

## COAHOMA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

(Adopted, December 2008)  
JBD (Revised, September 2013)

### ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS AND EXCUSES

The school board believes that good attendance, with a minimum of tardiness and absenteeism, is essential if students are to gain maximum benefit from the school district's instructional program. The school board thusly directs the superintendent to develop administrative regulations governing tardiness and absences (excused and non-excused).

The administrative regulations shall be based on all applicable state laws governing absenteeism and tardiness and shall include (but not limited to) the counting and reporting of students to the Mississippi Department of Education for attendance purposes, expectations for good student attendance, parent responsibility, excused and unexcused absences, and tardiness. Initial administrations regulations and any future changes to such administrative regulations shall be approved by the school board before implementation.

**Make-up Assignments:** The administrative regulations shall specify that no absence will be excused when it is due to suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary action. However, to avoid adopting a policy or administrative rule that would ensure a student's failure, the district shall adopt a provision that permits or requires suspended students who are not immediately placed in an alternative school program to make up work within specified deadlines.

**Attendance Reporting:** In order for a student to be considered as having attended school for a full day, the school board specifies that each student must be present for 63% of his or her individual Instructional day as fixed by the local school board for each individual school. For purposes of reporting absenteeism, a student who has an absence that is more than thirty-seven percent (37%) of the student's instructional day, as fixed by the school board for the school at which the student is enrolled, shall be considered absent the entire school day.

The superintendent shall develop and submit for board adoption a policy which includes:

1. a definition of the instructional day for each individual school so that the 63% of the instructional day can be computed for each student within the school district's individual schools, and
2. a process for computing 63% of the instructional day for each student within the school district's individual schools.

### **Definitions**

**Full Day Attendance:** When a student is present for 63% of his or her individual Instructional day as fixed by the local school board for each individual school.

**Unlawful Absence:** An absence for an entire school day or during part of a school day when such absence is not due to a valid excuse.

Good school attendance and promptness are extremely important elements of a successful school program. The right to attend the public schools places accompanying responsibility upon students and their parents to strive for perfect attendance.

## I. EXCUSED ABSENCES

For purposes of this policy, an absence shall be excused if it is due to one of the following valid excuse.

1. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee.
2. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
3. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school official.
4. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters.
5. A medical or dental appointment with prior approval of the superintendent or his designee, except in the case of emergency.
6. Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
7. Observance of a religious event, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his designee. (Approval should not be withheld unless, in the professional judgment of the superintendent or his designee, the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
8. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel including vacations or other family travel, with the prior approval of the superintendent or his designee. (Approval shall be based on the professional judgment of the superintendent or his designee but shall not be withheld unless the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)
9. Other conditions sufficient to warrant nonattendance, with prior approval of the superintendent or his designee.

## II. TARDIES

Tardies to school caused by the following reasons shall be excused and not be recorded against a student:

1. School transportation or other school-related actions.

2. Medical or dental appointments only if accompanied by a note from the physician, dentist or other medical staff on their office letterhead
  3. Illness of the student if accompanied by statement or note from the parent, a valid guardian or legal custodian.
  4. Special circumstances such as natural disasters, weather, traffic accidents, or other causes acceptable to the building administrator.
- III. Perfect attendance is no absences (excused or unexcused), no tardies and no dismissals from school. Exceptions shall be bus tardies or school-sponsored field trips or other school-sponsored activities.
- IV. No absence will be excused when it is due to suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary action. However, suspended students who are not immediately placed in the alternative school program will be permitted to make up missed work within the first 10 school days after his return to school.

According to a 1998 Attorney General Opinion, automatic fail provision of an absences policy may not apply against legal, excused absences. Such absences policies may not be applied against absences resulting from disciplinary suspensions if absences policies are applied to truant children who are otherwise passing, the district must afford the child procedural due process. (Attorney General Opinion, *Carter*, 1-9-98) (#183) (97-0817)

The Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard for this policy are Standards 16 and 17.

LEGAL REF.: MS CODE § 37-13-91

*Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*

CROSS REF.: Policies CED - Duties of Superintendent

JBA - Compulsory School Attendance

JBAC - Truancy