

Arlington Community Schools Board

Monitoring: Review: Annually	Descriptor Term: Attendance	Descriptor Code: 6.200	Amended Date: 02/25/25
		Rescinds:	Last Issued: 01/28/25

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

ACS shall have an attendance program which shall be monitored by the Student Services Supervisor and which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
4. Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license;
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school; and
6. Assisting the Board, under the direction of the Superintendent, with the enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws of the State, and to discharge other duties that are necessary to effectuate enforcement of laws, this policy, and any procedures related to absenteeism and truancy.

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

The Principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign-in/sign-out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness; and

5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

The educational program offered by this District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session or during the attendance sessions to which she/he has been assigned.

The Superintendent/designee shall require, from the parent of each student of compulsory school age or from an adult student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a written statement of the cause for such absence within (5) days of returning to school. The Superintendent has the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence or prolonged absence.

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the Principal or his/her designee.

I. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Absences for which no written verification is submitted will be considered unexcused.

A. Unexcused Absences Due to Reasons Other Than Suspensions

Students with an unexcused absence due to reasons other than suspensions will be provided the opportunity to make up missed work for up to five (5) unexcused absences.

B. Students in Grades 6-12 with Unexcused Absences Due to First Time Suspensions

Students in Grades 6-12 receiving their first suspension in a school year may be permitted to complete and receive credit on make-up work for their assignments by performing pre-approved community service. This option will be available only to students in Grades 6-12 serving their first suspension in a school year, provided that the following process is followed:

1. When the student is readmitted, the Principal or his/her designee will meet with the student to agree upon the community service to be completed.
2. The Principal or his/her designee will keep a record of the student's community service documentation.
3. The Principal or his/her designee will notify the teachers of the student when the student has completed the community service.
4. At that time, the teacher and student will develop a plan for the student to complete and have counted as a grade his make-up work. Make-up work will be completed in a timely manner, directed by the teacher and in accordance with the school's general make-up work procedure.

Make up work must be requested no later than two (2) days after the student returns to school.

II. EXCUSED ABSENCES

In the following situations, the absences of school students shall be excused. These students shall be permitted the opportunity to complete all missed assignments. Students shall be allowed one day for each day they were absent to make up their work.

- A. Personal Illness, injury, or hospitalization of student. Physician verification will be required to justify absences after the accumulation of ten (10) days of absences during the school year. Notes must be date specific and will be required for subsequent absences beyond ten (10) days. After an accumulation of ten (10) check-ins or check-outs during a school year, physician verification will be required to justify the absence from school. Any accumulation of absences, check-ins, or check-outs beyond ten (10) without physician verification will be unexcused;
- B. Personal illness in the family necessitating the presence of the student;
- C. Death in the family;
- D. Absence due to the incapacity of parent/guardian;
- E. Special and recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of their faith;
- F. Legal court summons, court order, or subpoena when it is not a result of the student's misconduct as provided for by law;
- G. Pregnant Students;
- H. Extenuating circumstances approved by the Principal on a case-by-case basis;
- I. Upon approved request to attend a released time course in religious moral instruction.

III. STUDENTS COUNTED AS PRESENT

In the following situations, students shall be counted as present in the same manner as an educational field trip, rather than given an excused or unexcused absence. Students counted as present shall be afforded the opportunity to complete all missed assignments.

- 1. Students serving in-school suspension and receiving educational services.
- 2. Students receiving medical or educational homebound instruction.
- 3. Students who serve as Pages for the General Assembly during the school year, either at a regular or special session.
- 4. Students participating in school-sponsored events shall be counted present provided the event or activities are school-directed, related to an instructional activity, and have prior approval of the Board.

5. Students participating in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H, provided the program or activity does not occur during the TCAP testing window or any period of time for which the student has been suspended, expelled, or assigned to an alternative school or program, if the suspension, expulsion, or program would otherwise preclude the student from participating in an educational field trip.

6. Students appointed as the student member of the State Board of Education shall be counted as present for the time the student spends in the performance of duties as a member of the State Board of Education. The student shall provide to the Principal/designee of the student's school written certification from the Executive Director of the State Board of Education that the student was participating in duties as a member of the State Board of Education.

IV. ABSENCES FOR NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School Principals may excuse a student from school attendance to participate in a non-school sponsored extracurricular activity if the following conditions are met:

(a) The student provides documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation in the non-school sponsored extracurricular activity; and

(b) The student's parent or guardian, prior to the extracurricular activity, submits to the Principal a written request for the excused absence. The written request shall be submitted no later than seven (7) business days prior to the student's absence and shall include:

(i) The student's full name and personal identification number;

(ii) The student's grade;

(iii) The dates of student's absence;

(iv) The reason for the student's absence; and

(v) The signature of the student and the student's parent or guardian.

The Principal shall indicate in writing whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

The maximum number of days for which school Principals may excuse students for non-school sponsored extracurricular activities is ten (10) per school year; provided that the Principal may limit the number of days for which students may be excused based upon the student's grades or disciplinary record.

