

## **COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – HSD Policy – JBA –**

### **PHILOSOPHY OF ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is a vital aspect of developing and maintaining a successful educational experience. Regular attendance promotes a sense of responsibility, ensures educational continuity, and facilitates academic growth. Daily attendance is also important to both the school and the community in that it is the measure by which state funds are allocated to the schools.

### **COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The term “minor” when used in any statute, shall include any person, male or female, under twenty-one years of age. MS Code 1 1-3-27.

The Hollandale School District shall comply with the requirements of the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law (’37-13-91). Appropriate reports as required by law shall be provided to the Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Compulsory Attendance Enforcement.

### **COMPULSORY-SCHOOL-AGE-CHILD**

The school board is committed to providing the students of the Hollandale School District a performance-based educational program. The school board believes that all children can learn and that their daily attendance enhances the educational process. Therefore, in accordance with MS Code of 1972, Annotated 1 37-13-91; the Hollandale School District is directed to enforce the “Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law” and shall apply the same standards towards all students.

“Compulsory-school-age child” means a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program ’37-13-91 (2) (f) (2013)

#### **I. AGE/REQUIREMENTS**

Compulsory-school-age children must be enrolled in school unless the child is:

1. Physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation;

2. Enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children; or
3. Being educated in a home instruction program approved by the State Department of Education.

## II. REPORTS

If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year or if a child has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences during the school year, the principal or designee shall, within two (2) school days or within five (5) calendar days, whichever is less, report, on the form provided by the State Department of Education, the absences to the school attendance officer. The principal, or his/her designee, shall report any student suspensions or student expulsions to the school attendance officer when they occur.

School districts shall maintain accurate records documenting enrollment and attendance in a manner that allows the State Department of Education to make an assessment of changes in enrollment and attendance, including dropout rates.

School districts shall produce an annual report detailing statistical information in reference to dropout rates and other attendance-related problems, and provide the report to the State Department of Education.

The State Department of Education shall compile annually a statewide report on school district effectiveness in reducing absentee problems, dropout rates, and other attendance-related problems during the previous school year, incorporate the information into the annual Mississippi Report Card required by Section 37-3-53, Mississippi Code of 1972, on school district performance and offer technical assistance and coordination services to assist districts in improving performance.

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### III. DEFINITIONS

An “unlawful absence” is an absence during a school day by a compulsory-school-age child, which absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance. Days missed from school due to disciplinary suspension shall not be considered an excused absence under this section.

Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to the superintendent or his/her designee:

1. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee.
2. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school. Student must submit a valid doctor's excuse upon immediate return to school.
3. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school official. Student must submit a letter for the county health officer or State Board of Health upon immediate return to school.
4. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters. Student must submit a valid excuse from the company performing the services. This letter must be on company letterhead and contain valid contact information.
5. A medical or dental appointment with prior approval of the superintendent or his designee, except in the case of emergency.
6. Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
7. Observance of a religious event, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his designee. (Approval should not be withheld unless, in the professional judgment of the superintendent or his designee, the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
8. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel including vacations or other family travel, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his designee. (Approval shall be based on the professional judgment of the superintendent or his designee but shall not be withheld unless the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
9. Other conditions sufficient to warrant nonattendance, with prior approval of the superintendent or his designee. However, no absences shall be excused when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law. `37-13-91 (4)
10. An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory-school-age child participating in official organized events sponsored by the 4-H or Future Farmers of America (FFA). The excuse for the 4-H or FFA event must be provided in writing to the appropriate school superintendent by the Extension Agent or High School Agricultural Instructor/FFA Advisor.

11. An absence is excused when it results from the compulsory-school-age child officially being employed to serve as a page at the State Capitol for the Mississippi House of Representatives or Senate.

*No absence shall be excused when it is due to suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary action.*

NOTE: According to a 1998 Attorney General Opinion, automatic fail provision of an absences policy may not apply against legal, excused absences. Such absences policies may not be applied against absences resulting from disciplinary suspensions if absences policies are applied to truant children who are otherwise passing, the district must afford the child procedural due process. (Attorney General Opinion, *Carter*, 1-9-98) (#183) (97-0817)

The superintendent and principals shall cooperate with the school attendance officer employed by the State Department of Education, pursuant to 37-13-85.

The Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards for this policy are standards 10 and 11.

Legal Ref.: Miss. Code as cited

*Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*

CROSS REF.: Policies JBAC Truancy

JBD Attendance, Tardiness and Excuses

### **ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS AND EXCUSES – HSD Policy JBD**

Regular attendance and promptness to class are necessary to assure the continuity of the educational program. Time lost from class is irretrievable and absence tends to disrupt the continuity of the instructional program. Most teaching is done in an orderly sequence of building concepts and practice based on classroom activities and previous learning. If this pattern is broken by poor attendance, neither the student nor the school can expect satisfactory progress.

Absences are considered to be excused or unexcused.

### **Attendance Policy – Grades 7-12**

- I. Excused Absence – Absence will be excused for the following reasons:
  - A. Personal illness
  - B. Illness or death of family members
  - C. Required attendance at court proceeding
  - D. Medical or dental appointments
  - E. Other absences beyond the student's and/or parent's control will be reviewed on an individual basis.
  - F. All work missed for the above reasons must be made up within (2) days of returning to school.