

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 polies 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.

## II. Unexcused Absences

- A. All absences other than those listed above will be unexcused and missed work cannot be made up with the exception of In-School School suspensions imposed by the school or district administration.
- B. Students receive zero for all work missed when an absence is deemed to be unexcused by the school.

## III. Exceptions

- A. When a student's absence from school is because of representing the school on official business, e.g. sports, band, choral activities, etc., teachers will be notified two days in advance by the activity sponsor. However, the student has the responsibility of checking with the teacher in advance of the absence and completing all work missed, preferably in advance of the absence but within the time line of other excused absences. No student may miss more than twenty (20) class periods per year or five (5) sessions of the same class to participate in school activities.

- IV. There are three (3) major reasons why the attendance policy is needed. First, the district receives money through the Mississippi Adequate Education Program based on the average daily attendance of students and other considerations. Second is the staggering amount of make-up work that each teacher has to deal with because of students being absent. Finally, is the fact that student achievement is adversely affected by excessive absences being a major factor in student failure.

### A. Semester Classes:

1. When a student is absent for any reason(s) he/she will be reminded by school personnel of the restraints of the attendance policy and must present a valid excuse upon immediate return to school.
2. If a student misses two (2) or more consecutive days from school due to illness, she/he must produce a doctor's excuse upon immediate arrival to school or the absence(s) will be deemed unexcused.

3. With the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) absence during a semester, (excused or unexcused) parents and student will be advised by the attendance office that an absence pattern has developed and the student will be required to submit a doctor's or dentist excuse for each subsequent absence. Failure to do so will constitute the student being turned over to the state attendance officer for investigation.

B. Yearly Classes:

1. When a student is absent for any reason(s) he/she will be reminded by school personnel of the restraints of the attendance policy and must present a valid excuse upon immediate return to school
2. With the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) absence during a yearly class, (excused or unexcused) parents and student will be advised by the attendance office that an absence pattern has developed and the student will be required to submit a doctor's or dentist's excuse for each subsequent absence. Failure to do so will constitute the student being turned over to the state attendance officer for investigation.

V. Procedure of Due Process:

As in any appeal of a decision, the initial step will be to contact the building principal, following by an appeal to the Superintendent and then to the school board if needed.

**Note:** Absences for all compulsory school aged students who exceed five consecutive absences will be reported to the County/State Attendance Officer.

VI. Bus Suspensions:

- A. If a student is suspended from riding the school bus, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child arrives at school on time and is transported home safely. A suspension of bus privileges and subsequently not having transportation to school will not be accepted as an excuse for students to be absent.

**Attendance Policy Grades 1-6**

Excused Absences – 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.

II. Unexcused Absences:

- A. All absences other than those listed above will be unexcused and missed work cannot be made up with the exception of In-School Suspensions imposed by the school or district administration.
- B. Students receive zero for all work missed when an absence is deemed to be unexcused by the school.

III. Exceptions:

- A. When a student's absence from school is because of representing the school on official business, e.g. sports, band, choral activities, etc. teachers will be notified two days in advance by the activity sponsor. However, the student has the responsibility of checking with the teacher in advance of the absence and completing all work missed, preferably in advance of the absence but within the time line of other excused absences.

IV. There are three (3) major reasons why the attendance policy is needed. First, the district receives money through the Mississippi Adequate Education Program based on the average daily attendance of students and other considerations. Second is the staggering amount of make-up work which each teacher has to deal with because of the student being absent. Finally, is the fact that student achievement is adversely affected by excessive absence with absence being a major factor in student failure.

A. Semester Classes:

**Currently no one semester classes are offered in grades 1-6. However, if such classes are offered in the future, the following steps would apply:**

1. When a student is absent for any reason(s) he/she will be reminded by school personnel of the restraints of the attendance policy and must present a valid excuse upon immediate return to school.

2. If a student misses two (2) or more consecutive days from school due to illness, she/he must produce a doctor's excuse upon immediate arrival to school or the absence(s) will be deemed unexcused.

3. With the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) absence during a semester, (excused or unexcused) parents and student will be advised by the attendance office that an absence pattern has developed and the student will be required to submit a doctor's or dentist excuse for each subsequent absence. Failure to do so will constitute the student being turned over to the state attendance officer for investigation.

