

Blount County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in September	Descriptor Term: K-5 Attendance	Descriptor Code: 6.2001	Issued Date: 12/02/21
		Rescinds: 6.2001	Issued: 08/05/21

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

3 The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:¹

- 4 1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
- 5 2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance
6 requirements; and
- 7 3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school.

8 Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only
9 authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information
10 without the consent of the student or parent/guardian.³

11 The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:⁶

- 12 1. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;
- 13 2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent
14 for the majority of the day;
- 15 3. All student absences are verified;
- 16 4. Written excuses are submitted for absences and tardiness;
- 17 5. If necessary, verification is required from an official or other source to justify absences; and
- 18 6. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

19 When a student is absent, he/she should return to school with a note signed by the parent or guardian.
20 (Notes should be valid in the judgment of the principal.) The principal or designated person in charge of
21 attendance then decides if the absence is excused or unexcused. Five (5) unexcused absences per nine
22 (9) weeks may result in failure in any subject or grade for that particular nine (9) weeks, excluding days
23 suspended for disciplinary reasons. A student shall be excused for:⁴

- 1 1. The child's personal illness. A parent's signature is sufficient for ten (10) days for each school
2 year. After ten (10) days per school year, a physician's statement will be required;
- 3 2. Death in the family;
- 4 3. Family illness requiring temporary help. (physician's statement is required);
- 5 4. Religious observances;⁵
- 6 5. Absences excused by the principal (if prior to the student's absence, the parent or guardian
7 consults the principal and both principal and teacher agree that the absence is legitimate, the
8 absence shall be excused);
- 9 6. School-endorsed activities; or
- 10 7. Circumstances which in the judgment of the principal create emergencies over which the
11 student has no control.

12 If the student's absences do not come in one of the above categories, he or she will be given an unexcused
13 absence. Principals shall check regularly to see that this is closely followed. Admission slips, notes from
14 parents, doctor's statements, etc. shall be kept on file either in the principal's office or by the homeroom
15 teacher.

16 Students who have five (5) absences without adequate excuse shall be reported to the director of
17 schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's
18 absence.⁶ The director of schools/designee shall also comply with state law regarding the reporting of
19 truant to the proper authorities.⁶ In addition, the principal/designee shall initiate meaningful
20 communications with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to determine the underlying cause(s)
21 of the unexcused absences. When appropriate, the principal/designee shall develop an attendance plan
22 and coordinate additional services designed to improve the student's attendance.⁷

23 The school support team will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist or
24 to verify that the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or
25 be promoted.

26 The principal shall be responsible for notifying, in writing, the director of schools or designee and the
27 parents of the student of any action taken by the school.

28 After thirty (30) days absence for the year, the student will be retained at his or her present grade level.
29 An appeal can be made to the S-Team at the individual school.

30 Students are entitled to make up any work missed. The teacher shall allow a reasonable amount of time
31 for the student to make up his/her work. A reasonable amount of time should be at least a day for each
32 day missed plus one extra day.

1 All students are expected to be on time for classes and other appointments. A student who is tardy to
2 school or leaves school before the end of the day shall be assessed one unexcused absence. Both the
3 student and teacher should keep in mind that five (5) unexcused absences in any one grading period may
4 result in failure for that subject. Clear guidelines for tardies or early outs will include Dr. note, court
5 note, or circumstances which in the judgement of the principal create emergencies over which the student
6 has no control.

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

9 The Board shall determine annually and include in the school calendar a plan for using the three (3)
10 abbreviated school days and the procedures for making up missed instructional days.

11 Students participating in school-sponsored activities whether on- or off-campus shall not be counted
12 absent. In order to qualify as "school-sponsored", the activity must be school-planned, school-directed,
13 and teacher-supervised. Mass exodus or early dismissal or late arrival of all students or any segment of
14 students shall not be permitted for any reason except for emergencies such as inclement weather or other
15 unavoidable situations, unless instruction time is made up in full.¹⁰

16 *Progressive Truancy Plan*⁸

17 **Tier 1**

18 Tier one of the progressive truancy plan shall apply to all students within the district and include
19 schoolwide prevention-oriented supports. These supports shall include:

- 20 1. Letter sent home to parents or guardian for conference
- 21 2. Conference with student and his/her parent or guardian

22 Upon a student accumulating five (5) unexcused absences, he/she shall be subject to additional
23 intervention tiers. Tier two supports shall include, but are not limited to,

24 **Tier 2**

- 25 1. Conference with student and his/her parent or guardian
- 26 2. Attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent or guardian, and
27 an attendance officer. The contract shall include:
 - 28 a. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student
 - 29 b. The period of time for which the contract is effective.

3. 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;
5. An individualized assessment by a school employee, such as a school counselor or graduation coach, of the reasons a student has been absent from school; and
6. If necessary, referral to counseling, community-based services, or other services to address the student's attendance problems.

Tier three shall be implemented if tier two truancy interventions are unsuccessful. These supports may consist of one of the following supports:

Tier 3

1. School-based community services;
2. Participation in a restorative justice program;
3. Referral to a school-based teen court;
4. Saturday or after-school courses designed to improve attendance and behavior; or
5. Director of Schools or Director's designee report student's absences to juvenile court if the progressive truancy tiers have been unsuccessful and there is documentation the student's parents or guardians have been unwilling to cooperate with the truancy interventions.

STUDENTS FROM MILITARY FAMILIES⁹

The Director of Schools shall develop the necessary administrative procedures to ensure that students with parent(s)/guardian(s) in the armed services are identified and that appropriate and available services are provided to these students.

RELOCATION OF MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER⁹

A student who does not currently reside within the school district shall be allowed to enroll if he/she is a dependent child of a service member who is being relocated to Tennessee on military orders. To be eligible for enrollment, the student will need to provide documentation the he/she will be a resident of the school district on relocation.

Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student shall provide proof of residency within the school district.

1 **ABSENCES**

2 Principals shall provide students with a one (1) day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a
3 one (1) day excused absence upon the return of a parent/guardian serving active military service.

4 Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a
5 parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as
6 proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up school work
7 missed during these absences.⁹

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; Public Acts of 2021, Chapter No. 223
9. TCA 49-6-3019
10. TCA 49-2-130

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