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STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY GOVERNING GRADES K-12

The West Virginia Board of Education and the Boone County Board of Education recognizes that a direct relationship exists between students' daily school attendance and academic performance, graduation, and good work habits. This attendance policy promotes students' daily school attendance. Daily attendance is necessary for students to meet their schools' academic program standards as each day's learning builds on the work previously completed. While students and parents/guardians have the ultimate responsibility for daily school attendance, the laws of West Virginia require school administrators to enforce compulsory school attendance, and to provide an environment conducive to, and encouraging of, attendance.

The Boone County Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is vital to a student's academic program and must be encouraged and expected. Research indicates that classroom grades and test scores improve with good attendance. Students must attend school regularly and be on time for classes in order to realize maximum instructional benefits. The board also believes that school attendance is increased when a positive, safe environment exists that is conducive to learning and committed to helping students develop responsibility, self-discipline, and other work habits. Therefore, each school shall abide by the Safe School Act and enforce the Student Code of Conduct.

Parental awareness, support, and involvement are essential ingredients in a successful attendance policy. Parents are encouraged to support the attendance policy by sending their children to school regularly. Boone County Schools recognizes the importance of the home and school connection and strongly encourages parents to become aware of the policies and procedures of Boone County Schools and their child(ren)'s school(s). Parents should become familiar with their rights and responsibilities that are outlined in this policy and the school's handbook. With good attendance, students can maximize the development of good work habits, self discipline,

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responsibility, and a higher level of achievement. Good attendance is essential for better performance.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

The Boone County Schools Attendance Policy has been developed and revisions to the policy shall be determined by a committee, which includes the following representatives: teachers, principals, attendance director, central office staff, parents and community leaders.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

School attendance procedures shall contain at least the following notification components:

1. The county attendance policy shall be distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year. It shall be the responsibility of the school principal or his/her designee which may include the first teacher the student has, to explain the attendance policy to ensure that all students have an understanding.
2. New students who arrive during the school year shall also be provided a copy of the county attendance policy. It shall be the responsibility of the school counselor, principal or his/her designee which may include the first teacher the student has, to explain the attendance policy to ensure that all students have an understanding.
3. Students are responsible to deliver the attendance policy to their parents, guardians, and/or custodians.
4. Parents shall be notified of Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings and given an opportunity to attend and explain unexcused absences.

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GENERAL STATEMENTS AND DEFINITIONS:

1. An absence is defined as not being present in class or an approved activity. Any student who is physically absent from school must be counted absent.
2. Tardiness is defined as entry to school or class after the designated starting time. Consequences for student tardies are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct Policy. Excessive tardiness by an out-of-district student may affect his/her approval status for the following year. Preventions may include, but not be limited to the following: teacher/student conference(s), administrator/student conference(s), or referral to the Student Assistance Team (SAT).
3. Early departure is any time a parent or guardian receives permission to sign out a student prior to the end of the instructional day.
4. Skipping is any absence from school/class and/or approved school activity without administrative permission.
5. A parent is the person(s) who assumes legal responsibility for a student. This may be biological parent(s), legal guardian(s) or other adult person(s) within whose household a student resides. If a question of custody exists, the school must have on file a copy of the legal custody of that student.

A STUDENT IS UNEXCUSED:

1. when the student voluntarily chooses not to attend school;
2. when a parent fails to send a child to school for any reason other than excused absence;
3. when the student fails to provide valid verification for absences which might be otherwise excused;

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4. when he/she is suspended from school; or
5. when the student has exceeded the six (6) parent note limit and does not present a valid excuse.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

1. When a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences in a year his/her parent, guardian or custodian shall receive written notification from the attendance director indicating that school attendance is required. (W.Va. Code §18-8-5)
2. Students who accumulate five (5) unexcused absences shall be referred to the county attendance director. (W.Va. Code §18-8-4)
3. When a student accumulates five (5) total unexcused absences, the attendance directors shall serve written notice to the parent, guardian or custodian that s/he, accompanied by the student, must report in person, within five days of receipt of the notice, to the school the student attends for a conference with the principal or designee of the school in order to discuss and correct the circumstances causing the unexcused absences.
4. Any student who misses more than six (6) sessions of a class (unexcused) may be assigned detention, extra class time, or alternative class settings.
5. Students who accumulate ten (10) unexcused absences shall be referred to the county attendance director for legal action. (W.Va. Code §18-8-4)
6. Students who dropout of school and under age eighteen (18) or who accumulate ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) total unexcused absences will be denied a motor vehicle license or instruction permit. Students who have their license suspended for failure to comply with W.Va. Code §18-8-11, must have satisfactory school attendance (satisfactory being defined as