B. Yearly Classes:

1. When a student is absent for any reason(s) he/she will be reminded by school personnel of the restraints of the attendance policy and must present a valid excuse upon immediate return to school.

2. With the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) absence during a semester, (excused or unexcused) parents and student will be advised by the attendance office that an absence pattern has developed and the student will be required to submit a doctor's or dentist excuse for each subsequent absence. Failure to do so will constitute the student being turned over to the state attendance officer for investigation.

C. Procedure of Due Process:

As in any appeal of a decision, the initial step will be to contact the building principal, following by an appeal to the Superintendent and then to the school board if needed.

**Note:** Absences for all compulsory school aged students who exceed five consecutive absences will be reported to the County/State Attendance Officer.

VI. Bus Suspensions:

A. If a student is suspended from riding the school bus, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child arrives at school on time and is transported home safely. A suspension of bus privileges and subsequently not having transportation to school will not be accepted as an excuse for students to be absent.

#### IV. TARDINESS, ABSENCES and DISMISSALS

##### A. Tardiness:

- a. Any student reporting to his or her assigned school and/or class after the specified daily starting time for the school and/or shall be considered tardy for the school day and as such, shall be subject to the guidelines of the disciplinary code of conduct.
- b. The tardy strategy listed below will be used in the Fall Semester (August through December) and the Spring Semester (January through May).
  - i. If a student receives three (3) tardies at any point during the Fall or Spring semesters, a mandatory parent conference with the principal of the school or his/her designee will be warranted.
  - ii. Following the subsequent parent meeting, if a student receives his/her fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) tardy the student will not be allowed to participate in any school sponsored or extra-curricular activities for a 2 weeks period during that semester.
  - iii. Should a student receive a five (5) or more tardies following the implementation of the above strategies, he/she will be given an additional week (5 school days) of non-participation in school sponsored or extra-curricular activities per tardy over five (5) AND may be turned over to the attendance officer and/or the Department of Human Services for the investigation of child neglect by the parent.
- c. **NOTE: All tardy incidents will be removed from a student's record at the beginning of each semester.**

##### B. Early Dismissals:

- a. Any student dismissed from school prior to being there for at least 63% of the school day or prior to 1:00 p.m. shall be counted absent for the day.
- b. Only the building level principal or certified assistant principal will be authorized to release students early from school.
- c. A student will only be allowed to be dismissed early from school for the following reasons:
  - i. Pre-approved doctor or dental appointment.
    1. Approved by the principal
  - ii. Death in the immediate family
  - iii. Documented proof of a family emergency
- d. Any student allowed to be released from school early must have a valid excuse immediately upon arriving back to school.

NOTE: Any approved early dismissal will be considered an absence from school and will be considered in the total number of absences for that school year.

C. Absences:

- a. Any student missing more than 37% of the school day or comes to school after 10:00 am will be considered absent. However, students with a valid excuse accepted by the school principal may be admitted to school at any point during the school day with the understanding that he or she will be considered absent for that day and will be allowed to make up all work missed under school policy.
- b. If a student reports to school and is properly signed out by the parent or guardian, he/she cannot not return to the school grounds during the same 24 hour period for participation in any school sponsored event unless otherwise approved by the building level principal.

Participation in any extra-curricular activities as they may relate to the implementation of this policy statement will be determined by the principal of the school.

All absences and tardiness related to truancy are unexcused.

**DISMISSAL HSD Policy – JGFC**

Withdrawal from School

- A. No student shall leave school without permission from the principal or his designee.
- B. Students shall be allowed to withdraw from school for personal illness or bona fide emergency. Students must secure a withdrawal permit from the attendance office, and a parent or guardian appointed by the Chancery Court contacted before they will be allowed to leave school.
- C. Students having an appointment with a doctor or dentist or for other valid reasons may withdraw from school as follows:
  1. A parent or guardian appointed by the Chancery Court may personally come to the school and withdraw a student.
  2. The student may present a doctor or dentist appointment card to the attendance office and receive a withdrawal permit.
  3. The student may present a note from a parent or guardian appointed by the Chancery Court to the attendance office, which contains the reason for withdrawal, time of