

CHAPTER: STUDENTS

TITLE: ATTENDANCE

PHILOSOPHY

The Calhoun County Board of Education believes that regular attendance is a requirement for the delivery of formal education to public school students. The basic intent of this policy is to promote and increase attendance by creating a positive climate conducive to learning, and committed to helping students develop responsibility, self-discipline, and good work habits and by developing a system enlisting parental support for daily school attendance by students.

REVISIONS TO THIS POLICY

Proposed revisions to this policy will be recommended to the Calhoun County Board of Education and upon approval a draft will be posted on the county web site (<http://boe.calhoun.k12.wv.us/policies-under-comment>) until a date shortly before the next regular meeting. This comment period will provide for input from teachers, parents and community members. Upon final adoption by the Board of Education, the revised policy will be submitted to the West Virginia Department of Education for approval.

ANNUAL EVALUATION OF POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

The Calhoun County Board of Education will conduct an annual evaluation of attendance data in all schools to determine the effectiveness of the attendance policy.

FULL DAY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT FOR GRADES 9-12

Attendance for the full school day for all four years during grades 9-12 is important so that students obtain the full benefit from the educational programs offered in the schools of West Virginia. Therefore, all students shall be scheduled for the full instructional day for all four years. Exceptions may be made by the Calhoun County Board of Education to accommodate placement in college courses, advanced vocational/technical programs, participation in the WV Virtual School, or for other compelling circumstances.

The Calhoun County Board of Education does not foresee any compelling circumstances under which they would blanket approve students for attendance for fewer than four full years or less than the full instructional day. They will, however, consider requests from students or parents on an individual basis.

COUNTY ATTENDANCE DIRECTOR/HOMELESS LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES

The county attendance director shall serve as liaison for homeless children and youth as defined in W.Va. Code 18-8-4.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

The federal definition of homelessness as defined in section 725

The McKinney-Vento Act defines children and youth to be served under this law as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:

- children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
- children and youths who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- children and youths who are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- children and youths who are abandoned in hospitals;
- children and youths who are awaiting foster care placement;
- children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

- children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above;
- unaccompanied youth (i.e., youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian).

Stability and adequacy of the living arrangement are critical considerations when determining homelessness.

LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISONS

West Virginia State Code §18-8-4 designates the attendance directors in each county as the local homeless education liaison unless another staff person is appointed as such.

Local homeless education liaisons must ensure that:

1. Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless children and youths enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that local education agency.
3. Homeless facilities, children, and youths receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs, preschool programs administered by the local education agency, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
4. The parents or guardians of homeless children are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where children and youths receive services under this act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment dispute resolution process adopted by the state.
7. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of their duties, state coordinators and local educational agencies shall inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the local educational agency liaisons. Local liaisons are required to coordinate and collaborate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.

In addition, liaisons are required to:

1. Assist unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions, including considering the youth's wishes in those decisions, and providing notice to the youth of the right to appeal such decisions under the state's enrollment dispute resolution process.
2. Assist children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
3. Ensure that unaccompanied youths are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.

SCHOOL SELECTION

According to a child or youth's best interest, Calhoun County Schools will either continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin within the county for the duration of homelessness, or enroll the child or youth in school in any public school that non homeless students who live in the attendance area where the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

School of origin is defined as the school that the child or youth attended within the county when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

1. A homeless child's or youth's right to attend his/her school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness.
2. Children and youth who become homeless between academic years are entitled to attend their school of origin for the following academic year.
3. If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.

ENROLLMENT

1. The school shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.
2. The term enrollment includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
3. The enrolling school shall immediately contact the last school attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.
4. If a child or youth needs to obtain immunizations or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local education agency liaison who shall help obtain necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records.
5. The act does not prohibit Calhoun County Schools from requiring a parent or guardian to submit contact information.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Disagreements and disputes are to be settled as close to the point of conflict as possible. Each local homeless education liaison shall assist the family and school to ensure compliance with federal and state legislation and policy governing the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The liaison shall work with appropriate local school representatives to address any policies or procedures that are identified as barriers in the access to and success within a free appropriate public education.

The school shall:

1. Immediately admit the student to the school in which enrollment is sought and provide all services for which the student is eligible, pending resolution of the dispute.
2. Refer the child, youth, parent, or guardian to the designated local homeless education liaison who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

When a local liaison is notified of an enrollment dispute involving a student experiencing homelessness, the liaison shall:

1. Initiate documentation on the Enrollment Dispute Resolution form.
2. Ensure the child or youth is immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought and provided with all services for which the student is eligible, pending resolution of the dispute. Transportation must be arranged while the dispute is being resolved.
3. Review feasibility and best interest guidance documents with the school and appropriate central office personnel.
4. If another county is involved, contact the county's local homeless education liaison to participate in the decision- making process.
5. Consult with the State Coordinator for additional technical assistance.

6. Within ten (10) business days, provide, the family or unaccompanied youth and the WV Dept. of Education attendance and Homeless coordinator with a written determination of the county's placement decision.