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no unexcused absences) for a semester before being issued a reinstatement form from the West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

EXCUSED ABSENCES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. illness/injury verified by a medical excuse;
2. death in the immediate family (limited to three days per death);
3. legal or religious obligation;
4. failure of bus to run (note from bus driver or parent may be required);
5. approved school activities; and
6. parent notes not to exceed six (6) days per year.

Written excuses **must** be submitted to the principal or designated staff member no later than two (2) days after returning to school following an absence. Unexcused absences include any absences not covered above (1-6).

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION:

The parent or legal guardian must contact the Department of Exceptional Children at 304-369-3131 in order to request an application for Homebound Services. Homebound Instruction will not begin until an application for services is received and approved by the Department of Exceptional Children.

(See West Virginia Board of Education Policy 4110)

ATTENDANCE REPORTING:

The attendance director shall monitor absenteeism reporting through the WVEIS system for the purpose of maintaining an accurate account of daily attendance for every student. WVEIS codes shall be uniform in recording absences in all schools and should

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reflect the allowable deductions as defined by the West Virginia Department of Education.

For statistical purposes, attendance will be reported and aggregated to the nearest half day according to the definitions for full and half day attendance. Full day attendance is being present at least 74% of the school day. Half day attendance is being present at least 50% of the school day.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. At the beginning of each school year, each building principal shall appoint a designated school attendance coordinator (principal or designee) who collects student attendance data and makes appropriate referrals to the county attendance director.
2. Each building principal/designee shall maintain accurate, up-to-date, computerized records for every student in every class and must record all absences daily. These records will be maintained in accordance with the Procedures for the Collection, Maintenance, and Disclosure of Student Data. (West Virginia State Board Policy 4350)
3. All student absences shall be recorded daily by the student's first or homeroom teacher to the school attendance coordinator. Absences must reflect the allowable deductions as defined by the West Virginia Department of Education.
4. Absence reason codes and five (5) day unexcused notification shall be current at all times.
5. The principal/designee shall make appropriate referrals to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) and/or school counselor for attendance issues. If it is necessary, referrals are to be made to outside agencies for assistance.

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6. Referrals, using county adopted A-R1 forms, are to be made to the county attendance director as appropriate.
7. Secondary schools shall notify parents of student absences on a daily basis via phone call to the student's home address.
8. Truancy suspected on the elementary level requires the principal/designee to contact the home via phone call or letter.
9. The building principal/designee is to ensure that records are kept on all dropouts and are reported to the West Virginia Department of Education in a timely manner.
10. Each school year the building principal/designee shall implement a public relations program to enlist parent support for good school attendance. This may include: distribution of brochures, radio and TV public service announcements, or presentations at PTA, PTO, and community group meetings.
11. Parents/guardians are to be made aware of the current attendance policy and their responsibility and accountability for regular school attendance. This can be communicated through school handbooks, lunch menus, or other mailings from the school.
12. The principal shall notify, by letter, the parent, guardian, or custodian of the student and conduct a meeting with such person and the student when the student has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences.
13. Each school must ensure that students are not suspended solely for failure to attend class, i.e. skipping.

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MAKE-UP WORK:

Elementary

1. Students will receive two days for each day absent to complete make-up work.
2. Scheduled tests will be administered and pre-assigned work will be due on the first day upon returning from an absence.
3. Extenuating circumstances will be determined by the principal to extend the amount of time for make-up work (curricular and extracurricular activities).

Secondary

1. Students will receive one day for each day absent to complete make-up work.
2. There will be a ten (10) day limit on make-up work for extended absences unless approved by the principal due to extenuating circumstances.
3. Previously assigned make-up work will not gain extended time due to subsequent absences.
4. Extenuating circumstances will be determined by the principal to extend the amount of time for make-up work (curricular and extracurricular activities).

