ATTENDANCE POLICY UPDATES

KEY CHANGES FOR 2026-2027

Mississippi Senate Bill 2103 | District Policy JBA

These state-mandated regulations go into effect for the 2026-2027 school year.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- Excused absences are now limited to five (5) per semester.
- Additional excused absences require principal approval based on the following documented extenuating circumstances: prolonged illness or injury supported by medical documentation, extended religious observances, or participation in educational opportunities of substantial merit.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

- Absences due to illness or injury beyond the third (3rd) occurrence must be supported by a written excuse from a medical provider.
- Previous policy allowed unlimited medically excused absences with a doctor's note.

PARENT NOTIFICATION

- Parents/guardians must be notified beginning with a student's third (3rd) absence, whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
- Parents/guardians must be offered an opportunity to participate in a conference to identify attendance barriers.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

- Students must attend at least 66% of the instructional day to be counted present for a full day.

STATE ATTENDANCE OFFICERS

- State Attendance Officers may file court petitions after eight (8) unexcused absences rather than twelve (12).
- DeSoto County Schools' role is limited to reporting absences to State Attendance Officers according to the method and timeline prescribed by state law.

State Attendance Officer procedures and timelines are established and implemented by the state and are not legislated by DeSoto County Schools.

Every day matters. Every minute counts.

ATTENDANCE LAW: THEN VS. NOW

DeSoto County Schools • 2026–2027

CATEGORY	PREVIOUS (OLD)	REVISED (NEW)
PARENT-EXCUSED ABSENCES	Parent/guardian could excuse absences with a note based on the number set by district policy.	A student may receive up to 5 excused absences per semester (based on documentation and medical excuses) with certain limitations.
MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION	No specific requirement regarding documentation was required for illness-related absences.	Absences due to illness or injury beyond the 3rd absence require medical documentation.
EXCESSIVE ABSENCES	Unlimited medical excuses were permitted with appropriate documentation to excuse absences.	Additional excused absences beyond the semester limit require principal approval based on documentation within one of the three extenuating circumstances.
STATE ATTENDANCE OFFICERS	May file court petitions at 12 unexcused absences.	May file court petitions at 8 unexcused absences.

For additional guidance, refer to Mississippi Senate Bill 2103 and DeSoto County Schools Policy JBA.