COORDINATION WITH TITLE I

1. An LEA may receive funding under Title I, Part A, only if the LEA has on file with the WVDE an approved plan that is coordinated with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
2. Each LEA Title I plan must include a description of the services that will be provided to homeless children, including services provided with funds from the Reservation of Funds set-aside.
3. Each LEA shall reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in Title I, Part A funded schools to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children and youth may live.

In addition, the attendance director shall file with the county superintendent and county board of education, at the close of each month, a report showing activities of the school attendance office and the status of attendance in the county.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Compulsory school attendance shall begin with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to the first day of September of such year or upon enrolling in a publicly supported kindergarten program and continue to the seventeenth birthday or for as long as the student shall continue to be enrolled in a school system after the seventeenth birthday. Compulsory school attendance shall be enforced against a person eighteen years of age or older for as long as the person continues to be enrolled in a school system and shall not be enforced against the parent, guardian or custodian of such person. A child may be removed from such preschool programs when the principal, teacher, and parent or guardian concur that the best interest of the child would not be served by requiring further attendance. The principal shall make the final determination in this regard.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The fundamental right to attend public schools places upon students the accompanying responsibility to be faithful in attendance. In compliance with WV Codes 18-8-1 and West Virginia Board of Education policy 2510.

The following shall constitute excused absences:

1. School-approved curricular/co-curricular activities.
2. Failure of the bus to run due to hazardous conditions or other causes. However, if the bus runs later during the day students will be expected to attend if conditions permit. The principal will make the final decision with regard to individual excuses.
3. Medical and/or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside the school day and when the absence is verified in writing by the physician/dentist.
4. Legal or religious holidays with verification.
5. Personal illness when school attendance jeopardizes the personal health of classmates. Any student absent from school for three (3) consecutive days or ten (10) intermittent days due to personal illness may be required by the principal to have a doctor's statement upon re-admittance to school.
6. Serious illness in the immediate family. Absences claimed for illness in the immediate family must be accompanied by a doctor's statement that the student's presence was essential.
7. Death in the immediate family resulting in up to three (3) days of absence. "Immediate family" includes mother, father, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, or any person living in the same household.
8. College visits (Arranged in compliance with established school procedure).
9. In cases of extended hospital confinement and/or prolonged illness at home, the parents are responsible for contacting the school. Arrangement can be made for a home/hospital teacher to be assigned to the student. The home/hospital instruction program provides students an opportunity

to make up work without loss of course credit. Home/hospital instruction can be provided to any student who cannot attend school because of a temporary or serious health problem as certified by a licensed physician and who is absent for a period that has lasted or will last more than three (3) weeks.

10. Leaves of educational adhering to the following stipulations:
 - a) Completed educational leave form
 - b) Student must be in good standing academically and in attendance.
11. Absences due to a documented chronic medical condition, meaning any physical or mental condition that may require multiple or regular absences, or a documented disability, meaning any mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities. Both documented chronic medical conditions and disabilities must be documented annually with a valid physician's note that explains the condition and its anticipated impact on attendance. The necessity for the absences must be approved and reviewed quarterly by the SAT, IEP, or 504 team.

It is the responsibility of the student to bring to the school secretary a written excuse for being absent. The student will have one (1) day after his/her return to provide an excuse for being absent. If this procedure is not followed, the days absent may be unexcused.

Parent excuses, such as an illness verified by the parent, will be recorded as such in WVEIS. After the 10th parent note excuse for a school year the absences will be coded as excessive and count as unexcused.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any absence not classified as an excused absence will be defined as an unexcused absence. The principal will make the final decision in a situation where the absence is questionable. However, students may not be suspended solely for failure to attend class.

A student suspended from school shall have an unexcused absence or absences. Unexcused absences shall be reported to the Attendance Director to determine if further action is necessary. Parents have the right to appeal the application to this policy through the appeals procedure for citizens. Forms are available at the Board of Education Office or at any school.

MAKE UP WORK

The student is always responsible for contacting the teacher and doing the assigned work for days absent. If class work missed is not made up according to the makeup schedule to be provided by the teacher or if no contact is made, the absence shall be counted as a zero. Upon returning to school, a student will be granted one day for each day of absence to complete missed work. For excused absences, an extension of time may be granted. There may be no withholding of credit and/or grade unless the student, after given an opportunity to make up the work, fails to do so. Students that have prior knowledge of absence must get the assignment prior to the absence.

EARLY DISMISSALS AND TARDIES

Students shall not be permitted to leave school before the regular closing hour except for extraordinary reasons. Requests to do so shall be approved by the principal or his/her designee. Leaving school without permission during the school hours may result in unexcused absences and discipline.

No child may be withdrawn from school without the consent of the parent/legal guardian with whom the child is living. A child may be physically removed, taken out or away from school only by those persons listed on the child's emergency care card. If legal guardianship changes during the school year or from one year to the next, it is the responsibility of the legal guardian to provide documentation of this change to the school system.

In all cases of question, the principal should notify the superintendent's office for final disposition.

Students are expected to report to classes and other school functions punctually to minimize disruptions and to form positive work habits. When a student accumulates three tardies, the principal or designee will

have a conference with the student in an attempt to solve the problem. If tardies continue, a conference will be scheduled with the student and parent. The principal shall consistently deal with students with excessive tardies in a manner that will discourage repeated tardies. As deterrents to tardiness, the principal may use in school detention, loss of certain privileges, alternative scheduling, etc.

