

Absences and Excuses

It is the intent of this policy to encourage the regular and punctual attendance of students enrolled in the school system. While it is the responsibility of the parent and the student to ensure regular and punctual attendance, this policy details the attendance expectations for students enrolled in the District. Recording of absences and tardies shall be made in compliance with the requirements of [702 KAR 007:125](#).¹

The Carter County Board of Education believes that there is a direct relationship between poor attendance and lack of achievement. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are much better adjusted to live in our society.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

All children in the District who have entered Kindergarten or who are between the ages of six (6), as of August 1, and eighteen (18), except those specifically exempted by statute, shall enroll and be in regular attendance in the school in which they are assigned.²

EXEMPTIONS FROM COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

The Board shall exempt the following from compulsory attendance:

1. A graduate from an accredited or approved 4-year high school,
2. A pupil who is enrolled in a private or parochial school,
3. A pupil who is less than seven (7) years old and in regular attendance in a private kindergarten nursery school,
4. A pupil whose physical or mental condition prevents or renders inadvisable, attendance at school or application to study,
5. A pupil who is enrolled and in regular attendance in private, parochial, or church school programs for exceptional children, or
6. A pupil who is enrolled and in regular attendance in a state supported program for exceptional children.³

PHYSICIAN'S STATEMENT REQUIRED

The Board, before granting an exemption, for a physical or mental condition, shall require a signed statement as required by law unless a student's individual education plan (IEP) specifies that placement of the child with a disability at home or in a hospital is the least restrictive environment for providing services.³

DEFINITION OF TRUANCY

Any student who has attained the age of six (6), but has not reached his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday, who has been absent from school without valid excuse for three (3) days or more, or tardy without valid excuse on three (3) days or more, is a truant.

Any student enrolled in a public school who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years, but has not reached his/her twenty-first (21st) birthday, who has been absent from school without valid excuse for three (3) or more days, or tardy without valid excuse on three (3) or more days, is a truant.

Absences and Excuses**DEFINITION OF TRUANCY (CONTINUED)**

Any student that is considered habitually truant will not qualify for annual District attendance awards.

Any student who has been reported as a truant two (2) or more times is an habitual truant.

For the purposes of establishing a student's status as a truant, a student's attendance record is cumulative for an entire school year, but not limited to the current school year. When students transfer from one Kentucky district to another, attendance information from the previous district shall become part of their official attendance record for that school year.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Causes for absences that are considered to be excused shall be:

1. Illness of the student, including mental or behavioral health; parent's personal notes are accepted excusing students for up to six (6) full days and three (3) tardies per academic year at the high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. To be excused, days missed beyond this limit must be approved by the school attendance committee, which may require documentation by a clinic or physician; Excuses will only be accepted within five (5) school days after the student returns to school. After a student is notified that an absence is unexcused, an appeal must be filed within five (5) school days if it is to be considered.
2. Death in the immediate family;
3. Appointment with a health professional, where such absence during the school day is justified. This excused absence requires written certification from the attending health professional;
4. Driver's test;
5. Cause pre-approved by the school attendance committee;
6. Court appearance (note signed by the court or appropriate court official must be presented);
7. Failure of District-provided transportation system to operate;
8. Two (2) days for college visits for seniors;
9. Attendance at the Kentucky State Fair (1 day only);
10. Religious holidays, as appropriate and for appropriate duration. These absences should be pre-approved by the attendance committee;
11. Documented military leave;
12. One (1) day prior to departure of parent/guardian called to active military duty;
13. One (1) day upon the return of parent/guardian from active military duty;

Absences and Excuses**EXCUSED ABSENCES (CONTINUED)**

14. Visitation for up to ten (10) days with the student's parent, de facto custodian, or person with legal custody who, while on active military duty stationed outside of the country, is granted rest and recuperation leave;
15. Ten (10) days for students attending basic training required by a branch of the United States Armed Forces;
16. Students participating in any of the page programs of the General Assembly;⁴ or
17. Medical and Health Care Provider Excuses

Medical and health care provider excuses will only be accepted if the student has been seen at the medical facility. The excuse must include the exact date(s) for which the student is to be excused. Due to confidentiality concerns, the excuse must be turned in to the Principal's office in person, copies by email or facsimile will not be accepted. Students presenting forged, false, reproduced or altered excuses may be subject to disciplinary action.

18. All absence events and tardies will be considered unexcused until the appropriate written excuse, or documentation, is provided to the school. These notes, excuses, etc., must be turned in to the school with five (5) days after the absence event or tardy. If not received in five (5) days, the absence event/tardy will remain unexcused.

Parents or student may submit up to ten (10) doctor/medical excuses for an excused absence. Any absence due to medical reasons in excess of ten (10) requires the presentation of the District Medical Excuse Form before the absence will be excused.

Note: In cases where the circumstances causes the student to be absent for a part of the day, the student should return to school, when deemed possible by the attendance committee.

EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES (EHO)

Trips qualifying as educational enhancement opportunities, as determined by the Principal.

