

Murfreesboro City School Board

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in March	Descriptor Term: <h2 style="margin: 0;">Attendance</h2>	Descriptor Code: 6.200	Issued Date: 08/28/18; reviewed 8/24/21 4/26/22
		Rescinds: STU 9; STU 57; STU 60	Issued:

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

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.

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).²

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

1. Personal illness/injury;
2. Illness of immediate family member;
3. Death in the family;
4. Extreme weather conditions;
5. Religious observances;³
6. School endorsed activities;⁴
7. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
8. 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:⁵

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

General

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.⁶

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 does not provide documentation within an additional five (5) days 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 Intervention Plan⁷

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy intervention plan will be implemented.

Tier I

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, the following:

1. Physically healthy learning environment;
2. Welcoming, socially-emotionally safe, trauma-informed school climate;
3. Access to Learning Supports;
4. A culture of continuous improvement;
5. Enrichment activities and clubs;
6. Celebration of attendance; and
7. A team that monitors attendance data.

It shall also consist of system-wide parent communications reinforcing the importance of attendance and notification of available supports to assist parents with issues that may create a barrier to attendance.

Upon the accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences, the principal/designee shall send a letter to the parent(s) or guardian(s), or other person(s) having control of the student notifying him or her of the student's

absences and that the child's attendance at school is required by law. (See Sample Attendance Letter.)

The letter must further advise parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control of the student that the school must receive any documentation to excuse the absences within five (5) school days. If sufficient documentation is not provided to excuse any of the absences, the principal/designee shall implement the second tier of the progressive truancy intervention.

Tier II

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

2. An attendance contract, based on the conference, signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s),

and an attendance supervisor or 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; and
3. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss the student's progress.
4. 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.

If a student accumulates additional unexcused absences in violation of the attendance contract in Tier II, or if the parent fails to execute the contract, the student will be subject to Tier III.

Tier III

This tier shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier II are unsuccessful.

Tier III shall consist of one of one or more the following interventions: School-based community services, family preservation court, referral to the Youth Services Division of the Rutherford County Juvenile Court, and other available resources. The interventions shall address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/designee.

If the student continues to have unsatisfactory attendance and has accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences, truancy charges may be filed with the juvenile court.

MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

School principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one-day excused absence upon the return of a parent or custodian serving active military service.

Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during these absences.⁸

117 **ATTENDANCE HEARING⁹**

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

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

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

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 134 The Director of Schools/designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and
 135 disseminated to all students, parents, teachers, and administrative staff.
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Legal References

1. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.08(1)(a); TCA 49-6-3006
2. TCA 10-7-504; 20 USCS § 1232g
3. TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.03(16); TCA 49-6-2904(b)(5)
4. TN Department of Education, *Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual* (2017)
5. TCA 49-6-3007
6. TN Department of Education, *Student Membership and Attendance Procedures Manual* (2017)
7. TCA 49-6-3007; TCA 49-6-3009; Public Acts of 2018, Chapter No. 958
8. TCA 49-6-3019
9. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.17

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
- Students in Foster Care 6.505
- Student Records 6.600