ATTENDANCE CREDIT

For statistical purposes, full day attendance is being present for .74 of the school day. One-half day attendance is being present at least .50 of the school day. Times for checking in and out will be determined by individual schools.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COORDINATOR

The principal, or designee, shall be responsible for collecting classroom attendance data and for making referrals to the County Attendance Director when necessary. The attendance coordinator is to implement the attendance policy at their assigned school by working with all staff members and students to improve attendance.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

The Calhoun County Board of Education believes that it is important for each school to enlist parental support for regular school attendance. When absences become excessive, the principal, or designee, shall contact the parents to discuss the consequences and/or penalties of continued absences and attempt to secure parental involvement for improvement. It is essential that parents and students recognize their responsibility and accountability for regular school attendance. In the event that problems related to attendance occur, the student shall be referred to a School Assistance Team which may recommend options including, but not limited to, counseling, interagency involvement, alternative plans or programs that are positive in nature and encourage improved school attendance.

INTERAGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Calhoun County Board of Education will attempt to establish cooperative agreements with the Minnie Hamilton Health Care Center, local mental health care agencies and other agencies serving school age children.

APPEAL PROCESS

If a parent believes that an attendance record is in error, the parent shall submit a written request to the principal of the school asking for a review of the record. The parent must provide specific details as to why he/she believes the record is in error. In the event that the principal does not concur with the parental request, the parent may appeal the decision to the County Attendance Director.

REVIEW OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

When a student's absences become excessive, the student's progress should be reviewed by the principal and student's classroom teachers. Areas of consideration might include review of the student's academic progress; consideration of whether the school could develop alternative plans or programs that are positive in nature which might encourage improved school attendance; referral for counseling for problems related to attendance; referral for evaluation to determine appropriate academic placement; or referral to the County Attendance Director. In the case of five total unexcused absences of a child during a school year, the attendance director or assistant shall serve written notice to the parent, guardian or custodian of such child that the attendance of such child at school is required and that within ten days of receipt of the notice the parent, guardian, or custodian, accompanied by the child, shall report in person to the school the child attends for a conference with the principal or other designated representative of

the school in order to discuss and correct the circumstances causing the inexcusable absences of the child.

REPORTING UNEXCUSED ABSENCES TO THE COUNTY ATTENDANCE DIRECTOR

When it is known or suspected that the absence is without legitimate cause, the principal shall immediately make a referral to the County Attendance Director. Any student who has an unexcused absence may be considered truant and treated as such.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Each school shall maintain accurate attendance records which shall include an up-to-date register/record of attendance for every student in every class. This information will be recorded in WVEIS and will reflect allowable deductions, such as, absences that result from school-approved curricular/co-curricular activities; failure of the bus to run/hazardous conditions; excused student absences; students not in attendance due to disciplinary measures; and absent students for whom the attendance director has pursued judicial remedies to compel attendance (filed a criminal complaint or juvenile petition) due to provisions in W.Va. Code 18-8-4. Each school shall also keep accurate and current records of drop-outs utilizing WVEIS. If a student is physically absent from school, the student is to be counted absent and the appropriate reason noted in WVEIS.

INCENTIVES TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Schools will develop preventive and educative procedures as incentives to maintain and promote regular attendance. Incentives might include rewards for good attendance; individual recognition; closer home-school contact using postal cards, calls or letters from the principal or teacher; opportunities for improved student and student-staff communication; use of community resources; and/or creative approaches used in scheduling classes and activities.

COPY OF POLICY PROVIDED

A copy of the county attendance policy will be provided to students and parents in school handbooks and posted on the county web site.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AS CONDITION OF LICENSING FOR PRIVILEGE OF OPERATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE

A driver's eligibility certificate is issued to any student who is at least fifteen but less than eighteen years of age, who is in satisfactory standing with regard to attendance, school behavior and academic progress. Student absences cannot exceed (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) total unexcused absences in a year, pursuant to West Virginia code 18-8-1. Students must earn at least five credits annually (three credits must be from core requirements as identified in WVBE policy 2510) and a student can be suspended or expelled for the following behaviors when committed on the premises of an educational facility, at school sponsored functions, or on a school bus: a) assault and/or battery on school employees; b) possessing deadly weapons; c) sale of a narcotic drug; d) committing an act or engaging in conduct that constitutes a felony under WV code if committed by an adult; e) unlawfully possessing a controlled substance governed by the uniform control substance act as described in WV code 60A-1.1 et seq. If a student has had his/her driver's license revoked as a result of withdrawal from school, which is defined as more than ten consecutive, or fifteen days total, unexcused absences during a school year, the students must exhibit satisfactory attendance for one complete semester before becoming eligible for reinstatement of the driver's license.

REFERENCES: SBP 4110
ADOPTION DATE: 04/05/99;
REVISION DATES: 09/03/02; 01/06/03; 01/20/04; 12/12/16;
06/19/18
REVIEW DATE: 12/10/12; 11/14/16