



# Student Attendance Manual

2025-2026



## **Introduction**

The purpose of the Attendance Policy Handbook is to provide students, parents, schools, and teachers with an explanation of Trenton Special School District's attendance policy. Please refer questions and suggestions for future editions of this Handbook to the Attendance Supervisor.

Regular daily attendance is a critical component of the educational process. The attendance policy promotes high expectations for student attendance, but allows for certain reasonable absences. In addition, a student who misses class may be able to make up some of the schoolwork, but it is not possible to recover all of the learning that takes

place in the classroom on a daily basis. School attendance for Kindergarten through grade 12 is essential to students' academic success and personal growth. Development of habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility are an integral part of the process of meeting and exceeding state and district academic standards. Attendance is a major factor in student achievement.

Excessive absenteeism is a key indicator that a child will drop out of school prior to graduating. In today's rapidly changing times, an education is now more vital than ever for economic stability. For this reason, we encourage you to ensure your child attends school every day it is in session. Arriving late for school and checking out early should be avoided if at all possible. When your child misses it has a negative effect on his/her education.

Chronic missed instruction, excused or unexcused, may be directed to the Attendance Supervisor for implementation of a Progressive Truancy Plan.

### Student Responsibilities

1. It is the student's responsibility to attend class all day, every day.
2. A student who is late arriving to school must check in at the office before reporting to class.
3. A student who leaves school early must check out at the office before leaving the school grounds.
4. If the student must miss an entire class period for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to see that a written/verbal excuse is provided to the school prior to, or within no more than three (3) days after the absence. Failure to do so within three days of the student's return to school will result in the absence being entered into the system as Unverified, which is considered an Unexcused Absence.
5. If a student is late to class, the missed instruction is considered as an Unexcused Tardy. If there is a valid reason for being late to class, it is the student's responsibility to provide the teacher with documentation for the reason the student was late (e.g. a pass from the office, counselor, or nurse). If such documentation is presented, the teacher will notify the office and the unexcused tardy will be changed to excused.
6. It is the student's responsibility to request make-up assignment(s) ON THE DAY he or she returns to school after an absence for work missed during the absence. It is the student's responsibility to abide by the school/teacher's procedures for when and how to request this work and when and how to make up exams and quizzes. The student has a limited number of days in which to return the make-up work. Failure to request/complete/return make-up work within the required time will affect the student's academic grade in the class, no matter what the cause of the absence.
7. A student who misses any part of a class (tardy, check out, etc..) is responsible for making up any scheduled class work, tests, or quizzes that were assigned while the student was not in class. It is the student's responsibility to request the make-up assignment(s) and to abide by the school/teachers procedures for how to request this work and when and how to make-up exams, and quizzes. Any work that is not completed will affect the student's academic grade in the class, no matter what the cause of the missed instruction.

### **Parent/ Guardian Responsibilities**

- r. It is the responsibility of each student's parent/guardian to assure the student attends school every day.
2. Parents/guardians should make every reasonable effort to schedule medical appointments, legal appointments, vacations, and other activities for times outside the student's school day.
3. If the student must miss class for any reason, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to see that a written/verbal excuse, explaining the cause for the absence, is provided to the school, prior to or within three (3) days after the absence. If the parent/guardian does not notify the school of the reason for the absence within three (3) days after the student returns to school, the absence will be considered an Unverified excuse, which for attendance purposes is an Unexcused Absence. Please note that just because a parent/guardian provides a verbal or written excuse, the absence is not automatically approved.
4. Parents/guardians are strongly advised to telephone the school **each day a student is absent** to acknowledge his or her absence on that day.
5. It is important that the school be able to contact parents/guardians when their child is not at school, when they become ill while at school, miss the bus, or in any other emergency situation. To do this, **parent's/guardian's must inform the school of changes in address or telephone number.** In addition, any change in emergency contact numbers should also be reported to the school.
6. If the student has any health problems that have been verified by a medical professional and which may result in lengthy/chronic absences from school, the parent/guardian is requested to notify the school in writing and provide the note from the health care professional. It may be advisable to seek an alternative placement (e.g. Home Bound) for students who will miss a great deal of school for consecutive days.
7. Approval for pre-arranged absences must be requested from the school principal in advance of the absence.
8. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to communicate regularly with the school regarding attendance issues/concerns and to attend conferences relating to attendance when requested by the school.

