

County Attendance Policy

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Section 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Authority West Virginia Code 18-8-1
West Virginia Board of Education Policy 4110.10

Section 2. PHILOSOPHY

- 2.1 Tucker County Board of Education recognizes that the educational process involves a continuity of instruction and active classroom participation which supports the need for compulsory attendance regulations. It is the Boards intent that all schools create a positive climate conducive to learning and supportive of good work habits and responsibility; and, that schools develop a system for enlisting parental support for regular school attendance.

Compulsory school attendance shall begin with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to September 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a publicly supported kindergarten program (unless an exemption is made for kindergarten attendance in compliance with 18-8-1a) and continue to the sixteenth birthday or for as long as the student shall continue to be enrolled in a school system after the sixteenth birthday. It is further provided that the compulsory school attendance provision of the Article shall be enforced against a person eighteen years of age or older for as long as the person continues to be enrolled in a school system, and shall not be enforced against the apparent, guardian, or custodian of such person.

Section 3. RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 Tucker County Board of Education designates the Principal as the school level attendance coordinator who is responsible for collecting classroom attendance data and makes appropriate referrals to the county attendance director.

In the event of developing or revising the County Attendance Policy, input will be received from a committee that is made up of teachers, principals, attendance personnel, parents and community leaders.

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Each year the county’s attendance director will determine its overall attendance rates in respect to the State’s mandate by using the West Virginia Education Information System, (WVEIS), to determine individual and student overall attendance rates.

Each identified at-risk student will be evaluated to see if early identification, intervention, etc. has improved overall attendance and possible grade improvement.

The policy will be evaluated annually by the Student Assistance Team.

- A. Absence. Not being physically present in school for any reason.
- B. Attendance. Full-day attendance—present at least .74 of the school day.
Half-day attendance—present at least .26 of the school day.

Absence Reason Codes Not Included in Calculation of State Attendance Rate.

Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, the absence reason codes listed below are state-defined standards and MUST be used when recording student absences. These absence reasons will NOT be included in the calculation of the state attendance rate.

- SA Suspended all day
- 11 Suspended half day
- 29 School approved curr/extra curr all day
- 30 School approved curr/extra curr half day
- 33 Failure of bus to run/haz condit all day
- 34 Failure of bus to run/haz condit half day

- C. Attendance Rate. $\frac{\# \text{ of days present}}{\# \text{ of days membership}}$

- D. Dropout. A dropout is an individual who:

1. Was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year and was not enrolled on October 1 of the current school year; or
2. Was not enrolled on October 1 of the previous school year although expected to be in membership (i.e., was not reported as a dropout the year before); and
3. Has not graduated from high school, obtained a GED diploma, or completed at state- or district-approved education program; and

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4. Does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
 - 4a. transfer to another public school district, private school, registered home school, or state- or district-approved education program;
 - 4b. temporary school-recognized absence due to suspension or illness; or
 - 4c. death.
5. Dropout Date. For students of ages sixteen or older, the dropout date is the day after they are no longer enrolled in school. For the purpose of GED eligibility, students must meet state requirements.
- 3.2 The school principal shall provide notification of county attendance requirements to students and parents.
 - a. At the commencement of each school year, parents shall be provided with a copy of the school's attendance procedure. New arrivals during the school year shall also be provided with a copy of the school's attendance procedure.
 - b. Parents shall be advised of their responsibility to report the absences of their children by personal phone call. A written notice is required upon the student's return to school. Failure to notify the school in writing of an absence will constitute truancy and may result in appropriate disciplinary actions.
- 3.3 The school Principal or his designee shall report all school dropouts to the Department of Education following procedures established by the state department.
- 3.3 The attendance director shall make reports available to the Board and Superintendent as requested.
- 3.4 It shall be the responsibility of the county attendance director to comply with all regulations as outlined in the states compulsory school attendance laws as well as state and county policies and procedures. These laws, policies, and practices address, but may not be limited to, the commencement and termination of compulsory school attendance and exemptions; exceptions to school attendance requirements home visitations, licensing for privilege of operation of motor vehicles, reporting of offenses, penalties and cost of prosecution; attendance workers, performing the duties of the position including the processing complaints, warrants, and hearings; coordinating activities with principals and teachers who are experiencing problems with students attendance and record keeping. Also, the attendance director will serve as the liaison for homeless children and youth as stated in WV Code 18-8-4

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Section 4. PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION

4.1 Excused Absences are defined as follows:

- a. Illness or injury of the student requiring physician's verification;
- b. Illness of student verified by parent/guardian not exceeding three (3) consecutive or five (5) days per semester. Verification by a physician will be required if absences exceed three (3) consecutive days;
- c. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside the school day when the absence is verified by the physician or dentist;
- d. Illness or injury in family when student absence is verified as essential by physician;
- e. Calamity, such as fire in the home, flood or family emergency upon approval by the school principal.
- f. Home or hospital instruction may be requested when an absence will be in excess of two (2) weeks.

