



The University of Texas Elementary School

Little Longhorns

Attendance Policy and Procedures Handbook

2023-2024

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Compulsory Attendance

We are sure you are aware of how important it is that your child receive a quality education. Students learn best when they attend school every day. When students miss school, they miss important lessons and essential skills needed for academic success. Being present and on time is a positive life-long habit. A student's tardiness and absences can have a major impact on the learning process for both your child and other children in the class. This could include missing an explanation of a new concept; interrupting a class already in session; needing the teacher to re-explain directions, slowing down the rest of the class, etc. Regular attendance establishes patterns of responsibility and commitment that will serve students throughout their lives. The State of Texas has a mandatory attendance policy called the Compulsory Attendance Law Sec. 25.085 TEC. All students who attend a public school (Pre-K–12th grade) are required to come to school every day. Under the laws of the State of Texas it is your duty as the parent/guardian to monitor your child's attendance and make sure they attend school each day, for the **full instructional day**. This also includes ensuring the student arrives to school on time, attends each class unless there is an extreme emergency.

Prekindergarten students are also subject to compulsory school attendance rules while they are enrolled in school. On enrollment in Prekindergarten, a child must attend school. However, if a child has not reached mandatory compulsory attendance age (6 years old as of September 1 of the current school year) the child's parent or guardian may withdraw the student from school, and the child will not be in violation of compulsory attendance rules.

Note that an allegation of truant conduct applies only to an individual who is 12 years of age or older and younger than 19 years of age. The offense of parent contributing to nonattendance, however, applies to parents of students who are subject to compulsory attendance, regardless of the student's age.

*Note: A child engages in truant conduct if the child is required to attend school under the TEC, §25.085, and fails to attend school on **10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year**. School districts must adopt truancy prevention measures designed to address student conduct related to truancy before the student engages in truant conduct, and the district must minimize the need for referrals to truancy court for absences in accordance with the TEC, §25.0915.*

What is the school/district's responsibility regarding school attendance?

If a student has been absent without excuse on four days or parts of days within a six-week period, the school district shall issue a warning notice to inform the parent, (A) of their duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school (B) the student is subject to truancy prevention measures in addition to other statutory requirements in existence and a request for a conference between school officials and the parents will be made to discuss the absences.

Phone calls will be placed to parents/guardians notifying them when a student has been marked absent. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that he/she provides current and up to date contact information to the school.

The school district will also provide attendance information on your child's report card for parents to monitor their student's school attendance. For up-to-the minute attendance, information parents/guardians can view their student's attendance record via Parent Portal.

Parental Notice of Excessive Absences

Parents will be asked to conference with an administrator to discuss your child's absences. If there are special circumstances involved concerning your child's absences, please notify a campus administrator and/or counselor as soon as possible. Resources are often available to assist families who are in difficult circumstances, and your child's administrator and counselor can assist you with investigating potential solutions.

Tardies

Students who arrive at school after 8:00 a.m. are tardy. Students must report to the office to check in. All excused absence reasons apply. Other reasons must be reviewed by an administrator before the tardy is considered excused. The student's tardiness is considered excused if the student:

- a) Brings a verified doctor/dental, court, or parent note using the same information as with an "excused absence."
- b) Brings doctor's note that is required for 3 or more consecutive tardy days.
- c) Delayed by the school bus.
- d) Delayed by unusual weather conditions (approved by administration)

Unexcused tardy includes, but are not exclusive of:

- a) Overslept/late start
- b) Car trouble
- c) Missed the bus
- d) Personal business

What should I do if I received a notice/letter regarding my child's attendance?

If you receive a notice, take steps to avoid future unexcused absences, complete the parent and student program identified in the notice, and conference with campus staff to understand how the absences occurred.

What if there is an error with my child's attendance?

If you have any concerns regarding the accuracy of your student's attendance, please contact the school's attendance office. (Stephanie Allen, 512-495-3300; stephanie.allen@austin.utexas.edu)

Attendance Committee

In accordance with legal requirements, UT Elementary has established an attendance review committee for efficient implementation of Education Code 25.092. The parent shall be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or be awarded a final grade. For students in kindergarten–grade 5, award of a final grade shall be based on attendance during the entire scheduled school year rather than on semesters.

