

Attendance Law

Amending Section 16-28-12, Code of Alabama 1975, requiring each local board of education to adopt and distribute to parents, guardians, and others a written policy of its school behavior standards; requiring parents, guardians, and others to document receipt of the plan; and specifying partial application to non-public schools.

Each parent, guardian or other person having control or custody of any child required to attend school or receive regular instruction by a private tutor who fails to have the child enrolled in school or who fails to send the child to school, or has him/her instructed by a private tutor during the time the child is required to attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a private tutor, or fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly conduct himself/herself as a pupil in any public school in accordance with the written policy (VI. Students Section 6.1.4) on school behavior adopted by the local board of education pursuant to this section and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) and may also be sentenced to hard labor for the county for not more than 90 days. The absence of a child without the consent of the principal/teacher of the public school he/she attends or should attend, or of the tutor who instructs or should instruct the child, shall be prima facie evidence of the violation of this section. At the commencement of each academic year a copy of the written policy on school behavior will be given to each parent, guardian, or other person having care or control of a child who is enrolled. Included in the written policy shall be a copy of this section. The signature of the student and the parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of the child shall document receipt of the policy.

Class Attendance and Absences

Students are expected to report on time and attend school for the full day. Kindergarten students are subject to the same attendance policies as other students in the system. Parents should make every effort to schedule doctors' and dentists' appointments after school hours. ABSENCES ARE EITHER EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED.

Excused absences are defined as the following:

1. Student Illness - Students who are sick and whose illness would endanger their health and the health of others. A doctor's excuse may be required.
2. Serious Family Illness - Students in whose immediate family there is a serious illness that would reasonably necessitate the absence of a student.
3. Death in the Immediate Family - Students in whose immediate family there has occurred a recent death may be temporarily excused from school for a reasonable length of time.
4. Recognized Religious Holidays - Students will be temporarily excused from attendance on special and recognized religious holidays.
5. Professional Appointments – Students will be excused for a professional appointment with a note from the Doctor for the appropriate amount of time provided by the excuse.
6. School-Sponsored Activities - Students shall be marked present when participating in a school-sponsored activity away from the school building. However, any work missed must be made up.
7. Family Emergency/Crisis - Students will be excused when their absence is beyond their control and due to a family emergency/crisis as determined by a school administrator.
8. Prior permission from the principal

Unexcused Absences

An absence for a reason not covered in the provisions described under "Excused Absence" will be unexcused (example: Overslept, Traffic, Missed Bus, etc.).

Students in grades K-12 with more than 10 unexcused days in one semester may be given a grade of FA (Failure due to Absence,) for that semester, unless extenuating circumstances exist, as determined by the principal. School attendance is required of all children between the ages of seven and seventeen, inclusive. (Alabama Code 16-28-3)

Parents will be notified of unexcused absences by letter sent via US Postal Service, per the following:

In-District Students

First unexcused absence – a letter will be mailed to the student address provided in the Student Information System.

Fifth unexcused absence – A letter will be mailed to the student address provided in the Student Information System from the attendance supervisor informing them that they are required to attend an Early Warning meeting. At the meeting, penalties for any additional unexcused absences will be discussed.

Seven or more unexcused absences – attendance supervisor will file a petition against the student in juvenile court. A contributing summons will be filed on the student's guardian if the student is under the age of thirteen.

Out of District Students

First unexcused absence - a letter will be mailed to the student's parent or guardian at the address provided in Student Information System

Third unexcused absence – a certified letter will be mailed to parent or guardian at the address provided in Student Information System reminding them of the attendance policies and procedures regarding out of district students.

Fifth unexcused absence - Attendance Supervisor will contact parent or guardian and request a face to face meeting to discuss the procedures regarding out of district students. If student reaches 6 unexcused absences, they may be withdrawn to the district in which they live.

Tenth unexcused tardy (check in or out) - Student and parents will be notified by certified mail regarding the attendance policies and procedures regarding out of district students.

Twelfth unexcused tardy (or a combination of both) - the student may be withdrawn to the school district in which they live Note: Unexcused absences and tardies are cumulative for the school year

Written Excuse Requirement

It is the parents' responsibility to see that their children attend school regularly and to provide evidence for an excused absence when an absence is necessary. A phone call to the school about an absence is not sufficient documentation.

The State of Alabama requires a written note on file; each note must contain the following:

- Child's full name
- Date to be excused
- Reason for absence
- Phone number to contact parent/guardian
- Signature of parent or doctor

Procedures for Parents Submitting Excuses

- (Seven) parent notes per semester that will excuse one (1) day per parent note will be accepted. (If a student is out more than 1 day, a parent note for each day will be required until all parent notes are used).

- After the student has used seven (7) parent notes for absences in the semester, a doctor's note will be required.
- Three (3) parent notes per nine weeks for check ins/check outs will be accepted. (Parent notes for check ins and outs are not counted against parent notes for absences.)
 - The excuse and/or necessary documentation must be submitted within three days (72 hours) after returning to school or the absence is unexcused.

All notes will be kept on file and marked valid or invalid upon date and time of receiving the note. When school officials do not know the reason for an absence, they must assume that it is unexcused.

It is the parent's responsibility to verify whether written or faxed excuses were received by the school.

Students must attend 51% of the day to be counted present for the day. Parents must sign their children in or out of school at the office and upon returning the student will need a note to take to his/her school. This note will count as one of the three (3) parent notes per grading period allowed for check ins/outs.

A student will have 5 days, after returning to school with an excused absence, to turn in make-up work (unless otherwise approved by the school principal).

STUDENT CHECK-IN AND CHECK OUT PROCEDURES FOR AMS

Any student checking in after 8:00 a.m. should have a parent/guardian notify the school in person or by phone as to the reason for the tardy unless he/she presents an excuse at the time of check-in.

Three parent notes, per nine weeks, will be allowed for check-ins/check outs. (Parent notes for check ins/check outs are not counted against parent notes for absences.)

Students will be allowed to check out of school only with parental permission. Parents are urged to leave children in school for the full school day.

Parents coming to the school to check students out, must come to the attendance office. A parent checking a student out does not in itself constitute an excused absence. Upon returning to school from checking out or from an absence, the student must present an excuse. Three parent notes per nine weeks will be allowed for check-ins/check outs, as long as the time in or out doesn't result in the student missing 51% or more of the school day. If the student does miss 51% or more of the day, a doctor excuse or one of the seven (7) parent notes for absences (with an acceptable ins/check outs, as long as the time in or out doesn't result in the student missing 51% or more of the school day. If the student does miss 51% or more of the day, a doctor excuse or one of the seven (7) parent notes for absences (with an acceptable excuse) must be used. Parent notes for check ins/check outs not resulting in the student missing 51% of the day or more are not counted against parent notes for absences. █

A student will have three (3) school days or 72 hours after returning to school to bring a note, and after that, the absence will be unexcused. If no note is offered, the absence will be unexcused. All notes will be kept on file and marked valid or invalid upon the date and time of receiving the note. A phone call or the mere fact that a parent signs a student in or out cannot be accepted as an excuse for an absence, check-ins, or check-outs. We must have a written note to file.

Please be advised that to implement Sections 16-28-40 (1975) Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-.02(7)(b)(1) your child's driver's license can be revoked by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency for excessive absences during a single semester.