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES:

Schools are encouraged to develop incentives through Local School Improvement Council (LSIC), Student Assistance Teams (SAT), business partners, classroom rewards, school-wide recognition programs and county recognition programs whereby students who maintain high attendance standards or show significant improvement are rewarded and/or recognized. Suggestions include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Placing their names and/or pictures in the local newspaper.
2. Recognition on behalf of the county board of education and/or school for ***PERFECT** and ***FAITHFUL** attendance.

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***PERFECT** attendance is defined as being present every day school is in session (not missing more than 50% of one school day during the school year.)

***FAITHFUL** attendance is being absent no more than five (5) days during the school year.

DROP-OUT PREVENTION:

It shall be the responsibility of every educator to work to prevent a student from dropping out of school. Each school is encouraged to develop a drop-out prevention program. Identification of potential drop-outs shall begin at an early age. Programs and counseling services should be provided; W.Va. Code §18-8-5a states that teachers may use one (1) non-instructional day to visit the home of students who have been identified as potential drop-outs. The county is to reimburse for all travel expenses.

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES:

These resources may be used for alternative plans and programs that are positive in nature and encourage improved school attendance. The county attendance director shall maintain contact and utilize these outside resources. Parents and students shall be made aware of counseling, mentoring, behavioral, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, health, and other services available.

OFFENSES; PENALTIES; COST OF PROSECUTION: (W.Va. Code §18-8-2)

Parents, guardians, custodians or the student depending upon his/her age may be:

1. Fined not less than \$50.00 nor more than \$100.00 together with the cost of prosecution or confined in jail not less than five (5) nor more than twenty (20) days.

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2. The magistrate or judge may require the parent, guardian, or custodian of said child to bring the child to school and remain in school through the day until such time as the magistrate or judge may determine appropriate.
3. Placed in foster care, group homes, or special schools for students who are truant.
4. Denied by the department of motor vehicles a license or instruction permit for the operation of a motor vehicle to any person under the age of eighteen (18) who is a dropout or who misses more than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) total unexcused absences in a year. Senate Bill 550 provides that any person who is at least fifteen (15) years of age may apply to the department of motor vehicles for an instruction permit. These individuals must comply with the compulsory attendance law to be eligible for a verification form.

DUTIES OF THE ATTENDANCE DIRECTOR:

1. Monitor absenteeism reporting through the WVEIS system for the purpose of maintaining an accurate account of daily attendance for every student. WVEIS codes shall be uniform in recording absences in all schools.
2. Serve written notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child or to the child if he/she has reached his/her eighteenth (18) birthday and is enrolled in school and has accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences. Form CA-2
3. File complaints, warrants and appear at hearings representing the county school system.
4. Make home visits, when necessary, and take part in school/parent conferences when requested.

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5. If the parent, guardian, or custodian does not comply, then the county attendance director shall make complaint against the parent, guardian, or custodian before a magistrate of the county.
6. The attendance director shall serve as the liaison for the homeless children and youth as defined in W.Va. Code §18-8-4. As defined in H.R. 1 (No Child Left Behind).
7. Monitor the reporting of dropouts to the West Virginia Department of Education.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (SAT):

Functioning student assistance teams are present in each school to assist any at-risk student including students with excessive absenteeism. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) shall review and act upon teacher recommendations, extend deadlines for make-up work, refer the case to the attendance director, refer the case for counseling, social and/or protective services or review the student's academic placement or any other appropriate interventions as determined by the SAT.

APPEAL PROCEDURE:

Request for any waiver of the requirements contained in this policy must be appealed in writing to the following in the order listed prior to any action:

1. Principal
2. Attendance Director
3. County Superintendent

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INSTRUCTIONAL DAY GUIDELINES AND EXCEPTIONS:

All students shall be scheduled for the full instructional day including all four years of high school. Exceptions made by the county board for college courses and/or advanced technical programs must be pursuant to West Virginia State Board Policy 2510.

ANNUAL POLICY REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis to assess its effectiveness. Any revisions will be submitted to the West Virginia Department of Education for review and approval.

SOURCE: Boone County Board of Education

DATE APPROVED: August 25, 1987

DATE REVISED: August 7, 1990

DATE REVISED: October 18, 1994

DATE REVISED: August 15, 1995

DATE REVISED: August 7, 1997

DATE REVISED: January 19, 1999

DATE REVISED: August 20, 2002

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DATE REVISED: October 21, 2008

DATE REVISED: October 6, 2014

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