## Tennessee Statutes

The State of Tennessee has made great strides when it comes to students attending class on a consistent basis. It is of major importance that your child(ren) are present in the classroom every day possible.

The State of Tennessee Compulsory Attendance Law, **TCA 49-6-3001**, mandates children attend school regularly.

Tennessee Code Annotated, **TCA 49-6-3007**, defines truancy. Per this code truancy is defined as being absent five (5) or more days from school without an adequate excuse.

**TCA 49-6-3009** established that a progressive truancy plan may be put in place beginning at three (3) unexcused absences but must be implemented no later than five (5) unexcused absences to assist and encourage good attendance. This law was passed for the entire State of Tennessee to help ensure a student's regular attendance. Once the local education administration has worked through all three (3) tiers of the plan, the next step is to be cited into court. Parents can be fined and/or incarcerated for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren). The Tennessee Department of Children's Services must also be notified in all educational neglect cases. High school students should also be aware that schools are required to notify the Tennessee Department of Safety and request a student's driver's license be suspended or not regularly attending school. These two laws are **TCA 49-6** and **TCA 37-L**

TSSD is asking parents and guardians to assist us in the area of attendance. You can help your student and the school district by making every effort to ensure that your child(ren) attends school daily and is prepared for class. Please review the Trenton Special School District's attendance policy which is located on the District website.

Our hope is that no student and/or parent/guardian will ever have to appear in court for Truancy and/or Compulsory School Attendance violations. Please work with the schools to ensure every child is properly educated and protected. We look forward to making 2021-2022 an exceptional school year for all of our students.

## Trenton Special School District Voluntary Pre K

### Attendance Policy

Young children's potential for growth and development is maximized through consistent participation in a high-quality environment. Establishing consistent attendance routines in Pre K will increase student's chances of success in all future school experiences, K-12, and decreases chances that your child will drop out of high school. Our goal is to establish healthy school habits as soon as school is introduced. Therefore, it is very important your child attend preschool on a regular basis. With this in mind, the Trenton Special School District, in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education, has adopted a Pre K attendance policy.

#### Pre K Attendance Requirements

1. Please call the Trenton Elementary School office at 731-855-0971 when your child is absent. The office will communicate with the teacher.
2. Students are considered TARDY at 7:50 A.M. Any student arriving later than 7:50, even 7:51, must be brought to the TES main office to be checked in BY A PARENT.
3. A doctor's excuse is required after three (3) consecutive day of absence.
4. We understand that children may miss some days of participation due to illness or other unavoidable situation. Absences due to illness will be considered as an excused absence. The following are acceptable reasons for EXCUSED absences:
  - a. The child is hospitalized.
  - b. The child is incapacitated due to a serious injury.
  - c. The child contracts a communicable disease (Covid, virus or flu).
  - d. The child has other ongoing health related ailments which temporarily prevent attendance.
  - e. There is a death in the family.
  - f. The child has medical/dental/therapy appointment (these will be excused provided they are not excessive. Please make every effort possible to schedule appointments around school hours).
  - g. The child has an absence that was pre-approved by the program administrator.
5. If you have questions or concerns about your child's attendance, or if you anticipate an ongoing attendance issue, please contact Amy Allen by phone at (731)855-1191 or by email at amy.allen@trentonssd.org.