All absences must be verified in writing by the parent within two (2) days of the student's return to school.

Absences for which no written verification is submitted will be considered unexcused.

Students who have more than five (5) unexcused absences have the opportunity to appeal to the Student Services Supervisor. The decision of the Student Services Supervisor shall be final.

V. ABSENCES OF STUDENTS OF DEPLOYED MILITARY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, if a student's parent, custodian, or other person with legal custody or control of the student is a member of the United States Armed Forces, including a member of a state National Guard or a reserve component called to federal active duty, School Principals shall give the student:

- a) An excused absence for one (1) day when the member is deployed;
- b) An additional excused absence for one (1) day when the service member returns from deployment;
- c) Excused absences for up to ten (10) days for visitations when the member is granted rest and recuperation leave and is stationed out of the county; and
- d) Excused absences for up to ten (10) days cumulatively within the school year for visitation during the member's deployment cycle.

Total excused absences under sections "c" and "d" above shall not exceed a total of ten (10) days within the school year.

The student shall provide documentation to the School Principal as proof of the service member's deployment.

Students receiving an excused absence under this policy regarding Absences of Students of Deployed Military Parents or Guardians shall have the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed and shall not have their class grades adversely affected for lack of class attendance or class participation due to the excused absence. Students shall have one (1) day to make up work for each day of excused absence.

Absences other than those outlined above shall be considered unexcused.

VI. ABSENCES OF STUDENTS FOR POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL VISITS

High School students participating in postsecondary school visits shall be counted as present, up to four (4) school days per school year; however, the student shall only be counted present the day of the postsecondary visit and shall not be counted during any travel days. In order to be counted as present, the student must satisfy the following requirements:

- (1) Prior written notice from a parent or legal guardian specifying the date of the post-secondary visit shall be provided to the student's high school Principal/designee seven (7) school days prior to the visit;
- (2) By no later than two (2) school days following the postsecondary school visit, the student must present the student's high school Principal/designee with written

verification from a campus official of the post-secondary institution documenting the student's visit; and

- (3) Student shall complete all school work missed during the post-secondary visit within five (5) school days of the return from the post-secondary school visit.

Although the student will not be counted as present for travel days surrounding the aforementioned postsecondary visits, up to two (2) travel days per postsecondary school visit meeting the requirements of this policy will be excused, provided that the student completes all schoolwork missed during the postsecondary school visit.

Post-secondary school visits are not required of any student. Students' parents/guardians, not ACS, are solely responsible for facilitating post-secondary school visits and for ensuring the safety of students during the visit.

VII. STATE-MANDATED TESTS/ END OF COURSE EXAMS

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled End of Course Exams, whether excused or unexcused, must make up the exam. Make-up dates will occur during the state-mandated testing window.

CHRONICALLY ABSENT STUDENTS

1. "Chronically absent" is defined as a student who has been absent from school for eighteen (18) or more school days of the respective school year. "Chronic absenteeism" includes all absences, excused and unexcused.
2. Within ten (10) school days after a student is identified as being chronically absent, the ACS Department of Student Services shall provide the parent/guardian of a chronically absent student, written notice of the student's status as being chronically absent.
3. Chronically absent students shall be required to provide documentation from the student's healthcare provider each time a student is absent from school due to receiving medical treatment for chronic illness or other health-related issues, in order for the absence to be excused.
4. Within ten (10) school days after a student is identified as being a chronically absent, and within ten (10) school days of every ten (10) days a student is absent thereafter, the student's parents/guardians shall receive written correspondence from their student's school counselor which sets forth:
 - (a) a schedule for meeting with a school official and the student's parent/guardian;
 - (b) a description of how the academic progress of the chronically absent student will be monitored by their school; and

- (c) other intervention methods which are available to assist parents/guardians of chronically absent students in addressing the factors that may be causing or contributing to the student's absence from school.

TRUANCY

Truancy is defined as an absence for an entire school day, a major portion of the school day or the major portion of any class, study hall or activity during the school day for which the student is scheduled.

By the beginning of each school year, the ACS Student Services Supervisor shall furnish to the Principals of each school a list of students who will attend the school together with the names of the students' parents or guardians. After the opening of school, each Principal must report to the Superintendent the names of all students on the list furnished to the Principal who have not appeared for enrollment.

Each Principal must report to the Superintendent the names, ages, and residences of all students in attendance at the school within thirty (30) days after the beginning of the school year.

By the beginning of each school year, the Principal shall give written notice to the parent, guardian, or person having control of a student subject to compulsory attendance that the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the student must monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school. The written notice must inform the parent, guardian, or other person having control of a student, that a student who accumulates five (5) days of unexcused absences during the school year is subject to ACS's Progressive Truancy Plan and that continued unexcused absences may result in a referral to juvenile court. The five (5) days of unexcused absences need not be five (5) consecutive days of unexcused absences.