Students shall be granted an excused absence for up to ten (10) school days to pursue an educational enhancement opportunity determined by the Principal to be of significant educational value. This opportunity may include, but not be limited to, participation in an educational foreign exchange program or an intensive instructional, experiential, or performance program in one (1) of the core curriculum subjects of English, science, mathematics, social studies, foreign language, and the arts. Students/parents should complete the Educational Enhancement Opportunity request form five (5) days prior to the absence.

Students receiving an excused absence under this section shall have the opportunity to make up school work missed and shall not have their class grades adversely affected for lack of class attendance or class participation due to the excused absence.

Unless the Principal determines that extenuating circumstances exist, requests for date(s) falling within State or District testing periods shall not be granted.

The Principal's determination may be appealed to the Superintendent/designee whose decision may then be appealed to the Board under its grievance policy and procedures.

Absences and Excuses**ABSENCES FOR VACATION**

The regular school calendar allows students to be off during the summer months as well as holidays, fall break, spring break Christmas break, and teacher professional days. Therefore, absences for family vacation when school is in session will be recorded as “unexcused”. Since classroom time is a high correlate for learning, parents are strongly encouraged to plan vacations around the school calendar.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE EVENTS/TARDIES

1. Student skip days or walkouts/protests are not authorized or approved by Carter County Schools. An absence or tardy on the days that these events occur will not be excused and will be considered skipping. Only a verifiable health care provider’s excuse or family emergency may be considered to excuse an absence or tardy occurring on days that these events may occur – no parent excuses allowed.
2. Any absences exceeding the allowed number of parent excuses or medical excuses, unless administratively excused on a case by case basis.
3. Examples of absences from class which are not valid and will count toward truancy procedures:

1. Overslept	8. Indifference
2. Out of town	9. Poverty
3. Hair appointment	10. At home suspension
4. Working at home/business	11. Illness (more than six (6) parent/guardian notes)
5. Babysitting	12. Absence unknown by school or parent/guardian
6. Transportation (missed bus or vehicle trouble)	13. Lessons/events related to a personal hobby or interest
7. Birthday or other celebration	

PROCEDURES-HIGH SCHOOL

Students having excused absences shall be allowed to make up work including tests. It is the student’s or parent’s responsibility to contact the teacher concerning make-up work. For every day of excused absence, the student will receive the same length of time (longer at the teacher’s discretion) to complete make-up work. The school will accept parent notes for up to six (6) full days and three (3) tardies per academic year for consideration for excused event. Excuses will only be accepted within five (5) school days after the student returns to school. After a student is notified that an absence is unexcused, an appeal must be filed within five (5) school days if it is to be considered.

Class work and tests may not be made up until the absence is excused.

Absences and Excuses**PROCEDURES-HIGH SCHOOL (CONTINUED)**

Each school will designate a person or persons to determine if a student's absence is excused. That determination should be made within three (3) days of a student returning to school.

Students who are sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) year old who become academically deficient in attendance shall be reported to the Transportation Cabinet for driver's license, permit or driving privilege revocation, under the Kentucky No Pass – No Drive Law.

Academic and attendance deficiencies for students age sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) enrolled in regular, alternative, part-time, and special education programs shall be defined as follows:

- a.) They shall be deemed academically deficient if they have not received passing grades in at least four (4) courses, or the equivalent of four (4) courses, taken in the preceding semester.
- b.) They shall be deemed deficient in attendance when they drop out of school or accumulate nine (9) unexcused absences for the preceding semester. Suspensions shall be considered unexcused absences.
- c.) Students whose driving permits are revoked, but later meet the statutory standards for reinstatement, must then apply to the Director of Pupil Personnel to have their standing confirmed. The District shall make the required report to the appropriate agency.
- d.) Students age sixteen (16) through twenty-one (21) in Carter County Schools with a valid driver's license that has been deemed academically deficient or deficient in attendance in the preceding semester shall not be provided school driving privileges. Any student that later becomes compliant may have school driving privileges reinstated on a semester-by-semester basis by the school Principal.

Students may not leave school early for the day after 2:50 p.m., except in the case of an emergency.

Except in the case of a death in the immediate family, students will not be allowed to take part in after school activities (extracurricular) unless they were at school the entire school day. The Superintendent will develop an administrative regulation to provide guidance for this section and to list exceptions to the policy, if any.

Each school will establish an attendance committee to provide oversight of school attendance procedures and to hear student and parent appeals concerning absenteeism. At least one (1) administrator, one (1) counselor, and two (2) teachers will be part of each school appeals committee. All schools will use Carter County Appeal committee forms that must be signed off and maintained by each school's attendance clerk. Students shall request an appeals form and shall only use up to four (4) appeals academic days/tardies, unless otherwise approved by the Director of Pupil Personnel.

Students that are truant, as defined in this policy, will be reported to the District director of pupil personnel on the District-approved form. The director of pupil personnel will take action to help return the student to school, and if necessary, refer the student and parent to the county court system.