6. If a child has four (4) or more consecutive absences (or four (4) or more absences in a month) the site-level administrator will contact the family to determine the child's participation status.
7. If a child misses five (5) or more days in a three-month period, the site-level administrator will contact the family and will schedule a meeting to develop an attendance plan.
  - a. The attendance plan will be designed to help the family establish regular attendance or, if necessary, to plan for alternative services.
  - b. The attendance plan will be developed by the family and appropriate school personnel, including, but not limited to: the child's Pre-K teacher, the site-level administrator, the IEP team (if applicable), and additional staff serving the school and family (e.g. counselor, social worker, family support personnel, teacher assistant or other school support staff).
  - c. The plan must:
    - i. Identify the reasons for the attendance issues;
    - ii. Include a specific plan and date for establishing regular attendance or alternative services that meet the child's educational goals; and
    - iii. Include documentation of services and student outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the attendance plan.
8. Every effort will be made to ensure every child has access to a quality school program. However, Voluntary Pre K seats are limited and are made available through a state grant. **A child who has more than five (5) unexcused days per month or ten (10) unexcused days in a year may be terminated from the program for failure to follow the attendance policy.**
9. Because the seats are limited, if your child is withdrawn, his/her spot will be filled by another child. Future eligibility for a terminated child to re-enter the program will depend on vacancies after a 30-day waiting period. In addition, there will be a mandatory parent conference and the establishment of a binding Home/School Compact.



## Trenton Elementary School

### Attendance Policy

1. If your child will not be at school, please call the office to report the absence. If you do not have a phone you may send a written note with your child on the day they return to school. **No excuses will be accepted after three (3) days. Failure to call the school or send a note within three (3) days will result in an Unverified absence. Unverified absences are considered UNEXCUSED.**
2. Absences are classified as either Excused or Unexcused. In order for an absence to be excused, a doctor's note/funeral note must be provided on the day the student returns to school. **Failure to turn in a note within three (3) days will result in an Unverified absence. Unverified absences are considered UNEXCUSED.** Examples of Excused absences include:
  - a. Personal illness
  - b. Illness of an immediate family member
  - c. Death in the family
  - d. Religious observances
3. Parent's may use **five (5) parent notes** and **five (5) doctors** notes each school year. When five (5) parent notes have been used each additional absence will be considered UNEXCUSED, unless a doctor's note is provided.
4. Students are considered TARDY at *TSO*. Any student arriving later than 7:50, even 7:51, must be brought through the main office **BY A PARENT**. When students have accumulated three (3) unexcused tardies this will constitute one (1) UNEXCUSED absence. (Each additional three (3) unexcused tardies will result in an unexcused absence).
5. An accumulation of absences may result in a **Progressive Truancy Plan**. Please refer to the Trenton Special School District Board Policy located in this handbook concerning the Tiers of the plan.
6. It is important that the school be able to contact parents/guardians when their child is not at school, when they become ill while at school, miss the bus, or in any other emergency situation. To do this, **parents/guardians must inform the school of changes in address or telephone number.** In addition, any change in emergency contact numbers should also be reported to the school.

## Trenton Elementary School

### Contact Information

TES Main Office

731-855-0971

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Trenton Rosenwald Middle School

Attendance Policy

- r. If your child will not be at school, please call the office to report the absence. If you do not have a phone you may send a written note with your child on the day they return to school. No excuses will be accepted after three (3) days. Failure to call the school or send a note within three (3) days will result in an Unverified absence. Unverified absences are considered UNEXCUSED.
- 2. Absences are classified as either Excused or Unexcused. Examples of Excused absences include:
  - a. Personal illness/injury
  - b. Serious illness of an immediate family member
  - c. Death of an immediate family member
  - d. Religious observances
  - e. School endorsed activities
  - f. Summons, subpoena, or court order
  - g. Circumstance which in the judgement of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control
- 3. Parents may use five (5) parent notes and five (5) doctors notes each school year. When five (5) parent notes have been used each additional absence will be considered UNEXCUSED, unless a doctor's note is provided.
- + Students are considered TARDY at 7:50. Any student arriving later than 7:50, even 7:51, must enter through the main office and obtain a tardy slip to present to the teacher. When students have accumulated three (3) unexcused tardies this will constitute one (1) UNEXCUSED absence. (Each additional three (3) unexcused tardies will result in an unexcused absence). Consequences for any tardy beyond 3 will be at the discretion of the building administration.
- 5. An accumulation of absences may result in a Progressive Truancy Plan. A student who is absent three (3) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Attendance Supervisor, who will, in turn, contact the parent. Please refer to the Trenton Special School District Board Policy located in this handbook concerning the Tiers of the plan.
- 6. It is important that the school be able to contact parents/guardians when their child is not at school, when they become ill while at school, miss the bus, or in any other emergency situation. To do this, parents/guardians must inform the school of changes in address or telephone number. In addition, any change in emergency contact numbers should also be reported to the school.