In instances of excessive absences due to chronic health problems and/or severe illness as verified by a doctor, or hospitalization of the student, the building administrator will make every effort to meet the needs of the student and their parents who find themselves in these unfortunate circumstances.

Several means to assist children in these unfortunate circumstances are available:

1. Homebound instruction
 2. Arrangements, in cooperation with teaching staff, for make-up work
 3. Any other special arrangement made by the building administrator in cooperation with staff and students.
- g. Death in the family, limit three (3) days for each occurrence except in extraordinary circumstances as approved by the principal. Family defined as mother, father, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother's children, sister's children, student's child(ren), or any person living in the same household;

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- h. Leaves of educational value adhering these stipulations:
 - 1, Prior approval of school administrator;
 - 2. Prior submission and approval of educational plan detailing objectives and activities;
 - 3. Leave not to exceed 10 days with verification of implementation of the educational plan upon; the students return;
 - 4. leave to extend more than 10 days requires county board approval
- i. School approved curricular or extra-curricular activities;
- j. Legal obligation with verification;
- k. Failure of bus to run or extremely hazardous conditions;
- l. Observance of religious holidays; and
- m. Handicapped students' absences as addressed in accordance with Policy 2419.

4.2 Unexcused absences are absences not meeting the above requirements.

4.3 The West Virginia Board of Education has the responsibility of defining allowable deductions for purposes of state attendance reports and statistics. Absences resulting from allowable deductions shall not be calculated in the school's/county's attendance rate for accountability. Allowable deductions for schools-absences that result from school-approved curricular/co-curricular activities; failure of the bus to run/hazardous condition; excused student absences; students not in attendance due to disciplinary measures; and absent students for whom the attendance director has pursued judicial remedies to compel attendance (filed a criminal complaint or juvenile petition) due to provisions in WV Code §18-8-4.

4.4 Calculation Included.

- Excused absence
- Unexcused absence
- Unapproved vacation
- No contact from home explaining absence
- No doctor's excuse
- Left campus without permission
- Not in assigned area at time

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Medical or dental appointment
Illness in family verified
Illness verified by parent or physician
Calamity (fire, flood, family emergency)
Death in family
Skipped school
Educational leave
Legal obligation with verification
Observance of religious holiday

4.5 Violations to the compulsory school attendance law can result in conviction through the judicial system and if convicted penalties and costs applied as prescribed in WV Code 18-8-2.

4.6 Parents are asked to notify the school on the day of the child's absence. A follow-up note must be sent with the child when the child returns to school but no later than five (5) days after return to school. The note must include an explanation of absence.

If parents become subject to court proceedings, or if drivers license are to be revoked, then each person will be subject to due process hearing, as required by law.

4.7 Each school principal or his designee shall collect classroom attendance data and make appropriate referrals to the county attendance director. The principal or designee shall request a meeting or hold a telephone conference with the parent, guardian or custodian of a child when the child has five (5) unexcused absences in a semester. A referral will be made to the school counselor.

4.8 The attendance director must serve written notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian when a child has five consecutive or a total of ten unexcused absences in a semester. The notice shall include requirements of the parents in accordance with WV Code 18-8-4 regarding conferences, complaints, warrants and hearings. The attendance director must request a contact with the home to ascertain the reason for the absence.

4.9 Principals must make policy information available to students and their parents.

4.10 Make-up work: Any student absent from school shall be given the opportunity to complete or make up all work missed. The student will be given two (2) days for each day absent to make up assignments. discretion is granted to the principal for extraordinary circumstances.

4.11 Principals and/or the attendance director have the authority to investigate and declare any absence or absences unexcused when evidence exists that support that the absence does not meet the requirements for an excused absence.

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4.12 Leaving school without permission is classified as truancy.

4.13 Unexcused tardiness shall be defined as failure by the student to be on time for the beginning of school or class. As a preventative measurement for tardiness, “at risk” students may be referred to the counselor, teacher, nurse, principal, and student assistant team. Tardiness is not considered unexcused when the principal, counselor, nurse or a teacher writes a note that the student was delayed at the request of a teacher, counselor, nurse or the principal. Bus or system delays are not counted as student tardies.

