

# Attendance Guidelines

## ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

2019 -2020

### CARTHAGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

#### Attendance Philosophy

The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual child. The regular contact of pupils with one another under the tutelage of a competent teacher is vital to this purpose. There is also a direct relationship between poor attendance and academic failure. Students with good attendance records generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are much more employable after leaving high school. Thus, all students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time to classes in order to derive maximum benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.

Section 25.092 of the Texas Education Code stipulates that to receive credit for a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. **This statute applies equally to all students regardless of the reason for the absence.** The law, however, provides means by which students, through participation in alternative methods, may regain credit lost due to excessive absences. Students and parents are urged to consider each absence wisely and students are encouraged to miss school only when absolutely necessary. If absences in excess of the allowable number are necessary, students are urged to be diligent in completing alternative time methods.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Unless specifically exempted by TEC §25.086, a child who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not reached the child's **19th birthday** shall attend school. A person who is 19 or older and is enrolled in a public school must attend school each day. According to Section 25.085(e) the district will issue a warning letter stating that the person's enrollment may be revoked if the person has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. Section 25.085(h) provides that the district may impose a behavior improvement plan described by Section 25.0914(a-1)(11) as an alternative to revoking enrollment.

Under §25.085 (d), compulsory attendance applies to certain extended-year programs, tutorial classes, accelerated reading instruction programs, accelerated instruction programs, basic skills programs, and summer programs for students subject to certain disciplinary removals. Under Section 25.085(c), it also applies to students below the age for compulsory attendance but who are voluntarily enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten.

#### Required Attendance: Grades 9-12

If a student is not present at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered, he/she may be in jeopardy of losing his/her credits. Consequently, for the 2019-2020 school year, a student may accumulate no more than **nine (9) absences in the first semester and nine (9) absences in the second semester.** The tenth (10th) absence in the first semester will result in loss of course credit. The tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence in the second semester will result in loss of course credit.

Absences will be counted on a class by class basis at the secondary level, thus making it possible for a student to lose credit class by class. A student who has exceeded the allowable number of absences may regain credit through participation in alternative time options.

#### Required Attendance: Grades 7-8

A student in Grades 7-8 may be in jeopardy of losing credit for a course unless the student is in attendance in that class for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Absences will accrue on a class by class basis. Loss of credit in one course at the junior high level could result in the student being retained in the event that promotion standards are not met.

### **Required Attendance: Grades PK-6**

A student in Grades PK-6 may be in jeopardy of retention unless the student is in attendance at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Because of the uniqueness of elementary scheduling, an absence at this level shall be considered a full day absence. A student who at any time during the school year, exceeds the limit of 18 absences may not be promoted to the next grade.

### **Texas and Out-of-State Transfer Students**

State law requires all students be in attendance at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. The CISD attendance policy will apply to all students who enter a district school. The number of absences a student has accumulated at the previous school will be applied to the local policy. Students who enter late will also be held accountable for the 90 percent attendance requirement. Out-of-state students are not subject to the 90 percent rule.

### **Passing Grade Required**

In all cases, the student must earn a passing grade in order to receive credit. Promotion standards required for advancement to the next grade level must also be met for students in Grades 1-8. Please consult your child's campus information handbook for a detailed description of promotion standards.

### **Make Up Work: Daily Assignments and Exams**

A student shall have the opportunity to make up daily assignments and exams missed due to an absence and to receive a grade for work satisfactorily completed regardless of the reason for the absence. A student who fails to complete make up work within the allotted time will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. The student shall have the responsibility of requesting make up work and returning the completed work to the teacher within the time allotted by campus regulation. Successful completion of make up work does not guarantee the award of credit should a student exceed the allowable number of absences.

### **Re-Admittance Following an Absence**

The reason for each absence must be stated in writing and signed by the parent or other person standing in parental relation to the child. If a student fails to bring a note signed by the parent or guardian on the first day the student returns to school, the absence(s) shall be designated as unexcused. This designation will be changed if the student presents a note signed by a parent or guardian within the time period allowed by campus regulation. Excused/unexcused designations will not be changed after the published deadline; consequently, familiarity with your child's campus information handbook is extremely important.

### **Re-Admittance Following an Absence with a Health Care Professional**

When a student comes back to school after a temporary absence which results from a visit to a health care professional, the student must have documentation signed and dated by the health care professional in order to have the absence removed for ADA purposes. Documentation must be presented in the current six weeks period for an absence to be removed. The school may verify the absence with the health care professional.

### **Excused Absences**

Section 25.087 of the Texas Education Code states the following about excused absences: (a) a child required to attend school may be excused for temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent of the school in which the child is enrolled. (b) A school district shall excuse a student from attending school for the purpose of observing religious holy days, including traveling for that purpose. A school district shall excuse a student for a temporary absence resulting from a visit to a health care professional if that student commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment. A student whose absence is excused under Subsection (b) may not be penalized for that absence and shall be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed on those days. If the student satisfactorily completes the school work, the day of absence shall be counted as a day of compulsory attendance.

