

Descriptor Term: COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Descriptor Code: JBA

Rescinds: JBA

Board Approved: 11/27/2006

Previously Approved: 1/16/1990

"Compulsory-school-age child" means a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program. Provided, however, that the parent or guardian of any child enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program shall be allowed to disenroll the child from the program on a one-time basis, and such child shall not be deemed a compulsory-school-age child until the child attains the age of six (6) years.

If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in a school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year of the school which such child is eligible to attend or if a compulsory-school-age child has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences during the school year, the Principal or Superintendent will report, within two (2) school days or within five (5) calendar days, whichever is less, such absences to the school attendance officer of the youth court or family court.

Parents of a compulsory-school-age child who has not been enrolled in school within eighteen (18) calendar days after the first day of the school year of the public school which such child is eligible to attend or parents of a compulsory-school-age child who has accumulated twelve (12) unexcused absences during the school year are subject to prosecution under the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Every student governed by the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law who is absent from school must present, upon his/her return to the school, a written excuse, signed by the parent or legal guardian, giving name, date of excuse, date of absence and reason for absence. If it is not possible to send a note, the parents or guardian must telephone the principal's office before the student returns to school. In all cases parents must submit a written excuse within two days following the student's return to school. After a student has been absent for more than five (5) consecutive days or a cumulative of ten (10) school days per semester, written verification from a physician regarding illness or injury or a substantiating statement regarding a death or other required written verification must be presented. Additional verification may be required if it is deemed appropriate.

Legal Reference: Mississippi Code 1972, §37-13-91