

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

I. The Lafayette Parish School Board recognizes that the fundamental right to attend the public schools places upon students the accompanying responsibility to be faithful in attendance. Regular attendance can be assumed to be essential for a student's successful progress in the instructional program. A student is considered to be in attendance when he or she (1) is physically present at a school site or is participating in an authorized school activity and (2) is under the supervision of authorized personnel. This definition for attendance would extend to students who are homebound, assigned to and participating in drug rehabilitation programs that contain a state-approved education component, or participating in school-authorized field trips or other school-approved activities.

II. HALF AND WHOLE DAY ATTENDANCE

A. Half-day attendance - A student is considered to be in attendance for one-half day when he or she (1) is physically present at a school site or is participating in an authorized school activity and (2) is under the supervision of authorized personnel for more than 25% but not more than half (26%-50%) of the student's instructional day.

B. Whole-day attendance - A student is considered to be in attendance for a whole day when he or she (1) is physically present at a school site or is participating in an authorized school activity and (2) is under the supervision of authorized personnel for more than 50% (51%-100%) of the student's instructional day.

III. COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

A. Compulsory attendance laws and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) regulations require elementary students to be present a minimum of one hundred sixty-seven (167) days to be eligible to receive credit for courses taken. Secondary students shall be required to be present a minimum of eighty-three and one-half (83.5) days or the equivalent, per semester, or one hundred sixty-seven (167) days a school year for schools not operating on a semester basis, in order to be eligible to receive credit for courses taken.

B. **All** absences, whether excused or unexcused shall be counted as absences for attendance reporting purposes.

IV. MINIMUM ATTENDANCE

A. For a student to be eligible to receive credit and make up work during an absence, the student shall be required in each instance to submit an approved reason for the absence. Students not excused shall be given failing grades in those subjects for those days missed, provided a graded activity was conducted during the unexcused absence, and shall not be given an opportunity to make up the work missed.

V. EXCUSED ABSENCES

A. Excused absences can only be granted in the event of extenuating circumstances as outlined below. School personnel may require certificates from participating

physicians, and dentists substantiating all illnesses. Written evidence from church authorities relative to requiring religious observances may also be required.

VI. TYPES OF ABSENCES

The days absent for elementary and secondary school students shall include temporarily excused absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions.

A. Temporarily Excused Absences

Excused absences are absences of two or fewer consecutive school days incurred due to personal illness, serious illness in the family, death in the family (not to exceed one week), or for recognized religious holidays of the student's own faith and shall be given the opportunity to make up work provided that in each instance parental confirmation has been received, giving the reason for the absence. Written evidence from church authorities relative to requiring religious observances may also be required.

B. Unexcused Absences

Students shall not be excused for any absence other than those listed under temporarily excused absences above or extenuating circumstances below, and shall be given failing grades in those subjects for those days missed, and **shall not** be given an opportunity to make up work. Students shall not be excused from school to work on any job including agriculture and domestic service, even in their own homes or for their own parents or tutors, unless it is part of an approved instructional program.

C. Absences Due to Suspensions

Students missing school as result of any out-of-school suspension shall be counted as absent but may make up any assigned work for partial credit as determined by the assigned teacher and school principal.

VII. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Only the following shall be considered extenuating circumstances under which absences shall be exempt from provisions of compulsory attendance laws as verified by the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance.

A. Extended personal physical or emotional illness as verified by a physician or nurse practitioner.

B. Extended hospital stay as verified by a physician or dentist.

C. Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner.

D. Extended contagious disease within a family as verified by a physician or dentist

E. Observance of special and recognized holidays of the student's own faith

F. For any other extenuating circumstances, the student's parents or legal guardian must make a formal appeal in accordance with the due process procedures established by the school system. The parent may request and complete a Formal Appeal for Absences

Due to Extenuating Circumstances and submit it to the Child Welfare and Attendance Office.

G. Students who are verified as meeting extenuating circumstances and therefore eligible to receive grades shall not receive those grades if they are unable to complete makeup work or pass the course.

