

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS AND EXCUSES**

Good school attendance and promptness to classes are extremely important matters to the Jackson Public School District. Time on task is essential if students are to succeed in their educational efforts. The right to attend the public schools places accompanying responsibility on students and their parents to strive for perfect attendance. Tardiness, absences, dismissals and suspensions are all problems that require action by school officials because each of these results in a loss of time on task.

A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child in this state shall cause the child to enroll in and attend a public school or legitimate nonpublic school for the period of time that the child is of compulsory school age, except under the following circumstances:

- (a) When a compulsory-school-age child is physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation.
- (b) When a compulsory-school-age child is enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children.
- (c) When a compulsory-school-age child is being educated in a legitimate home instruction program.

The parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child described in this subsection, or the parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child attending any nonpublic school, or the appropriate school official for any or all children attending a nonpublic school shall complete a "certificate of enrollment" in order to facilitate the administration of this section.

The form of the certificate of enrollment shall be prepared by the Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement of the State Department of Education.

### **Section I: EXCUSED ABSENCES**

- A. Excused absences shall include
  - 1. Personal illness
  - 2. Death in the family or serious illness in the family
  - 3. Observance of religious holidays of the pupil's own faith

4. School-related field trips or educational activities approved by the district and/or building administrations
5. Special circumstances, such as a court summons, family emergencies, educational experiences, weather extremes, etc., which require immediate action and that the school principal deems acceptable

In order for any absence, with the exception of school field trips, to be excused, pupils must submit a district approved form, which is attached to this policy, signed by a parent/legal guardian stating the reason for that absence. The pupil must present this excuse to the proper school official on the day the pupil returns to school. If no excuse is presented, the absence shall be considered unexcused.

**Section II :           EXCUSED TARDIES**

- A. Excused tardies shall include
  1. Tardies due to late JPSD transportation, or other school related actions which will be considered excused and not recorded against the pupil's tardy record
  2. Medical appointments with doctors, dentists, or other medical staff, if accompanied by a note on medical office letterhead stationery
  3. Illness of the pupil, if accompanied by a valid parental statement/note
  4. Special circumstances such as natural disasters, weather, etc., acceptable to the building administrator

**Section III :         PUPILS LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS (DISMISSAL)**

- A. A pupil is not permitted to leave the school grounds during the regular school day without a written note from the parent/guardian to the principal or the designee stating the reason. The note shall be kept on file in the school. The parent must also physically dismiss his or her child and present a picture identification. A violator shall be subject to disciplinary action. A pupil excused from school shall be in the custody of a parent or legal guardian or excused pursuant to specific written instructions from the parent or guardian.
- B. Acceptable dismissals shall include:
  1. Personal illness
  2. Medical appointments that cannot be arranged after school hours
  3. Special family emergencies as approved by the principal

- C. All dismissals for school shall count against the pupil's attendance record.

#### **Section IV: UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, TARDIES OR DISMISSALS**

Any absences, tardies, or dismissals which do not meet the requirements listed in this policy shall be considered unexcused.

If a compulsory-school-age child has not enrolled within fifteen calendar days after the first day of the school year at the school which the child is eligible to attend or has accumulated five unlawful absences during the school year, the superintendent or his designee shall report the absences to the school attendance officer within two school days or five calendar days, whichever is less.

During the course of the school year, after a child has been unlawfully absent from school for fifteen (15) consecutive days, the child will be dropped from the school roll unless the parent or legal guardian notifies the school of the cause of the absences and the school determines that they are excused absences.

In an effort to prevent drop-outs, the school board directs the superintendent to provide regular reports on efforts made to increase student retention. Accurate records shall be maintained on enrollment and attendance, including dropout rates. The school district will implement programs and procedures that are designed to keep students in school and to lower the dropout rate. School personnel should exhaust all available means and avenues to keep children in school. When a child has missed fifteen days of school, the principal should, in coordination with the district's school attendance officers, make a written request to the executive director for academics and legal counsel to implement parental neglect proceedings. Excessive unexcused absences will be reported to the state attendance officer.

#### **Section V: ALLOWABLE CREDIT**

Excused absences, tardies or dismissals will allow 100% credit for work required by the teacher, provided that work is completed and submitted within five school days. Teachers may require earlier submission of assignments or make exceptions as circumstances dictate.

#### **Section VI: MAKE UP WORK**

When an unexcused absence, unexcused tardy, unexcused dismissal or suspension for 10 days or less causes a pupil to miss class time, that pupil shall be given the opportunity to make up work required by the teacher, and may earn credit up to 75% of the credit which normally would be allowed. A pupil shall have the opportunity to complete and submit required work within five school days after returning to school, or earlier as required by the teacher. Otherwise, no credit shall be given for all missed

work. School work may be requested by parents during the time of unexcused absences, tardies, dismissals, or suspension for 10 days or less.

A student who is suspended for more than 10 days or expelled, and who has been offered the opportunity to attend the alternative school and chooses not to do so, shall not be permitted to make up missed work. However, students who attend the alternative school will be able to complete work in the core subjects of English, math, science, and social studies that are offered at the alternative school.

**Section VII : ABSENTEE LIMIT**

- A. A student shall not accumulate more than three unexcused tardies to school or to any one class per term.
- B. The school principal shall have the right to use his/her professional judgment to make exceptions to the attendance limit in any one term. However, to be considered, appeals from parents and pupils must be submitted within five school days after appraisals are issued to pupils each term.

**Section VIII : PERFECT ATTENDANCE**

“Perfect Attendance” shall be defined and observed by all schools as no absences, no tardies, and no dismissals from school. Exceptions shall be school bus tardies or school sponsored field trips.

**Section IX : SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

Participation and/or practice in school-related activities shall not be permitted the day that an unexcused absence occurs.

**Section X : UNAUTHORIZED VISITATION TO OTHER SCHOOLS**

Unauthorized visitation by individual pupils to schools of different grade levels to attend school functions conducted during the school day shall not be permitted.

SOURCE: Jackson Public School District, Jackson, Mississippi

LEGAL REF.: Section 37-13-91; Mississippi Code of 1972

DATE: April 30, 1980

AMENDED: February 18, 1985 – Effective: August 1985  
September 16, 1991  
November 25, 1991  
June 21, 2004  
December 17, 2013