Personal illness/injury - A physician's statement or a parent conference may be required. A
20 physician's statement may be required at any time should the principal or teacher deem it
21 necessary;
22
- 23 2. Illness of immediate family member;
24
- 25 3. Death in the immediate family (includes parents, stepparents, guardian, grandparents, brother,
26 sister, stepbrother/stepsister, aunt, uncle);
27
- 28 4. Extreme weather conditions;
- 29
- 30 5. Religious observances;⁵

- 1 6. College visits;
- 2
- 3 7. Pregnancy;
- 4
- 5 8. School sponsored or school endorsed activities;⁶
- 6
- 7 9. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
- 8
- 9 10. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the
- 10 student has no control.
- 11
- 12 11. Cultural/educational activities - Students may be excused from school to participate in cultural
- 13 and educational activities. The following guidelines shall be used by school principals in
- 14 approving cultural/educational activities:
- 15
- 16 a. A maximum of three days will be available for family cultural/educational activities,
- 17 annually.
- 18 b. A request for the absences to be excused must be filed with the principal prior to the
- 19 activity.
- 20 c. A request will not be approved after the activity has occurred, during state-mandated
- 21 achievement testing, if the student is not passing all classes at the time of the request, or
- 22 if the student has three or more unexcused absences.
- 23 d. A request must be in writing on forms available in the school office and completed by
- 24 the parents/guardians of the student. No other relative can do this.
- 25 e. If a student uses more than the maximum days allowed, the first three days of absence
- 26 will be considered excused.
- 27 f. Make-up work is the responsibility of the student and parent. The local school policy on
- 28 make-up procedures will be followed.

29 The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:⁷

- 30 1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
- 31
- 32 2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent
- 33 for the majority of the day;
- 34
- 35 3. All student absences are verified;
- 36
- 37 4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness; and
- 38
- 39 5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.
- 40

37 **EARLY DISMISSAL**

- 38 1. Students will not be permitted to leave school premises during the school day without request
- 39 of the parent or guardian.
- 40

- 1 2. Teachers shall not permit any student to leave school prior to regular dismissal hours except
2 with approval of the principal.

3 **TRUANCY**

4 *General*

5 Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that
6 attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled
7 school day in order to be counted present. If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction
8 program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the
9 school system provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the
10 same manner.⁹

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

16 *Progressive Truancy Intervention Plan*¹⁰

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

19 **Tier I**

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

- 21 1. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
22
23 2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s),
24 and an attendance supervisor or designee. The contract shall include:
25
26 a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
27 b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
28 c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional
29 disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court; and
30
31 3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.

32 **Tier II**

33 If a student accumulates additional unexcused absences in violation of the attendance contract in Tier I,
34 the student will be subject to Tier II.

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

4 **Tier III**

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

6 These interventions shall be determined by a team formed at each school. The interventions shall
7 address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director
8 of Schools/designee.

9 **NON-SCHOOL-SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY⁴**

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

- 16 1. Student's name and personal identification number;
- 17 2. Student's grade;
- 18 3. The dates of the student's absence;
- 19 4. The reason for the student's absence; and
- 20 5. The signatures of the student and parent or custodian.

21 The principal may limit the number and duration of nonschool-sponsored extracurricular activities for
22 which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

23 **RELEASED TIME COURSE¹¹**

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

27 The student must submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent or legal guardian prior
28 to the student's participation in the released time course. The principal or designee shall document the
29 approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal or designee as proof of
30 the student's participation in the released time course.

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

1 **MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

2 School principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and
3 a one-day excused absence upon the return of a parent or custodian serving active military service.

4 Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a
5 parent or guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as
6 proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork
7 missed during these absences.¹²

8 **MAKE-UP WORK**

9 Following an absence, it is the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian to contact the teacher so
10 that the student may complete work missed. Upon return to school, the student has the same amount of
11 time to make-up assignments as the length of the absence(s) incurred. Grades missed due to unexcused
12 absences will be graded at 80 percent.

13 **CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL**

14 Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance, however, student attendance
15 may not be the sole criterion.¹³ However, if attendance is a factor, prior to credit/promotion denial, the
16 following shall occur:

- 17
18 1. Parents and students shall be advised if a student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due
19 to excessive absenteeism.
- 20 2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

21 **DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION²**

22 More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any
23 semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license, or to obtain such if of age.

24 In order to qualify for reclaiming a driver's permit or license, the student must make a passing grade in
25 at least three (3) full unit subjects or their equivalency at the conclusion of a subsequent grading period.

26 **ATTENDANCE HEARING¹⁴**

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

- 1 The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.
- 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 accessible in each school building and
7 disseminated to all students, parents, teachers, and administrative staff.

8 STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT

- 9 Students who are absent the day of the scheduled EOC exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or
10 must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused
11 absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Excused
12 students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam.
- 13 Students who have an unexcused absence shall receive a failing grade on the EOC exam which shall be
14 averaged into their final grade.

Legal References

1. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.08(1)(a); TCA 49-6-3006
2. TCA 49-6-3017(c)
3. TCA 10-7-504; 20 USCA § 1232g
4. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(1)(c)
5. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.03(15); TCA 49-6-2904(b)(5)
6. TN Department of Education, *Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual* (2017)
7. TN Department of Education, *Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual* (2017); TCA 49-6-3007; Public Acts of 2018, Chapter No. 958
8. TN Department of Education, *Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual* (2017)
9. TCA 49-6-3021
10. TCA 49-6-3007; TCA 49-6-3009; Public Acts of 2018, Chapter No. 958
11. TCA 49-2-130
12. TCA 49-6-3019
13. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7)
14. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17

Cross References

- Extracurricular Activities 4.300
Reporting Student Progress 4.601
Promotion and Retention 4.603
Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs, & Holidays 4.803
Student Records 6.600