VIII. PRINCIPAL APPROVED ABSENCES

The only other exceptions to the attendance regulations shall be other absences as verified by the principal or his/her designee as stated below:

- A. Prior school system-approved travel for education (College Visitation, University Testing)
- B. Death in the family (not to exceed one week)
- C. Natural catastrophe and/or disasters

IX. EXCUSES

A. When a student is absent, one of the following forms of documentation must be presented to the school **within five days** upon the student's return to class if an exception is to be granted:

- 1. Absences for Medical or Dental Reasons: A doctor's, dentist's, or nurse practitioner's written statement of student's incapacity to attend school is required for all medical/dental absences.
- 2. Absences for Legal Commitments: Court ordered subpoenas or other legal business documentation.
- 3. Death in the Family: Documentation regarding the death of a family member, i.e., death certificate, obituary. (Maximum of five (5) days)
- 4. Catastrophic: Documentation regarding catastrophic personal-social occurrences, i.e., flood, fire, domestic violence, family illness in the student's home, etc.
- 5. Chronic Medical Conditions: Require a letter from a licensed health care provider that states the condition and how it contributes to absences from school. This letter must be submitted to the school principal by the end of the first three (3) weeks of the session or immediately after the medical condition has been diagnosed. The student's medical situation should be discussed with the teacher and/or principal. Each time a student is absent due to the chronic condition, the parent must send a note state that the absence was due to the diagnosed chronic medical condition.
- 6. Head lice: Absences require appropriate documentation from school nurse or physician (maximum three (3) day absence).

X. MAKE-UP WORK

A. After each absence from school, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to makeup work missed during the absence with his/her teacher, following his/her return.

B. All makeup work will be completed within five (5) school days from the day the student returns to school. The teacher who will give the makeup work will decide on the scheduling of the work on any day after the return day but within the five (5) days.

C. If a student misses a mid-term or final exam, proper medical/dental documentation, must be submitted by the parent/guardian that verifies and documents the necessity for the absence.

D. Any work missed because of suspension or recommended expulsions can be made up. The student will receive partial credit as determined by the teacher and principal.

E. A student attending school sponsored or endorsed activities, including LPSS pullout programs, sporting events, field trips and college or military visitation has the responsibility of obtaining all assignments and completing the work as scheduled for the classes missed. For extended absences, teachers may grant exceptions, prior to the absence, for work due in his/her class.

F. Students may not complete make-up work for any unexcused absences.

XI. REPORTING ABSENCES

A. The attendance of all school pupils shall be checked each school day and at the beginning of each class period and shall be verified by the teacher keeping such record, which shall be open to inspection by the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance or duly authorized representative at all reasonable times. All schools shall immediately report to the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance any unexplained, unexcused, or illegal absence, or habitual tardiness.

B. The Truancy Administrator shall, after written notice to the parent or legal guardian of a child, or a personal visit of notification, report any such child who is habitually absent or who is habitually tardy to the family or juvenile court of the parish as a truant child, there to be dealt with in such manner as the court may determine.

XII. STUDENT PERMISSION TO LEAVE CAMPUS

No public elementary or secondary school pupil shall be permitted for any reason to absent himself/herself from school attendance during the school day upon his/her own authority. The principal or designee shall make all reasonable efforts to verbally notify the parent or other person responsible for the pupil's school attendance of any such prohibited absence by a pupil.

XIII. APPEAL OF ABSENCES

A. When a student exceeds the maximum number of absences allowed, including excused and unexcused absences, the parents or student may make a formal appeal to the principal if they feel any of the absences are because of extenuating circumstances. If they feel that the decision is unfavorable, they shall appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee (Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance). After a review by the

Superintendent or his/her designee, a decision shall be made and communicated to the parents or legal guardian by letter.

B. Students in danger of failing due to excessive absences may be allowed to make up missed time in class sessions held outside the regular class time. The make-up sessions must be completed before the end of the current semester and all other applicable policies must also be met.

XIV. TARDINESS

A. A student shall be considered tardy to class if the student is not in the classroom when the bell to begin class ceases.

B. A student shall be considered tardy to school if the student is not in his/her homeroom/first period class when the bell to begin homeroom/class ceases.

C. Tardy shall also mean leaving or checking out of school unexcused prior to the regularly scheduled dismissal. Tardiness on the part of students shall not be tolerated.

D. Students who exhibit tardiness shall be subject to disciplinary action, appropriate under the circumstances. Parents of students who continue to be tardy shall be notified for a conference with the principal, and the student may be subject to suspension from school and the parent/legal guardian subject to court fines or community service.

E. A student shall not be marked tardy if his/her bus arrived late.

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