Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring: **Review: Annually, in March**	Descriptor Term: **Attendance**	Descriptor Code: **6.200**	Issued Date: **07/13/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **07/14/25; 04/07/03; 06/11/18; 12/10/18; 08/12/19; 09/27/21; 08/08/22; 05/08/23; 03/11/24**

General

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

The Director of Schools/designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and disseminated to all students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrative staff.

The Attendance Supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:[1]

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; and

5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.[2]

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(s)/guardian(s).[3]

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

1. Personal illness/injury;

2. Illness of immediate family member;

3. Death in the family;

4. Extreme weather conditions;

5. Religious observances;[5]

6. Pregnancy;

7. School endorsed activities;

8. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or

9. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:[6]

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.

TRUANCY

Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that attendance at school is required. Students shall be present at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled school day in order to be counted present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be considered present for school attendance purposes. If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school district provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.[7]

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

Progressive Truancy Plan[8]

Tier I of the progressive truancy plan shall apply to all students within the district and include schoolwide prevention-oriented supports to assist with satisfactory attendance. These supports shall include, but are not limited to, all students and parents receiving information regarding truancy prevention. This information will be provided through district website, social media, automated calls/texts/emails, the Student Handbook, and enrollment packets.

Tier II of the progressive truancy plan shall be implemented after the student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences, but before referral to juvenile court, and includes the following:

1. Mailed letter to parent/guardian.

2. A conference with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);

3. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Attendance Supervisor/Designee. The contract shall include:

    a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
    b. The period for which the contract is effective; and
    c. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary action and potential referral to juvenile court.

4. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress; and

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

Tier III shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful, as is evidenced by the student accumulating ten (10) unexcused absences. Tier III may consist of the following interventions:

1. Mailed letter to parent/guardian;
2. Required attendance meeting with district truancy supervisor and family;
3. Review/revision of attendance contract;
4. Referral for appropriate supports (e.g., Truancy Intervention Class, Parenting Strategies Class, individual school program). The interventions shall address students' needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/Designee.
5. Non-compliance truancy petition with the juvenile court.

Transfer Students and Truancy Tracking

The district shall request attendance records for students enrolling after the start of the school year from the previous public school district. Unexcused absences accumulated at a previous district for the

current school year shall be factored into the student's placement on the truancy intervention plan tiers, if applicable.[9]

NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY[9]

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

1. Student's name and personal identification number;

2. Student's grade;

3. The dates of the student's absence;

4. The reason for the student's absence; and

5. The signatures of the student and parent/guardian.

RELEASED TIME COURSE[11]

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

Students shall only be permitted to attend courses provided by entities that certify in writing that they have complied with the background check requirements outlined in state law.[12] The student shall submit a written consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian prior to participation in the released time course. The principal/designee shall document the approval in writing. The student shall provide documentation to the principal/designee as proof of the student's participation in the released time course.

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

Upon submission of the student's transcript from the entity that provided the released time course, the student may be awarded one (1) unit of elective credit. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures with secular criteria for determining whether credit shall be awarded.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during the excused absences. However, the student is excused for the day or days of absences, not the material covered in his/her classes. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility, not the teacher's, for make-up work in all subject matter covered during his/her absence. The time limit for make-up work is at the direction of the teacher. The student shall make arrangements for make-up work within three (3) working days, provided teachers are available.

STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled end-of-course (EOC) exams shall present a signed doctor's excuse or have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Excused students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam.

CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL

Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion.[13] If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be advised if the student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism; and

2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION[2]

A student who has more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) unexcused absences during any semester shall be ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license.

ATTENDANCE HEARING[14]

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

The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received.

Within five (5) school days of the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee. The action of the Board shall be final.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-3006
2. TCA 49-6-3017(c)
3. 20 USCA § 1232g
4. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(5); State Board of Education Policy 4.100
5. TCA 49-6-2904(b)(5)
6. TCA 49-6-3007
7. TCA 49-6-3021
8. TCA 49-6-3007; TCA 49-6-3009
9. Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 844
10. TCA 49-6-3022
11. TCA 49-2-130
12. TCA 49-2-130(i)
13. TCA 49-2-203(b)(7); TCA 49-6-3002(b)
14. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17(7)

Cross References

School Calendar 1.800
Extracurricular Activities 4.300
Interscholastic Athletics 4.301
Field Trips/Excursions/Competitions 4.302
Reporting Student Progress 4.601
Promotion and Retention 4.603
Recognition of Religious Beliefs, Customs, & Holidays 4.803
Voluntary Pre-K Attendance 6.2011
Homeless Students 6.503
Students in Foster Care 6.505
Students from Military Families 6.506
Student Records 6.600