

4.07 -- ABSENCES - School Board Policy

If any student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan conflicts with this policy, the requirements of the student's IEP or 504 Plan take precedence.

Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Important as that is, students' regular attendance at school, whether in person or digitally, is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept responsibilities they will face as adults. Interactions with other students and participation in instruction within the classroom or online enrich the learning environment and promote a continuity of instruction, which results in higher student achievement.

Absences for students enrolled in synchronous digital courses shall be determined in the same manner as for District students attending courses in person.

Excused Absences

Nemo Vista will allow a maximum of eight (8) excused absences per semester. If the student's absences exceed the maximum of eight (8) allowed excused days, the parent/guardian must contact the principal for preapproval of the absences. This may be by phone or in person. If the parent/guardian does not seek preapproval or is not approved for the extended absences, these absences will be considered unexcused (see the paragraph concerning unexcused absences).

Excused absences are those where the student was on official school business or when the absence was due to one of the following reasons. Parents need to keep all documentation, just in case their child misses 8 days. This documentation will need to be presented to the principal to receive extended absences.

1. The student's illness or when attendance could jeopardize the health of other students (with medical documentation)
2. Death or serious illness in their immediate family;
3. Observance or recognized holidays observed by the student's faith;
4. Attendance at an appointment with a government agency;
5. Attendance at the medical appointment: All Doctor's statements are required to be on the doctor's letterhead with an original signature (no stamps). (Nemo Vista: The district reserves the right to require confirmation of the medical documentation through direct communication with the medical personnel responsible for the documentation, and if the district is unable to confirm or verify the absence or the reason for the absence, to consider the absence to be unexcused;
6. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal;
7. Participation in an FFA, FHA, or 4-H-sanctioned activity;
8. Participate in the election poll workers program for high school students;
9. Absences granted to allow a student to visit his/her parent or legal guardian who is a member of the military and has been called to active duty, is on leave from active duty or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. The number of additional excused absences shall be at the discretion of the superintendent or designee.
10. Absences granted, at the Superintendent's discretion, to seventeen (17) year-old students who join the Arkansas National Guard, while in eleventh grade, to complete basic combat training between grades (11) and (12).
11. Absences for students excluded from school by the Arkansas Department of Health due to a disease outbreak because the student has an immunization waiver or whose immunizations are not up to date.
12. Absences due to conditions related to pregnancy or parenting, including, without limitation:
 - Labor, delivery, and recovery;
 - Prenatal and postnatal medical appointments and other medically necessary, pregnancy-related absences;
 - The illness or medical appointment of a child belonging to a parent who is enrolled at a District school;
 - A legal appointment related to pregnancy or parenting, including, without limitation:
 - Adoption;

- Custody; and
 - Visitation;
 - A reasonable amount of time to accommodate a lactating student's need to express breast milk or to breastfeed the student's child on the District's campus; and
 - At least ten (10) school days of absences for both a parenting mother and a parenting father after the birth of a child.
13. Absences for a student who is the child of a fallen service member or fallen first responder:
- Due to a mental health concern; or
 - To attend an event from a sponsoring organization that provides support to families of fallen service members or first responders or provides support for traumatic loss, grief, or resiliency.
14. Upon the written consent of a student's parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis to the student, the District shall grant an excused absence for the following purposes:
- Social or public policy advocacy; or
 - Attempts to influence legislation or other governmental policy-making at the local, state, or federal level.
15. Students who serve as pages for a member of the General Assembly shall be considered on instructional assignment and shall not be considered absent from school for the day the student is serving as a page.
- a. The student's parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis to the student provides written documentation that the student's absence is to attend an event from a sponsoring organization that:
- Provides support to families of fallen service members or first responders or provides support for traumatic loss, grief, or resiliency; and
 - May be verified as an organization that provides support to the military and first responder community by reviewing the Resources Page for Military Family Engagement on the Department of Education website.
- In order for the absence to be considered excused, the student must:
- a. Bring a written statement to the principal or designee upon the student's return to school from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence;
 - b. If the student is attending the District's courses digitally, upload a written statement from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence through the District's digital course management platform for review by the principal or designee; or
 - c. Provide documentation as proof of a student's participation in an activity or program scheduled and approved by the 4-H program that is provided by a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program.

A written statement presented or uploaded for an absence having occurred more than five (5) school days before its presentation or upload will not be accepted.

Nemo Vista requires that all notes explaining reasons for excused absences be kept at home by parents. If the principal questions the number of days that a student is absent, the parent will be required to bring the notes to a meeting with the principal or their designee. The principal or their designee will discuss the notes with the parents and declare the total of excused absences.

Students who serve as pages for a member of the General Assembly shall be considered on instructional assignment and shall not be considered absent from school for the day the student is serving as a page.

Up to one (1) time during each scheduled election, a student shall not be considered absent from school for the time the student accompanies the student's parent when the parent is exercising the parent's right to vote in a scheduled election.

The Arkansas General Assembly intends that students having excessive absences be given assistance in obtaining credit for their courses. Excessive absences may, however, be the basis for the denial of course credit, promotion, or graduation.

A student shall not be eligible to receive an excused absence for #13 above if:

- The student is not in good academic standing;
- The student does not have a prior record of good attendance; or
- The absence occurs during a date on which standardized testing is administered.

The District shall annually provide a report by June 30 to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education that contains the following:

- The number of absences requested under number 14;
- The number of absences granted under number 14; and
- The stated purposes of the absence.

The former student meets certain requirements specified in the statute.