Trenton Rosenwald Middle School

Contact Information

TRMS Main Office

731-855-2422

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## Peabody High School

### Attendance Policy

Success in school is directly related to student's punctuality and attendance. Regular classroom attendance is an absolute necessity if a student is to receive the maximum benefit from instruction. Classroom attendance is vital for class discussion and interchange of ideas with others.

- L A parent or guardian must phone Peabody High School on the day of the student's absence. If parents do not have a phone, a letter written by the parent or guardian must be presented to the attendance clerk upon the student's return to school. No excuses will be accepted after three (3) days. Failure to call the school or send a note within three (3) days will result in an Unverified absence. Unverified absences are considered UNEXCUSED.
- 2. Absences are classified as either Excused or Unexcused. Examples of Excused absences include:
  - a. Personal illness/injury
  - b. Serious illness of an immediate family member
  - c. Death of an immediate family member
  - d. Religious observances
  - e. School endorsed activities
  - f. Summons, subpoena, or court order
  - g. Circumstance which in the judgement of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control
- 3. Students are considered TARDY at 7:50. Any student arriving later than 7:50, even 7:51, must enter through the main office and obtain a tardy slip to present to the teacher. When students have accumulated three (3) unexcused tardies this will constitute one (1) UNEXCUSED absence. (Each additional three (3) unexcused tardies will result in an unexcused absence). Consequences for any tardy beyond 3 will be at the discretion of the building administration.
- + A child is considered truant when he/she is absent from school for five (5) days during the school year without an adequate excuse. The days do not have to be consecutive. Parents may use five (5) parent notes and five (5) doctor's notes each school year. When five (5) parent notes have been used each additional absence will be considered UNEXCUSED, unless a doctor's note is provided.

5. An accumulation of absences may result in a **Progressive Truancy Plan**. A student who is absent three (3) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Attendance Supervisor, who will, in turn, contact the parent. Please refer to the Trenton Special School District Board Policy located in this handbook concerning the Tiers of the plan.
6. **Seniors at Peabody High School shall adhere to the same attendance requirements. Seniors who fail to comply with attendance requirements WILL NOT participate in one or more of the following senior activities:**
  - a. Senior walk at Trenton Elementary School and Trenton Middle School
  - b. Junior/Senior Prom
  - c. Senior Class Day
  - d. Commencement (graduation)
7. More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported absences by a student during any semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license, or to obtain such if of age. In order to qualify for obtaining or reclaiming a driver's permit or license, the student **must**:
  - a. attend school regularly with no additional missed days
  - b. make a passing grade in at least three (3) full unit subjects or their equivalency at the conclusion of the grading period.
8. It is important that the school be able to contact parents/guardians when their child is not at school, when they become ill while at school, miss the bus, or in any other emergency situation. To do this, **parents/guardians must inform the school of changes in address or telephone number.** In addition, any change in emergency contact numbers should also be reported to the school.

## Peabody High School

### Contact Information

PHS Main Office

731-855-2601

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## **Trenton Special Board of Education**

### **Attendance Policy 6.200**

Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore, students are expected to be present each day school is in session. The Director of Schools/designee shall develop appropriate administrative procedures to implement this policy.

