

# 2023-2024 COLBERT COUNTY SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## Absenteeism & Excuses

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- **School Day Absence** Non-attendance for more than 50% of the regularly scheduled school day. Students must be present more than 50% of the scheduled school day to be counted.
- **Class Absence** Non-attendance for more than 50% of a regularly scheduled class. To be counted present, a student must be present more than 50% of the scheduled class time.
- **Elementary Students** All students are expected to be in attendance each day unless they are ill or an emergency arises. Students must be in attendance 160 (no more than 15 absences per school year) days in order to receive credit for academic work. In extraordinary circumstance, a student's attendance record may be reviewed by the school attendance committee to determine eligibility for credit for the year's work & promotion to the next grade.
- **Secondary (High School) Students** All students are expected to be in attendance each day unless they are ill or an emergency arises. Students in grades 7-12 may not be absent more than 15 days in any class for which they are given credit. In extraordinary circumstance (i.e. extended illness or hospitalization), a student may appeal to the school attendance committee for a waiver.
- **Written Parental Excuse** Required In accordance with State Law, a parent, guardian, or custodian must explain the cause of every absence of students under his/her control or charge. Every student, upon return to school, must bring a written excuse from home within 3 days following the absence signed by the student's parent/guardian/custodian for each absence & present it to the principal or designee.
- **Doctor's Excuses or Legal Documentation** For students in grades K-12, the following guidelines will be used during each school year for absences to be excused:
  - 10 days excused with home notes per school year. Each student may use 5 home notes per semester (maximum)
  - All other excuses must be signed by a doctor or legal documentation from court where the student's attendance in court was commanded by the court & not necessitated for the reason that the student &/or a member of the student's immediate family initiated the civil action for his/her own benefit must presented by the parent/guardian.
  - Filing of Excuses All written excuses shall be retained for the remainder of the school year in the principal's office or other approved locations.

## Excused Absences

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All student absences shall be designated as either excused or unexcused by the principal or designee. In accordance with Alabama law, a student shall be excused for an absence from school for any one of the following reasons:

- Legal quarantine
- Student is too ill to attend school
- Emergency conditions as determined by the Superintendent or principal
- Absence with prior permission of principal/designee & consent of parent/guardian/custodian.
- Inclement weather, which would be dangerous for students to attend school as determined by the Superintendent or principal
- Death in the immediate family (defined as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, grandparent, uncle, aunt)

## Unexcused Absences

Absence for reasons other than those defined above shall be considered as unexcused.

## Parental/Student Notice

The provisions of this policy/procedure shall be included in the student handbooks & distributed to students in a timely manner.

## Absentee Referrals

The homeroom teacher shall refer all cases of known truancy, parental neglect, & chronic absenteeism to the principal or designee. The principal or designee shall refer any such students to the Attendance Supervisor in accordance with the Truancy & Early Warning Prevention Program, under this cover.

Students taken into custody by officers in compliance with the County Truancy & Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Program shall be reported to the Attendance Supervisor by the principal or designee.

## Make-Up Work - Excused Absences

If a student is absent for any excused reason as defined above, the student shall be allowed to make up all major assignments & other work missed during said absence or absences at a time agreeable to the teacher(s). Teachers shall not be required to reteach lessons, but students shall be given a reasonable opportunity to learn the lessons missed due to excused absences.

- **Elementary** The parent/guardian/custodian shall be responsible for arranging necessary make-up work.
- **Secondary (High School)** The student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher or teachers to arrange to make up the work.
- **Time Limit on Work Assigned/Missed During Excused Absences** Arrangements must be made with the teacher to complete exams, homework, papers, projects, etc. missed or assigned during an excused absence(s) must be made within three days after returning to school from an excused absence. Normally, arrangements & make-up work must be completed within a total of five (5) school days; however, for long-term absences additional days to make up the work may be approved by the principal.
- **Time Limit on Work Assigned Prior to Excused Absences** Exams, homework, papers, projects, etc. assigned prior to an excused absence(s) are due the date the student returns to school. However, principals may approve additional days to make up work for long-term absences.

## Make-Up Work - Unexcused Absences

Teachers shall not provide make-up work or examinations for students absent for unexcused reasons. Teachers, at their discretion, may require students absent for unexcused reasons to make up homework, class work, etc., on a non-credit basis in order to help such students maintain academic pace. Teachers shall not assign zeros to students absent for unexcused reasons on an automatic basis; zeros may be assigned to such students only when other students in general receive grades for homework, examinations, recitation, etc.

## **Tardiness**

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A student is tardy to school when he/she fails to report "on time" to his/her first class when the bell begins to ring to start the school day. When tardy to school, students should report to the attendance office for the tardy to be documented & a tardy slip to be issued. An unexcused check-in during the 1<sup>st</sup> scheduled class will be counted as a tardy to school & may lead to a Saturday School assignment.

A student is tardy to class when he/she enters the classroom after the tardy bell BEGINS TO RING. To be counted "on time", students should be seated & ready to begin class.

- Students are allowed 3 tardies to each class per semester.
- 3 unexcused tardies in any class will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- On the 4th tardy to any class, the student will be assigned 1 day of Saturday School.
- After the 5th tardy in the same class, students will be assigned 1 day of Saturday School for each future tardy.

## **Check-Ins/Outs**

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Any student checking in/out of school should bring a note of explanation at the time of the check-in &/or check-out within three days thereafter to be filed in the principal's office or another designated area. Check-ins & check-outs should be kept to a minimum.

- Students are allowed to check-in &/or check-out a total of 5 times a semester by calling his or her parent or guardian.
- After the 5th check-in/out, a parent/guardian must check-in/out the student in-person.
- If a student needs to check-out, the office must speak with a parent or guardian. Only a parent or guardian can give a student permission to check-in or check-out.
- Students must sign a check-in or check-out form before leaving school.
- Students may not check-in or check-out of school & remain on school campus.
- An unexcused check-in during 1st period will be counted as tardy to school & may lead to a Saturday School Assignment. Students must check-in/out through the school office & in compliance with board policy.

## **Perfect Attendance**

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A Perfect Attendance Certificate shall be awarded to students who have attended school every day for the entire day during the school year, i.e. no tardies, no check-outs, etc.

## **School Participation Absences**

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Students who are away from school because of participation in official school-sponsored activities shall be marked present & allowed to make up missed work. Students who are absent from school for an excused or unexcused reason shall not participate in any school extracurricular or co-curricular activities that day (athletic contest, cheerleading, scholars bowl, etc.), except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the principal.

## **Religious Absences**

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A student will be excused for official religious holidays when the student's parent, guardian, or custodian notifies the principal in advance for the student to be absent for this purpose. Students shall be allowed to make up work missed during such absences.

## **Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program**

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In order to comply with Legislative Acts, 93-672 & 94-782, the Board has established the following procedures to monitor & reduce the number of absences by students. If a student does not attend school, his/her absence must be explained in writing by the parent/guardian/custodian on or before the 3rd day after each absence. If an explanation is not given or if an explanation is given that is not excusable, based on Board policy, the absence will be marked as unexcused. Steps in the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program:

1. After the 1<sup>st</sup> unexcused absence, the student & parent will receive a warning from the principal & a copy of the Colbert County Schools' Attendance Policy & a copy of the Alabama Compulsory School Attendance Law.
2. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> unexcused absence, the parent & student will be notified of the consequences of additional unexcused absences.
3. After the 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, a conference shall be held by the principal & attendance officer with the parent & student.
4. After the 7<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, the parent & student shall be referred to the Colbert County District Attorney's Office for truancy violations.