Absences and Excuses**STUDENTS EIGHTEEN (18) YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER**

A student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older may be withdrawn for the remainder of the school year for excessive absence from school. Withdrawal action will begin only after the school has taken documented steps to remedy the problem. If a student is to be considered for withdrawal, the following steps must be taken:

1. After a total of five (5) days of unexcused absences in one (1) school year, a parent-student conference will be held. The purpose of the conference will be to identify, if possible, the cause(s) for the student's repeated absences from school and to consider remedies.
2. After a total of ten (10) days of unexcused absences in one (1) school year, a formal in-school hearing will be held.
 - a. The hearing shall include the student, parent/guardian and school administrator as well as any other persons represented by them.
 - b. The purpose of the hearing will be to review the steps which have been taken to remedy the problems and to serve notice that withdrawal action may be taken after five (5) more days of unexcused absence.
3. After a total of fifteen (15) days of unexcused absences in one (1) year, a student may be withdrawn from school.
4. If the decision is made by the Board to withdraw the student from school, the student and parents shall be notified by certified letter that the student may return to school the following school year.
5. Students will not be permitted to participate in any extracurricular activity after receiving a total of ten (10) unexcused absences.
6. Any twelfth (12th) grade student who has accumulated eight (8) or more full day unexcused absences will not be allowed to participate in high school graduation ceremonies. Any time period in which a student withdraws from school or has a late enrollment will also be considered as "an unexcused absent day" from the school year. Transfers from one (1) public high school to Carter County Schools will be granted an exemption of three (3) school days for moving and travel. Senior attendance is based on a full year enrollment and official withdrawal from school cannot be used as an avenue to circumvent the eight (8) day unexcused absence rule.

PROCEDURES- ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

1. Students having excused absences shall be allowed to make up work including tests. It is the student's or parent's responsibility to contact the teacher concerning make-up work. Elementary and middle schools will accept parent notes for up to six (6) full days and three (3) tardies per academic year for consideration for excused event. For every day of excused absence, the student will receive the same length of time (longer at the teacher's discretion) to complete make-up work. Excuses will only be accepted within five (5) school days after the student returns to school. After a student is notified that an absence is unexcused, an appeal must be filed within five (5) school days if it is to be considered.

Absences and Excuses**PROCEDURES- ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)**

2. Class work and tests may not be made up when the absence is unexcused.
3. Each school will designate a person or persons to determine if a student's absence is excused. That determination should be made within three (3) days of a student's returning to school.
4. Students may not leave school early for the day after 2:50 p.m., except in the case of an emergency.
5. When school is in session, except in the case of a death in the immediate family, students will not be allowed to take part in after school activities (extracurricular) unless they were at school the entire school day. The Superintendent will develop an administrative regulation to provide guidance for this section and to list exceptions to the policy, if any.
6. Each school will establish an attendance committee to provide oversight of school attendance procedures and to hear student and parent appeals concerning absenteeism. At least one (1) administrator, one (1) counselor, and two (2) teachers will be part of each school's appeal committee. All schools will use Carter County Appeals committee forms that must be signed off and maintained by each school's attendance clerks. Students shall request an appeals form and shall only use up to four (4) appeals academic days/tardies, unless otherwise approved by the Director of Pupil Personnel.
7. Students that are truant, as defined in this policy, will be reported to the District director of pupil personnel on the District-approved form. The director of pupil personnel will take action to help return the student to school, and if necessary, refer the student and parent to the county court system.

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The following guidelines will be used in relations to a student's unexcused absences and tardies.

Parents will be notified by mail when a student has missed three (3) unexcused absences and the student's name will be referred to the Family Resource Center for any assistance that might be needed. When a student has reached six (6) unexcused absences they will be referred to the Director of Pupil Personnel. After six (6) or more unexcused absences, the Director of Pupil Personnel will refer the student to Family Court for truancy violations.

Students dismissed from school with a parasitic infection will be given two (2) days excused absence and must be cleared by the Principal or designee in accordance with Policy 09.213 in order to return to school. In order to receive any additional excused days the parent must contact the school Principal for approval. Habitual absences due to a parasitic infection will be referred to Family Court.

For the purposes of establishing a student's status as a truant, a student's attendance record is cumulative for an entire school year. When students transfer from one Kentucky district to another, attendance information from the previous district shall become part of their official attendance record for that school year.

Absences and Excuses

REFERENCES:

¹[702 KAR 007:125](#)

²[KRS 159.010](#); [OAG 85-55](#)

³[KRS 159.030](#)

⁴[KRS 159.035](#)

[KRS 36.396](#); [KRS 38.470](#); [KRS 40.366](#)

[KRS 158.070](#); [KRS 158.183](#); [KRS 158.293](#), [KRS 158.294](#)

[KRS 159.140](#); [KRS 159.150](#); [KRS 159.180](#)

[OAG 76-566](#); [OAG 79-68](#); [OAG 79-539](#); [OAG 91-79](#); [OAG 96-28](#)

RELATED POLICIES:

08.22; 09.111; 09.122; 09.213; 09.4281

09.126 (re requirements/exceptions for students from military families)

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