

Descriptor Term: STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY	Descriptor Code: JE
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The Rogers School District believes that the instructional program is the vital part of a formal education and that students must be in regular attendance in order to profit from that instructional program. The measures outlined in this policy are intended to ensure regular attendance by creating a cooperative effort among staff members, parents, students, and (when necessary) legal authorities.

Students are expected to attend school at all times when school is in session. The school district recognizes that absences are sometimes unavoidable when caused by illness, school activities, or family emergencies. In such cases, students are expected to complete make-up work promptly and completely. Generally, students will be given the same number of days to complete make-up work as the number of days they were absent.

In accordance with Arkansas statute 6-18-221, the school district has entered into a cooperative agreement with local law enforcement officials to enforce school attendance laws. Under this agreement, law enforcement officers are authorized to

- Locate students who are off school premises during school hours.
- Stop and detain any such students who cannot produce documentation explaining their absence from school.
- Take into custody any such student who fails to produce satisfactory documentation and deliver the student to the student's own assigned school.

The schools in the district are authorized by the Rogers Board of Education to develop daily attendance procedures, within the guidelines of this policy, which will ensure accurate and timely attendance reports and appropriate communication between school and parents. Procedures for teachers to follow in recording and reporting student absences from their classes shall be consistent among the different school levels in the district. Procedures for parents and students to follow in reporting absences and in arranging for make-up work shall also be consistent among the different school levels in the district. All schools are encouraged to develop incentive programs to reward students for good/improved attendance.

Before a student accumulates the maximum number of unexcused absences, a parent may petition the school administration for special arrangements related to attendance. If arrangements are granted by the school administration, a formal written agreement to include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement will be developed and signed by the school administrator, parent, and student.

The following specific procedures will apply within the elementary and secondary schools, respectively, of the district:

Elementary School Procedures (Grades K-5)

The classroom teacher has the responsibility for taking attendance and recording all student absences from her/his class each day. All student absences from class, except those caused by approved school activities or in-school suspension, will be reported to the school administration and recorded for each student as unexcused absences with the following exceptions. For any absence, parents have the responsibility to see that make-up work occurs.

1. Homebound: Absences due to long-term injury or illness will be recorded as excused during that time that a student is placed on an approved homebound program and satisfactorily completes the work assigned in that program.

When such long-term absences occur or are anticipated, parents should contact the school about establishing homebound instruction. These services are provided at no charge to the parent.

2. Limited short-term illnesses: Each student may be granted up to six (6) days per year for illnesses such as flu, chicken pox, or similar illnesses requiring that the student remain at home. Such absences will require written documentation from a parent, doctor or other medical professional. Additional excused absences may be approved by the building principal or designee.
3. Absences for out-of-district transferees: Transferees, after the first quarter, will be allowed fewer days of allowed absence days in Rogers proportional to the date of transfer. Lengthy absences can affect academic standing.

All Other Absences:

1. Tardiness: Students who are late to school, and those who leave during the school day, missing up to 2 hours in one day, will be charged with a tardy. Excessive tardiness is a serious issue and will result in building-level interventions.
2. Half-day absence: Students who miss from 2 hours to 4 hours in one day will be charged with a half-day absence.
3. One absence: Students who miss more than 4 hours in one day will be charged with one absence unless the absence is defined as school business i.e. field trip, contest, etc.
4. Truancy: Truancy should be treated as a disciplinary matter. Any absence due to truancy will be counted in the student's total number of unexcused absences. Removing a child from school for extended periods of time is considered truancy.
5. Notification to parents of absences: No later than the fifth day of a student unexcused absence during a semester (not including long-term and short-term absences listed above) the school will contact the parent by telephone or will send a letter to the parent. At this time, the school will notify the parent of the consequences of continued poor attendance by the student.

On the eleventh day of a student unexcused absence during the semester (not including long-term and short-term absences listed above) the school will notify the parent that the student may be retained at the current grade during the following school year and/or that the parent will be reported to the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS). The appropriate prosecuting authority shall also be notified of the student's excessive absence at this time.

School officials are authorized to contact the prosecuting authority, juvenile authorities, or social service agencies at any time during this process, if parents are not making reasonable efforts to encourage regular attendance by students.

Middle School Procedures (6-8)

Absences

The classroom teacher has the responsibility for taking attendance and recording all student absences from each of her/his classes each day. All absences will be reported to the school administration and recorded for each student.

All absences except approved school activities and suspensions will be counted as unexcused absences from school when considering the 5-day and 11-day parent notification each semester with the following exceptions. For any absence, parents have the responsibility to see that make-up work occurs.

1. Homebound: Absences due to long-term injury or illness will be recorded as excused during that time that a student is placed on an approved homebound program and satisfactorily completes the work assigned in that program. When such long-term absences occur or are anticipated, parents should contact the school about establishing homebound instruction. These services are provided at no charge to the parent.
2. Limited short-term illnesses: Each student may be granted up to five (5) days per semester for illnesses requiring that the student remain at home. Such absences will require written documentation from a doctor or other medical professional. Additional excused absences may be approved by the building principal or designee as part of the implementation of a Student Attendance Waiver (Student Attendance Waiver JE-Guidelines).
3. Absences for out-of-district transferees: Transferees, after the first quarter, will be allowed fewer days of allowed absence days in Rogers proportional to the date of transfer. Lengthy absences can affect academic standing.

Tardy

Students who are absent for more than 15 minutes of a class period, due to tardiness and/or early dismissal, will be counted as an unexcused absence for that class period, unless the missed time is caused by a school activity.

