

4.7 Absences

If any student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan conflicts with this policy, the requirements of the student's IEP or 504 Plan take precedence.

Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Important as that is, students' regular attendance at school, whether in person or digitally, is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept responsibilities they will face as an adult. Interactions with other students and participation in the instruction within the classroom enrich the learning environment and promote a continuity of instruction which results in higher student achievement.

Absences for students enrolled in synchronous digital courses shall be determined in the same manner as for District students attending courses in person.¹

Excused Absences

Excused absences are those where the student was on official school business or when the absence was due to one of the following reasons:

1. The student's illness or when attendance could jeopardize the health of other students. A maximum of six (6) such days are allowed per semester unless the condition(s) causing such absences is of a chronic or recurring nature, is medically documented, and approved by the principal.²
2. Death or serious illness in their immediate family;³
3. Observance of recognized holidays observed by the student's faith;
4. Attendance at an appointment with a government agency;
5. Attendance at a medical appointment;
6. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal;
7. Participation in an FFA, FHA, or 4-H sanctioned activity;
8. Participation in the election poll workers program for high school students.
9. Absences granted to allow a student to visit his/her parent or legal guardian who is a member of the military and been called to active duty, is on leave from active duty, or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. The

number of additional excused absences shall be at the discretion of the superintendent or designee.

10. Absences granted, at the Superintendent's discretion, to seventeen (17) year-old students who join the Arkansas National Guard while in eleventh grade to complete basic combat training between grades eleven (11) and (12).

11. Absences for students excluded from school by the Arkansas Department of Health during a disease outbreak because the student has an immunization waiver or whose immunizations are not up to date.³⁴

Students who serve as pages for a member of the General Assembly shall be considered on instructional assignment and shall not be considered absent from school for the day the student is serving as a page.⁴⁵

In order for the absence to be considered excused, the student must:

- a. Bring a written statement to the principal or designee upon the student's return to school from the student's parent or legal guardian stating the reason for the student's absence; or
- b. If the student is attending the District's courses digitally, upload a written statement from the student's parent or legal guardian stating the reason for the student's absence through the District's digital course management platform for review by the principal or designee.

A written statement presented or uploaded for an absence having occurred more than five (5) school days prior to its presentation or upload will not be accepted.

Unexcused Absences

Absences that are not defined above; do not have an accompanying note from the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis; or have an accompanying note that is not presented or uploaded within the timeline required by this policy, shall be considered as unexcused absences. Students with (6)6 unexcused absences in a course in a semester may not receive credit for that course. At the discretion of the principal after consultation with persons having knowledge of the circumstances of the unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

When a student has (3) unexcused absences, his/her parents, legal guardians, persons with lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be notified⁷. Notification shall be by telephone by the end of the school day in which such absence occurred or by regular mail with a return address sent no later than the following school day.

Whenever a student exceeds (6) unexcused absences in a semester, the District shall notify the prosecuting authority and the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.

It is the Arkansas General Assembly's intention that students having excessive absences be given assistance in obtaining credit for their courses. Therefore, at any time prior to when a student exceeds the number of unexcused absences permitted by this policy, the student, or his/her parent, legal guardian, person with lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis may petition the school or district's administration for special arrangements to address the student's unexcused absences. If formal arrangements are granted, they shall be formalized into a written agreement which will include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement's requirements. The agreement shall be signed by the student,; the student's parent,; legal guardian,; person having lawful control of the student,; or person standing in loco parentis,; and the school or district administrator or designee.⁸

Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.⁹

Days missed due to out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be unexcused absences.⁹

The District shall notify the Department of Finance and Administration whenever a student fourteen (14) years of age or older is no longer in school. The Department of Finance and Administration is required to suspend the former student's operator's license unless he/she meets certain requirements specified in the statute.

Cross References: 4.8—MAKE-UP WORK

4.57—IMMUNIZATIONS

5.11—DIGITAL LEARNING COURSES

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-4-302

A.C.A. § 6-18-209

A.C.A. § 6-18-213

A.C.A. § 6-18-220

A.C.A. § 6-18-222

A.C.A. § 6-18-229

A.C.A. § 6-18-231

A.C.A. § 6-18-507(g)

A.C.A. § 6-18-702

A.C.A. § 6-28-114

A.C.A. § 7-4-116

A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f)

A.C.A. § 27-16-701

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning

Date Adopted: 6-30-11

Last Revised: 5-26-21

Admittance Procedures Following and Absence:

1. Students must have a note from a parent/guardian or a doctor containing the student's first and last name, date of the absent and the reason for the absence, a parent/guardian's signature, a phone number where parent/guardian can be reached for verification on the day he/she returns to school or the absence may be considered unexcused.
2. Students are to pick up their admittance note at the office window at the 7:45 bell in the morning before the go to class bell rings. Failure to obtain an admit slip on the day the student arrives back to campus will result in an assignment to noon detention.
3. Students who do not bring a note from a parent/guardian or doctor's office on the first day back to school will be given 24 hours to bring the note to the office window.

Students who do not bring a note will be given noon detention once the 24 hour time or next day has expired.

4. Students who arrive on campus any time after the first period tardy bell must sign in at the office window and receive a pass before reporting to class.

5. Students must make arrangements for any missed assignments with their teachers.

6. A student shall not forge or falsify any note, hall pass, student scheduling information forms.

Consequences: Warning, on-site Parent/Guardian Conference, Behavior Contract, Detention Hall, In School Suspension, and/or Out of School Suspension, Expulsion.

A student is absent if the student is not:

1. present for onsite instruction provided by the district,
2. participating in a planned district-approved activity, or
3. engaged in scheduled instruction at an off-site location, including remote learning.

EXCUSED ABSENCE FOR DRIVER LICENSE TEST

Only one excused absence shall be allowed to take the Driver's License written test, and one excused absence to take the Driver's License road test. Documentation must be present