4.14 Tardiness interferes with the orderly conducting of class; and, as such, shall be regarded as a disciplinary problem. Classes shall begin promptly on schedule and students shall be prepared to respond accordingly. Any student not prepared to begin class shall be considered tardy. Any disruptive or excessive tardiness shall be reported to the principal for disciplinary action; the following alternative courses of action may be pursued: counseling, parent conferences, work assignments, rearrangements of class schedules, detention, in-school suspension, restriction of extracurricular activities, and/or other disciplinary measures as presented in the school discipline plan.

4.15 After students have accumulated 3 unexcused tardies, they will be referred to the Student Assistance Team.

4.16 WV Code 18-8-11, requires that for the purposes of denying a drivers license, withdrawal from school shall be defined as not attending school more than 10 consecutive or 15 days total unexcused absences during the school year.

4.17 In order for those under 18 to regain their suspended drivers license, he or she must complete one full semester with three (3) or less unexcused absences.

Section 5. INCENTIVES

5.1 Attendance Certificate Awards

- a. Students who have achieved a perfect attendance record during the course of each instructional year shall be awarded a Perfect Attendance Certificate.
- b. Students who have been absent five (5) days or less during the course of each instructional year shall be awarded a Faithful Attendance Certificate.
- c. Each school will offer incentives to promote attendance.

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Regular attendance at school is a strong determiner of academic achievement; therefore, rewards and incentives to encourage perfect and outstanding attendance will be developed and implemented at the building level.

A variety of opportunities to provide incentives for school attendance are available at the building level. Some options are:

- A. Presentation of awards, i.e., certificates, plaques, season passes to sports events, etc. Awards can be presented on a semester basis as well as a yearly basis.
- B. Recognition at awards assemblies, graduation, other.
- C. Class participation bonus points (awarded by teacher).
- D. Special classroom or school privileges (determined by staff and/or administration, i.e., special seating in assemblies, etc.)
- E. Other.

Section 6. CORRECTIVE MEASURES

Each school shall develop and implement measures designed to meet the developmental needs of students such as:

- a. Alternative plans and programs that are positive (i.e., the County Alternative Learning Center) in nature and encourage improved school attendance;
- b. Procedures for the notification of parent/guardians of absences and procedures for securing parent involvement for improvement. At-risk students with 5 or 10 unexcused absences will be referred by the principal to the guidance counselor and/or attendance offices.
- c. Procedures for providing adequate counseling for concerns relating to attendance;
- d. Procedures for ensuring that county social services and attendance workers comply with the regulations as outlined in the Compulsory School Attendance Law in West Virginia Code as well as state and county policy.
- e. An unexcused absence of a student may also be treated as a disciplinary problem. Action will be taken to remedy the situation, which may include, but is not limited to, referral to the County Attendance Director, referral to county multi-disciplinary team after 10 absences, Dept. of Human Resources, Alternative learning center, contracting, counseling, parent conferences, home visitations, work assignments, rearrangement of class schedules, detention, restriction of extracurricular activities, in-school suspension, Saturday school, or other disciplinary actions.

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6.2 Exceptions

All high school students are required, according to WV Policy 2510, to be scheduled for a full instructional day for all four years. Exceptions will only be made for college courses, advanced technical training or virtual school classes. Exceptions will be approved by the Superintendent based on a principal recommendation.

6.3 Due Process

- a. When a student reaches five unexcused absences, the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian of the student requesting a conference to discuss the student's attendance. The parent/guardian must respond within 10 working days.
- b. When a student reaches 10 unexcused absences, a notice requiring a conference to discuss the student's attendance will be sent. The parent/guardian has 10 days to attend the conference. Failure to attend this conference will result in a warrant issued in magistrate court.
- c. No student will be suspended solely for failure to attend class.

There may be times during the implementation of this attendance policy where staff and/or administrative judgment is questioned by students, parent(s) or guardian(s).

The first appeal should be made to the principal at the school

After every effort is made to resolve differences at the building level, the parent(s) and students of legal guardian(s) may make appeal through the "Complaints from the Public—Appeals Procedures for Citizens".

A Student Assistance Team should be established at each school. The Committee shall meet periodically to review procedures for implementation of a policy and to determine appropriate interventions and appropriate preventative measures and their effectiveness to hear appeals from students and/or parents.

All revisions will be submitted to the West Virginia Department of Education for approval.