

## CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES & TRUANCY

5.40

Regular school attendance is important to all students enrolled in Lee County Schools. It is the policy of Lee County Schools that course content and grading procedures are to be structured so that regular attendance is necessary in order to successfully complete course requirements.

Subject to parental guidance, each student must be responsible for his/her own attendance. Administrators and teachers will make every effort to encourage regular attendance by students and to solicit assistance from parents/guardians in accomplishing this objective.

#### EXCUSED ABSENCES

Alabama law requires all children between the ages of six and seventeen to attend school. Administrators and teachers will make reasonable efforts to encourage attendance by students and to inform parents when there are attendance problems. The final responsibility for each student to comply with Alabama attendance laws, however, rests with each student and his/her parent/guardian. Students are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend all classes daily, be on time; provide appropriate documentation for all absences; and request, complete, and turn in on time all make up work given for excused absences.

Following any absence, a written statement is required giving date(s) and reason(s) for the absence(s). A maximum of 5 days per semester will be excused with a note from the student's parent, after which, in order for an absence to be excused there must be a doctor's excuse. Students have three (3) days

following an absence to provide this written explanation.

Absences may be excused for the following reasons:

- pupil too ill to attend school;

- inclement weather dangerous to the life or health of the child if he/she attends school; legal quarantine;

- death in the immediate family;

- emergency conditions as determined by the superintendent or the principal; and

permission from the principal and consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

All other absences are unexcused. Repeated unexcused absences or a pattern of absences will not be tolerated and may be considered a violation of the Alabama attendance law.

#### EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

Lee County Schools may grant additional days of excused absences to military-connected students whose parent/guardian is called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to

a combat zone or combat support posting. The conditions under which the local school may approve

excused absences are:

(1) the absence must be pre-approved by the principal or designee ;

(2) the student must be in good standing;

(3) the student must have a prior record of good attendance;

(4) missed work must be completed and turned in within the school's allotted time period; and

(5) the absence may not be during standardized testing dates.

#### PERFECT ATTENDANCE

A Perfect Attendance Certificate is given to any student in the system who has not been absent from any class during the entire school year. Each school is responsible for securing and presenting this certificate.

#### TRUANCY

The major reasons that students drop out of school are poor attendance, truancy, and failure to move up in grade classification. Students must attend school to achieve. Code of Alabama Compulsory Attendance law, *Code of Alabama (1975) 516-28-3*, requires all children between the ages of (6) and (17) to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education. The law also states that parents or guardians are responsible for their child's regular attendance and proper conduct. All laws regarding school attendance shall be strictly enforced by the Lee County Board of Education.

**The following procedures for handling truanancies shall be uniformly administrated throughout the Lee County Schools:**

**1. First Truancy/Unexcused Absence**

All Lee County Schools will use the automatic call out system that will contact the parent on the day of their student's absence to notify parent that student is unexcused absent on that day. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the school has correct contact numbers for their student.

**2. Third truancy/Unexcused Absence (Warning)**

After the 3rd unexcused absence, the parents/guardians shall be notified in writing by the school principal or his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the absences.

**3. Fifth Truancy/ Unexcused Absence**

At the 5th unexcused absence, parent or guardian will be notified via truancy letter by the school principal or his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the absences. This will serve as an official notification of student's truancy and possible consequences to follow if unexcused absences continue to occur.

**4. Seventh Truancy/ Unexcused Absence**

At the 7th unexcused absence, a conference will be scheduled by school level personal with the parent/guardian, a school administrator, school attendance liaison, the school social worker, school resource officer, and various members of an attendance team to actively identify and

involve various in and out of system services (ie., mental health, DHR, school nurse, student/parent support groups, etc.), if needed, to resolve the student's attendance problem. School level personal will complete referral form notifying attendance liaison of meeting details. A written "attendance agreement" will be completed at this meeting.

The Early Warning program through Lee County Juvenile Court may be utilized after the 7th unexcused absence. At Juvenile Court, the parents/guardians and student are informed of the Alabama State Compulsory Attendance Laws and consequences of further unexcused absences.

Failure to appear at the school conference and/or failure to appear at the Early Warning program shall result in the filing of a petition against the parent under Code of Alabama (1975) 516-28-3. (failure to cooperate), or truancy charge against the student, whichever is appropriate.

#### **5. Tenth Truancy/ Unexcused Absence**

**After the 10<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, a petition/complaint is subject to be filed against the parent(s)/guardian(s) and child (when age appropriate) with the Juvenile Court of Lee County.**

**In addition to a truancy petition being filed, the following consequences of truancy could occur.**

**Revocation of driver's license.**

**Suspension of worker's permit.**

**Possibility of a Department of Human Resources report regarding dependency concerns, is appropriate.**

**Lee County Schools shall inform each student's parent or guardian of the following requirements of Alabama Code 16-28-12 (1975):**

**Each parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of any child required to attend school or receive regular instruction by a private tutor who fails to have the child enrolled in school or who fails to send the child to school, or have him or her instructed by a private tutor during the time the child is required to attend a public school, private school denominational school, or parochial school or be instructed by a private tutor, or fails to require the child to regularly attend the school or tutor, or fails to compel the child to properly concur himself or herself as a pupil in accordance with a written policy on school behavior adopted by the local board of education and documented by the appropriate school official which conduct may result in the suspension of the pupil, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, this offense is punishable by a fine of up to \$500 or a sentence to hard labor for the county for a period not to exceed 12 months or both. The absence of a child without the consent of the principal or teacher of the school he/she attends or should attend, or of the tutor who instructs or should instruct the child, shall be prima facie evidence of the violation of this section.**

**Parental Responsibilities required in Alabama Code Section 16-28-12 are as follows:**

- 1. To enroll their child.**

**Every child between the ages of six and seventeen years shall be required to attend school.**

- 2. To ensure regular attendance by his/her child.**

**Attendance requirements as set forth in the Early Warning Program will**

continue to be followed to ensure regular attendance.

**Pupil**

**Responsibilities:**

1. To **attend school regularly**.
2. **To conduct himself/herself in accordance** with **written policies on school** behavior.