



Book	Board Policy Manual
Section	J - Students
Title	Student Attendance
Number	JB
Status	Active
Legal	TCA 49-6-3007 TCA 49-6-3019 TRR/MS 0520-01-03-.08(1)(a) 0520-01-02-.17
Adopted	July 18, 2006
Last Revised	September 18, 2018
Last Reviewed	March 20, 2018

The Board recognizes that good attendance at school is basic to student learning. Attendance is a key factor in student achievement: therefore, students are expected to be present each day that school is in session. Parents have both a legal obligation and a moral responsibility to see that children are present every day that school is in session.

The Compulsory School Attendance Law in Tennessee requires children to attend school each day. A student who has been absent five days (this means a total of five days during the school year and not necessarily five consecutive days) without adequate excuse is considered truant and may be summoned to court. Whenever possible, attendance issues should be resolved at the school level. Prior to referral to a truancy officer, a meeting shall be held at the school to assist the family and improve student attendance via an attendance contract. If unexcused absences continue to accumulate, the Director of Schools or his/her designee will report the parent and student to the Juvenile Court for further action.

The following are official/adequate excuses that should be turned in to the attendance secretary in the school office

- Medical note for the student (doctor, dentist, hospital, etc.)
- Student illness not requiring a doctor visit ( five parent notes per semester)
- Court note for the student
- Funeral notice
- Recognized religious holiday
- College Visits
- Military deployment paperwork for parent

### **Appeal Procedure for Unexcused Absences**

The initial appeal shall be to the building principal or designee. If not resolved at the building level, the parent can request in writing an appeal to the Attendance Office at the Sumner County Board of Education. The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee consisting of Director of Schools Designee, an Attendance personnel representative and a principal/assistant principal representative. The burden of proof rests on the student or guardian. The appeal process for determining unexcused absences is ancillary to a truancy decision rendered by a juvenile court judge as described in T.C.A. 49-6-3010.

A principal may verify absences for the following:

- Approved school activity that is school sponsored and school supervised
- Extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis

Tardies: Any student not in the classroom when the class begins is tardy. Students who accumulate excessive unexcused tardies are considered truant and will be reported to Juvenile Court. A tardy is only excused by a doctor's note.

Unexcused Early Dismissals: For any student that is dismissed from school without a valid reason, the absence will be considered an unexcused early dismissal. A doctor's note excuses the early dismissal. A parent note may only be used to excuse a full day of absence.

Make-up work: Upon the first day of returning to school, it is the student's responsibility in middle and high school and the parent's responsibility in elementary school to make contact with the teacher(s) regarding make-up work. During the school year, make-up work must be completed within a number of days equal to the number of consecutive days of the absence.