The attendance supervisor shall oversee the entire attendance program which shall include:

1. All accounting and reporting procedures and their dissemination;
2. Alternative program options for students who severely fail to meet minimum attendance requirements;
3. Ensuring that all school age children attend school;
- + Providing documentation of enrollment status upon request for students applying for new or reinstatement of driver's permit or license; and
5. Notifying the Department of Safety whenever a student with a driver's permit or license withdraws from school.

Student attendance records shall be given the same level of confidentiality as other student records. Only authorized school officials with legitimate educational purposes may have access to student information without the consent of the student or parent(s) /guardian(s).

Absences shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the principal/designee. Excused absences shall include:

- i. Personal illness/injury (maximum of five (5) excused medical absences per school year; note must be submitted on the day the student returns);
2. Serious illness or death of immediate family member;
3. Extreme weather conditions;
- + Religious observances;
5. Pregnancy;
6. School endorsed activities;
7. Summons, subpoena, or court order; or
8. Circumstances which in the judgement of the principal create emergencies over which the student has no control.

The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- i. Attendance is checked and reported daily for each class;



2. Daily absentee sheets contain sign in/sign out sheets and indicate students present or absent for the majority of the day; signing out will only be excused when recommended by the school nurse or with a doctor's note;
3. All student absences are verified;
4. Written excuses (parent notes) are submitted for absences and tardiness (only accepted if submitted the day upon returning to school; maximum of five (5) will be accepted); and
5. System-wide procedures for accounting and reporting are followed.

## **TRUANCY**

### *General*

Annually, the Director of Schools/designee will provide written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) that attendance at school is required. Students shall be present for at least fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled school day in order to be counted as present. Students may attend part-time days, alternating days, or for a specific amount of time as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan and shall be considered present for school attendance purposes. If a student is required to participate in a remedial instruction program outside of the regular school day where there is no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school system provides transportation, unexcused absences from these programs shall be reported in the same manner.

A student who is absent five (5) days without adequate excuse shall be reported to the Director of Schools/designee who will, in turn, provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's absence. If a parent does not provide documentation within adequate time excusing those absences, or request an attendance hearing, then the Director of Schools shall implement the progressive truancy plan described below prior to referral to juvenile court.

### *Progressive Truancy Plan*

Prior to referral to juvenile court, the following progressive truancy plan will be implemented.

#### **Tier I**

After three (3) unexcused absences, the parent(s)/guardian(s), or other person having control of the student will receive a letter or phone call from the school making them aware of the student's current absences. The letter/call will include a reminder of the

compulsory attendance law and TSSD Board policy concerning attendance. If needed an attendance meeting will be scheduled and an attendance contract will be drafted for the student and parent to sign.

## **Tier II**

Upon a student's accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences, the progressive truancy plan will include the following:

- a.) A conference with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s), or other person having control of the student;
- b.) A resulting attendance contract to be signed by the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), or other person having control of the student, and the attendance supervisor/designee. The contract shall include:
  - 1. A specific description of the school's attendance expectations for the student;
  - 2. The period for which the contract is in effect; and
  - 3. Penalties for additional absences and alleged school offenses, including additional disciplinary actions and potential referral to juvenile court;
- c.) Follow up, which may be with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), or other person having control of the student. This may be via letter or phone call to discuss the student's progress.
- d.) An individualized assessment by a school employee of the reasons a student has been absent from school; and
- e.) If necessary, referral of the student to counseling, community-based services, or other in-school or out-of-school services aimed at addressing the student's attendance problems.

## **Tier III**

This tier shall be implemented if the truancy interventions under Tier I and Tier II are unsuccessful.

These interventions shall be determined by a team formed at each school. The interventions shall address student needs in an age-appropriate manner. Finalized plans shall be approved by the Director of Schools/designee. If necessary, referral to juvenile court will be implemented.