Transfer Students

Students who transfer in during the school year will be charged with all absences reported by the previous school and all days missed between withdrawing from the previous school and enrolling in the Rogers School District as unexcused absences with the exceptions above.

Truancy

Any absence which occurs without the prior knowledge of a parent/guardian is truancy. Such absences **are** counted as unexcused absences when considering the 5- and 10-day limits each semester, and students may face disciplinary penalties as well.

Parent Attendance Notification – 5 Day Absence

On the **fifth** day of student unexcused absence (or the equivalent of five days) during the semester, the school will contact the parent by telephone or by letter. The consequences of continued poor student attendance will be explained. The school may request a parent conference.

Parent Attendance Notification – 10 Day Absence

On the **eleventh** day of a student unexcused absence (or the equivalent of eleven days) during the semester, the school will notify the parent that the student has exceeded the 10-day limit for the semester. The consequences of continued poor student attendance will be explained. The school will request a parent conference. The school attendance committee may recommend a waiver from this provision of the policy.

Prosecuting Authority Notification – 13 Day Absence

The appropriate prosecuting authority will be notified of the student's excessive unexcused absences at the time of the thirteenth absence.

School officials are authorized to contact the prosecuting authority, juvenile authorities, or social service agencies at any time during this process if parents are not making reasonable efforts to encourage regular attendance by students.

High School Procedures (Grades 9-12)

Absences

The classroom teacher has the responsibility for taking attendance and recording all student absences from each of her/his classes each day. All absences will be reported to the school administration and recorded for each student.

All absences, except approved school activities and suspensions, **will be** counted as unexcused absences from school when considering the 5-day and 11-day parent notification each semester with the following exceptions.

1. Homebound: Absences due to long-term injury or illness will be recorded as excused during that time that a student is placed on an approved homebound program and satisfactorily completes the work assigned in that program. When such long-term absences occur or are anticipated, parents should contact the school about establishing homebound instruction. These services are provided at no charge to the parent.
2. Limited short-term illnesses: Each student may be granted up to five (5) days per semester for illnesses requiring that the student remain at home. Such absences will require written documentation from a doctor or other medical professional. Additional excused absences may be approved by the building principal or designee as part of the implementation of a Student Attendance Waiver (Student Attendance Waiver JE-Guidelines).
3. Absences for out-of-district transferees: Transferees, after the first quarter, will be allowed fewer days of allowed absence days in Rogers proportional to the date of transfer. Lengthy absences can affect academic standing.

Tardy

Students who are absent for more than 15 minutes of a class period, due to tardiness and/or early dismissal, will be counted as an unexcused absence for that class period, unless the missed time is caused by a school activity.

Transfers

Students who transfer in during the school year will be charged with all absences reported by the previous school and all school days missed between withdrawing from the previous school and enrolling in the Rogers School District as unexcused absences with the exceptions above.

Truancy

Any absence which occurs without the prior knowledge of a parent/guardian is truancy. Such absences **are** counted as unexcused absences when considering the 5- and 10-day limits each semester, and students may face disciplinary penalties as well.

School Business

Absences due to school business include approved field trips and school competitions. Such absences **are not** counted as absences when considering the 5- and 10-day limits each semester; however, students may be expected to arrange for make-up work prior to the activity.

Parent Attendance Notification – 5 Day Absence

On the fifth day of student unexcused absence from any class (or the equivalent of five days, in classes offered in a "block" format) during the semester, the school will contact the parent by telephone or by letter. The consequences of continued poor student attendance will be explained. The school may request a parent conference.

Parent Attendance Notification – 10 Day Absence

On the eleventh day of a student unexcused absence (or the equivalent) in any class during the semester, the school will notify the parent that the student has lost credit for the semester. Such loss of credit will be determined on a class-by-class basis; if a student has been absent 11 times in some classes but not in others, credit will be lost only in those classes where 11 absences have been accrued. In the event of excessive absences (eleven or more) due in full or part to documented illness, accidents or unavoidable circumstances, parents may request an attendance committee review at the student's school prior to the 10th day of absence. The attendance committee will operate under guidelines developed and approved by the principals of all high schools. The final decisions based on these guidelines are at the discretion of each building's principal and will be handled on a case by case basis. Based on these guidelines, the attendance committee, consisting of at least one administrator, one counselor, and one teacher as determined by the building principal, may recommend to uphold the loss of credit at the 11th day absence or recommend a waiver from the provisions of the policy. If the committee recommends a waiver from the provisions of the policy, the documentation of the waiver should be kept in the student's attendance file.

Students who lose credit because of excessive unexcused absences are expected to remain in school unless they elect an alternative program (evening school, computer-based instruction, correspondence classes) in an attempt to regain credit. Parents may be charged reasonable fees for the direct costs of such programs. See JE-Guidelines.

Prosecuting Authority Notification – 13 Day Absence

The appropriate prosecuting authority will also be notified of the student's excessive absence at the time of the thirteenth absence.

Schools officials are authorized to contact the prosecuting authority, juvenile authorities, or social service agencies at any time during this process, if parents are not making reasonable efforts to encourage regular attendance by students.

Legal ref. ACA 6-18-209; 6-18-211; 6-18-222

Policy Adopted

Revised 9/89, 7/91, 6/95, 5/96, 7/97, 4/14/98, 6/16/98, 6/18/02, 3/14/06, 6/06/06, 6/16/09, 5/18/10, 4/17/12, 3/12/13, 5/21/13, 8/20/13, 5/19/15

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