Unexcused Absences

Absences not defined above; do not have an accompanying note from the parents, or legal guardian; a person having lawful control of the student; person standing loco parentis, the student's treating physician, or a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program; or have an accompanying note that is not presented or uploaded in within the timeline required by this policy; shall be considered as unexcused absences. Students with more than eight (8) unexcused absences in a course in a semester may not receive credit for that course. Students in grades 9-12 who have more than eight (8) unexcused absences in a specific class period could potentially lose credit for that course at the administration's discretion. At the discretion of the principal after consultation with persons knowing the circumstances for the unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

When a student has 4 unexcused absences, his/her parents, legal guardians, persons with lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be notified. Notification shall be by telephone by the end of the school day in which such absence occurred or by regular mail with a return address sent no later than the following school day.

When a student exceeds the eight (8) excused absences per semester and no conference has been held with the building-level administrator, these days will be considered unexcused. The principal will contact the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis to inform them of the policy and schedule a conference with the parent, guardian, or loco parentis and/or student. If the absences continue with no preapproved circumstances, the building principal will send a letter to the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis and the prosecuting attorney will be notified. The parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.

At any time before when a student exceeds the number of unexcused absences permitted by this policy, the student or his/her parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis may petition the school or district's administration for special arrangements to address the student's unexcused absences. If formal arrangements are granted, they shall be formalized into a written agreement which will include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement's requirements. The agreement shall be signed by the student, the student's parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis, and the school or district administrator or designee.

The Arkansas General Assembly intends that students having excessive absences be assisted in obtaining credit for their courses. Therefore, at any time before when a student exceeds the number of unexcused absences permitted by this policy, the student, or his/her parent, legal guardian, person with lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis may petition the school or district's

administration for special arrangements to address the student's unexcused absences. If the formal arrangements are granted, they shall be formalized into a written agreement which will include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the agreement's requirements. The agreement shall be signed by the student; parentis; and the school or district administrator or designee.

Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.

Days missed due to out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be unexcused absences.

The District shall notify the Department of Finance and Administration whenever a student fourteen (14) years of age or older is no longer in school. The Department of Finance and Administration is required to suspend the former student's operator's license unless he/she meets certain requirements specified in the statute.

Sign Out

Students must be signed out at the appropriate office before they will be allowed to leave their classroom. Please go directly to the office when signing out a child. The office will intercom or go to the classroom to get your child.

Parent Pick-up and Drop Off (Elementary)

Parents who pick up their children should line up in the pick-up line in the north parking lot of the elementary building. Please stay in your car. Children will be released at 3:00 and will be brought to your car. When dropping off your children, please use the parking lot in front of the cafeteria. The cafeteria doors will be locked at 8:05. If you are dropping off after 8:05 (This is considered tardy), you must bring your child to the office and sign them in.

Students being picked up downstairs must stay on the steps with the supervisor until they have been released by the supervisor.

Passes and Permits

STUDENTS MUST HAVE A NOTE IF THEY ARE TO GO HOME WITH ANOTHER STUDENT, ON A DIFFERENT BUS, OR BE PICKED UP AFTER SCHOOL. Parents are welcome to call the office, and a note will be taken to the teacher. The child will give the note to the bus driver or the afternoon pick-up duty personnel. WE CANNOT GO ON THE CHILD'S WORD.

A student WILL NOT be allowed to leave school during the school day without prior permission from parents or guardians. A phone call or signed note is required before the departure of the student.

No student shall be taken from the school campus by anyone except a person who has a legal right to the child's custody or permission has been granted by a legal guardian. Please file custody papers in the appropriate office(s).

No student may be sent on errands away from the school campus except by permission of the principal (Elementary) Students who are going to be picked up early should give their teacher a note first thing in the morning to allow the teacher an opportunity to have the student ready to go.

Other Attendance Policies

A student must be in attendance for three (3) hours to be eligible to participate in any **school function** that day or night. The superintendent or principal may waive this rule in the event of extenuating circumstances.

When a student has been checked out from his/her school, the student must leave campus. A student **cannot** be checked out from one school to attend a function in another school without prior permission from the principal.

When students are not present at school, they may not attend a school event without prior permission from the building principal.

Cross Reference:

4.08 ---MAKE-UP WORK 5.7---IMMUNIZATIONS

5.11---DIGITAL LEARNING COURSES

5.29---WELLNESS POLICY

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-4-302
A.C.A. § 6-18-209
A.C.A. § 6-18-222
A.C.A. § 6-18-507(g)
A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f)

A.C.A. § 6-18-231
A.C.A. § 6-18-213
A.C.A. § 6-18-229
A.C.A. § 6-18-702
A.C.A. § 7-4-116

A.C.A. § 6-18-234
A.C.A. § 6-18-220
A.C.A. § 6-18-236
A.C.A. § 6-28-114
A.C.A. § 27-16-701

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Definition of a Full Day (Elementary Only)

A full day of school is defined by the State Department of Education as six (6) hours of instruction time for the student. This excludes lunch and recess time. To be counted in attendance for a full day, a student must arrive before 8:30 A.M. and stay the remainder of the day. If a student checks out early, they must not leave before 2:30 P.M. to be considered in full attendance.

Definition of a Half Day (Elementary Only)

With the definition of a full day being six (6) hours of instruction, a half day will be 2 instructional hours before lunch/recess or 2 instructional hours after lunch/recess

Definition of Half Day (Middle School/High School)

In Middle School and High School, attendance is taken on a period-by-period basis. Once a student has missed 5 more class periods, they will be considered a full day absence. Students missing 3 class periods will be considered as a ½ day absence.