The Principal of a school must report promptly to the ACS Student Services Supervisor, the names of all students who have withdrawn from school or who have accumulated three (3) days of unexcused absences. Upon a student's accumulation of three (3) days of unexcused absences, the ACS Student Services Supervisor shall serve upon the parent, guardian, or other person having control of a child subject to compulsory attendance who is unlawfully absent from school, written notice that the child's attendance at school is required by law.

Additionally, the Principal must report promptly to the ACS Student Services Supervisor, the names of all students who have withdrawn from school or who have accumulated five (5) days of unexcused absences. Each successive accumulation of five (5) days of unexcused absences by a student must also be reported.

When a student accumulates five (5) days of unexcused absences, the ACS Student Services Supervisor shall serve upon the parent, guardian, or other person having control of a child subject to compulsory attendance who is unlawfully absent from school, written notice that the child's attendance at school is required by law. The ACS Student Services Supervisor shall send a new notice after each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences.

After a student has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences, and after given adequate time, as determined by the ACS Student Services Supervisor, the student's parent, guardian, or other person having control of the student has failed to turn in documentation to excuse those absences, the ACS Student Services Supervisor shall implement the truancy intervention requirements of the second tier of the Progressive Truancy Plan.

Progressive Truancy Plan

The first tier of truancy prevention is applicable to all ACS enrolled students. The second and third tiers of truancy intervention apply to students who have accumulated a minimum of five (5) days of unexcused absences.

I. Tier One

Tier one of the Progressive Truancy Plan includes, but is not limited to, the following schoolwide prevention-oriented supports:

- (a) Regular attendance reminders given to students and parents;
- (b) Incentives and/or recognition for perfect or improved attendance;
- (c) Assisting with bus transportation;
- (d) Providing information on Y-Care or other aftercare programs;
- (e) Providing information regarding participation in clubs and/or sports groups;
- (f) Providing information regarding peer or adult mentoring programs;
- (g) Providing information regarding school nurse availability to address minor issues at school;
- (h) Providing counseling and/or tutoring opportunities for those that need additional support.

II. Tier Two

Tier two of the Progressive Truancy Plan shall include:

- a) A conference with the ACS Student Services Supervisor, and the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the student;
- b) An attendance contract to be signed by the student, the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the student, and the ACS Student Services Supervisor;

The contract must include:

- (1) a specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;

(2) the period for which the contract is in effect; and

(3) penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to Juvenile Court.

c) Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings, which may be with the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the student, to discuss the student's progress;

d) An individualized assessment by a school employee of the reasons a student has been absent from school; and

e) If necessary, referral of the student to counseling, community-based services, or other in-school or out-of-school services aimed at addressing the student's attendance problems.

III. Tier Three

Tier three of the Progressive Truancy Plan shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under tier two are unsuccessful. Tier three of the Progressive Truancy Plan may consist of one (1) or more of the following, at the discretion of the ACS Student Services Supervisor.

a) School-based community service;

b) Participation in a school-based restorative justice program; or

c) Saturday or after-school courses designed to improve attendance and behavior.

Judicial Intervention Regarding Truancy

Notwithstanding the above progressive truancy tiers, if any tier of progressive truancy intervention is unsuccessful and the ACS Students Services Supervisor can document that a parent or guardian on four (4) occasions has failed or refused to:

a) attend conferences as set forth in the ACS Progressive Truancy Plan;

b) return telephone calls from the ACS Student Services Supervisor;

c) attend follow-up meetings as set forth in the ACS Progressive Truancy Plan;

d) enter into an attendance contract as set forth in the ACS Progressive Truancy Plan; or

e) actively participate in any of the tiers of truancy intervention set forth in the ACS Progressive Truancy Plan,

the ACS Student Services Supervisor may report the student's absences to the Juvenile Court of Shelby County, Tennessee, without need to proceed to the next tier, if any.

1 Any parent, guardian, or other person who has control of a child, and who violates the State's truancy
2 law, commits educational neglect, which is a Class C misdemeanor. Each day's unlawful absence
3 constitutes a separate offense.

4 **NOTICE**

5 A copy of this Policy shall be posted on the ACS website and school counselors shall be supplied copies
6 of this Policy and the ACS "Attendance Program" for discussion with students. This Policy shall be
7 referenced in all school Handbooks. All teachers, administrative staff and parents/guardians shall be
8 provided copies of this Policy and the ACS "Attendance Program", electronically or in writing.

Legal References

State Board of Education Policy 4.100
State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-02-.17
State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03-.06
T.C.A. § 10-7-504
T.C.A. § 49-6-3006
T.C.A. § 49-6-3007
T.C.A. § 49-6-3009
T.C.A. § 49-6-3017
T.C.A. § 49-6-3019
T.C.A. § 49-6-3021
T.C.A. § 49-6-3022
T.C.A. § 49-6-3026