Attendance Committee Members

Principal, Assistant Principal, School Counselor, Grade Level Teacher, Campus Registrar, Special Education Teacher

Excused Absences

We do recognize, however, that perfect attendance is not always possible. Sick children should be kept at home to allow recovery and to keep other students from contracting the illness if contagious.

If your child is, absent from all or part of a school day, the student—upon arrival or return to school—**must** bring a note signed by the guardian or health care professional that describes the reason for the absence. All notes should be provided within **one (1)** week of returning to school. The campus will update attendance records based on the provided documentation.

Acceptable excuses for absences and tardiness are personal illness, illness or death in the family, quarantine, religious holiday with documentation, weather or road conditions making travel dangerous, participation in school activities with permission of the principal, or emergencies or any unusual circumstances recognized by the principal or person designated. Supervision of student attendance will be the responsibility of teachers and school administrators. Types of absences that count against the student's 90% attendance law include, but are not limited to: family trips, vacations, attendance at non-school sponsored events.

Minimum Attendance for Final Grades

Except as provided below, a student in **any** grade, level from kindergarten through grade 12 shall not be given a final grade for a class unless the student attends 90 percent of the days the class is offered. This restriction does not affect a student's right to excused absences.

A student who attends for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive a final grade under this subsection without the consent of the judge presiding over the student's case.

In order to receive a final grade for a class, a student is required to attend class 90 percent of the day's class is offered regardless of whether the student's absences are excused or unexcused.

When students fall below the 75% attendance rate, the student and parent/guardian must appeal to the Campus Attendance Committee. This Committee will review the reasons for your student's absences, review performance, and offer a plan for recovery. Each plan is unique based on individual student's circumstances. If a student is in good standing, work missed has been made up, and proper documentation for absences has been provided, the Attendance Committee may determine the method for recovery.

Make-Up Work Due to Excused School Absence

Upon return to school, students will be granted one calendar day per day of absence to submit missed work. It is the responsibility of the student to confer with each teacher in order to determine assignments missed. Students must request missed assignments immediately upon their return to school.

As a general rule, work assignments will not be provided during a student's absence due to illness unless requested. They need to focus on getting well. When student is well enough to return to school, there is ample time built into the make-up policy to complete the missing work. As always, should a student become seriously ill or face an extended absence from school, the team and the parents will work for a realistic solution to address individual student needs.

Chronic Absences/Excessive Tardies

The following is the sequence of actions regarding unexcused absences and excessive tardies at UT Elementary School:

- 4 days of unexcused absences and/or 5 tardies in a 6 week period:
 - Campus registrar will call home to remind parents/guardians of compulsory attendance laws and document the contact.
- 6 days of unexcused absences and/or 8 tardies in a 9 week period:
 - Campus registrar will call home to remind students/parents of compulsory attendance laws and send written notice of excessive absences.
- 8 days of unexcused absences and/or 10 tardies in a 12 week period:
 - An “Excessive Absences/Tardies” letter will be provided to the parents informing them of the number of absences/tardies.
 - Referral to the Campus Attendance Committee.
 - Intervention plan will be developed.
- 10 days of unexcused absences and/or 11+ tardies in a 16 week period:
 - A second “Excessive Absences/Tardies” letter will be mailed to the parent
 - Conference with school principal will be scheduled and intervention plan reviewed.
 - Review by Campus Attendance Committee and additional interventions developed.
- 15 days of unexcused absences and/or 11 + tardies in a 20 week period:
 - A final “Excessive Absences/Tardies” letter will be provided and notification that the student will not be eligible to return for the next school year.

Truancy Prevention Program/Procedures

- Upon enrollment Parents/Guardians receive Attendance Handbook and State Compulsory Law Policy
- Campus staff will contact and inform parent/guardian of frequent absences/tardies.
- Written Notices will be provided to parent/guardian of excessive absences/tardies.
- School administration will conference with families to discuss options for improvement and barriers to good attendance.
- Referrals to Campus Attendance Committee for review and development of intervention plans.
- Campus will provide monthly parent attendance class as a part of the Truancy Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Attendance Procedures

I hereby acknowledge receipt and understanding of the guidelines contained within the UT Elementary Attendance Procedures. My signature below notes that I have read and agree to comply with the attendance requirements set forth in this document.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____