## **MILITARY SERVICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN**

School principals shall provide students with a one-day excused absence prior to the deployment of and a one-day excused absence upon the return of a parent or custodian serving active military service.

Principals shall also allow up to ten (10) excused cumulative absences per year for students to visit a parent/guardian during a deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of his/her parent's/guardian's deployment. Students shall be permitted to make up schoolwork missed during these absences.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Students will be given two (2) days for make-up work for every day absent.

### **STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT**

Students who are absent the day of the scheduled EOC exams must present a signed doctor's excuse or must have been given an excused release by the principal prior to testing to receive an excused absence. Students who have excused absences will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Excused students will receive an incomplete in the course until they have taken the EOC exam.

Students who have an unexcused absence shall receive a failing grade on the EOC exam which shall be averaged into their final grade.

### **CREDIT/PROMOTION DENIAL**

Credit/promotion denial determinations may include student attendance; however, student attendance may not be the sole criterion. If attendance is a factor prior to credit/promotion denial, the following shall occur:

1. The student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be advised if the student is in danger of credit/promotion denial due to excessive absenteeism.
2. Procedures in due process are available to the student when credit or promotion is denied.

### **DRIVER'S LICENSE REVOCATION**

More than ten (10) consecutive or fifteen (15) reported unexcused absences by a student during any semester renders a student ineligible to retain a driver's permit or license or to obtain such if of age.

In order to qualify for reclaiming a driver's permit or license, the student must make a passing grade in at least three (3) full unit subjects or their equivalency at the conclusion of a subsequent grading period.

## **ATTENDANCE HEARING**

Students with excessive (more than five (5)) unexcused absences or those in danger of credit/promotion denial shall have the opportunity to appeal to an attendance hearing committee appointed by the principal. If the student chooses to appeal, the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided written or actual notice of the appeal hearing and shall be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will conduct a hearing to determine if any extenuating circumstances exist to excuse an absence(s) or to determine if the student has met attendance requirements that will allow him/her to pass the course or be promoted. Upon notification of the attendance committee decision, the principal shall send written notification to the Director of Schools/designee and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student of any action taken regarding the excessive unexcused absences. The notification shall advise parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to appeal such action within two (2) school days to the Director of Schools/designee.

The appeal shall be heard no later than ten (10) school days after the request for appeal is received. Within five (5) school days the Director of Schools/designee rendering a decision, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing by the Board, and the Board shall review the record. Following the review, the Board may affirm or overturn the decision of the Director of Schools/designee. The action of the Board shall be final.

The Director of Schools/designee shall ensure that this policy is posted in each school building and disseminated to all students, parents, teachers, and administrative staff.

## **Student Attendance Pledge and Contract**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that regular attendance is necessary for maximum achievement in school. Punctuality and dependability in meeting assigned responsibilities are personal behavior habits valued in our society. Trenton Special School District (TSSD) requires that students be punctual and in regular school attendance to help develop desirable behavior patterns, as well as to maximize their classroom learning.

Furthermore, I recognize that school attendance is required by law, as outlined in Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-3001. My absences and tardies will be addressed by individual interventions with progressive consequences. Each absence for all or any part of the school day shall be supported by a valid excuse. I recognize the relationship between attendance and learning.

I enter this contract with my parent(s)/guardian(s), school administration, and TSSD and pledge to come to school every day and attend my classes on time.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent Responsibilities and Pledge**

- i) I will ensure that my child arrives to school on time each day and remains at school for the duration of the day.
- 2) If the child is absent I must make contact with the school by phone.
- 3) In the event of an absence, I will provide a note on the day my child returns to school (either a parent or doctor's note).
- 4) In the event there is an accumulation of 15 or more absences during the school year, I understand that my student may be retained for the next school year unless there is a hardship situation determined by the principal.
- 5) I understand that continued absences, that cannot be resolved in the Progressive Truancy Plan, will result in court proceedings.

I agree to adhere to the TSSD attendance guidelines and will make every effort to ensure that my child attends and remains at school daily.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