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

Excused absences are those resulting from one or more of the following extenuating circumstances:

1. **Personal illness:** An absence due to personal illness may qualify as an extenuating circumstance. A statement from a physician or a health clinic may be required in the event a student is absent from school for five (5) or more consecutive school days. Parents are urged to present all pertinent documentation of absences in this category to attendance office personnel promptly. Documentation may take the form of physician's statements, hospital receipts which clearly identify the date of the treatment or visit, or clinic receipts which also identify the date of the visit. Attendance office personnel shall file all documentation for future review by the Campus Attendance Committee.
2. **Illness or death in the immediate family:** Immediate family shall be defined by any relationship depicted in policy DBE (Local)(E), NEPOTISM. The Attendance Committee may also consider additional travel time to attend the funeral or a family member to be an extenuating circumstance.

3. Quarantine
4. Weather or road conditions making travel dangerous
5. Court related students: This category shall include absences caused by required participation in juvenile proceedings and child abuse or neglect investigations. The reason for the absence must be stated in writing by the probation officer or case worker. The student shall also be required to complete all make up assignments within a reasonable period of time. (TAC, Section 129.62)
6. Court returned students: Absences of a student who returns to school as the result of prosecution under the truancy law or by order of a court may be considered as extenuating if:
  - a. The student returns to school and attends class regularly to the satisfaction of the district.
  - b. Satisfactorily completes assignments for the period of the absence within a reasonable time as determined by the district.
  - c. Passes an examination at the completion of the class. (Texas Family Code, Section 51.03)
7. Suspended students: Absences due to suspension shall be considered to be extenuating if the student satisfactorily completes the assignments for the period of suspension within a reasonable time as determined by the district.
8. Family hardships beyond the control of the student and/or family: Absences due to caring for younger brothers and sisters, children of teen parents, or parents who are critically ill, or other situations beyond the control of the student or family may be identified as extenuating. The Attendance Committee may require an interview with parents of students who request extenuating circumstance for absences in this category and may investigate to the degree necessary to determine if the situation was beyond the control of the student or family.
9. Observance of a Religious Holy Day(s)
10. School sponsored/sanctioned activities: Certain absences resulting from participation in activities of a co-curricular or extracurricular nature may be identified as extenuating if the activity has been approved by the Board of Education.

The district shall not schedule nor permit students to participate in any school related or sanctioned activities on or off campus that would require, permit, or allow a student to be absent from class in any course more than ten (10) days during the school year except as noted in the student handbook. Absences in excess of nine (9) in the first semester and nine (9) in the second semester may not be considered as being due to extenuating circumstances. Additionally, a student may accumulate no more than nine (9) such absences per class in the first semester or nine (9) per class in the second semester.

Absences which result from school sponsored activities which are approved by the Board of Education and which are under the direction of a professional member of the staff and those resulting from approved Religious Holy Days will not be included in a student's cumulative total of absences with the following exception:

The District shall make no distinction between absences for UIL activities and absences for other extracurricular activities approved by the Board. A student shall be allowed in a school year a maximum of ten extracurricular absences not related to post-district competition. This requirement shall only be waived by the Superintendent on a case-by-case basis. Absences related to competition above district level shall not be limited. FM (LOCAL)

#### **Chronic Illness/Hospitalization**

A student who has been determined by a licensed physician to have limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to **chronic health problems** will not automatically be exempted from attendance rules by the Campus Attendance Committee. Chronic health problems include such conditions as tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, a heart condition, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, which adversely affects the student's educational performance.

A student who presents documentation of hospitalization may be exempted from attendance regulations by the Campus Attendance Committee. A maximum of ten (10) days may be approved for exemption. If a student is expected to miss more than this number of school days due to hospitalization, parents should contact the campus principal in order to request some type of alternative delivery of instruction. Chronic illness forms and information may be obtained through the campus principal's office.

Requests for the chronic illness or hospitalization exemptions must be filed with the Attendance Committee according to the regulations governing petitions and must be accompanied by a physician's statement or in the case of hospitalization, documents

either from a physician or hospital administrator. **The chronic illness statement will be in effect for one school year.** It is the student's responsibility to request that the attendance committee consider his/her chronic illness documentation.

In either case, the student must satisfactorily complete all make-up assignments and have an average of at least a 70 in order to have the possibility of receiving credit for a course or class.

### **Unexcused Absences and Truancy**

Section 25.095 of the Texas Education Code requires that school employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, such as basic skills for ninth graders, or from required tutorials will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action.

Truancy may also result in assessment of penalties by a court of law against both the student and his or her parents. A complaint against the parent may be filed in the appropriate court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or

Section 25.093, which is the offense of Parent Contributing to Nonattendance contains that a fine is controlled by increasing fine limitations beginning with \$100 for the first offense and \$500 for a fifth or subsequent offense. Each day a child is out of school continues to be a separate offense.

Notice is not required under this section if the student is a party to a juvenile court proceeding or conduct described by Section 51.03(b) (2), Family Code.

The fact that a parent did not receive a notice under this section does not create a defense to prosecution under Section 25.093 or 25.094.

In this section, "parent" includes a person standing in parental relation.

### **Suspended Students**

If a student is suspended, the student will be given an opportunity to make up the work that is missed; however, a grade adjustment may be imposed. If the student satisfactorily completes the make up work within a reasonable time and in accordance with campus regulations governing make up work, the absences incurred while suspended shall be considered as extenuating.

Days of suspension, however, are considered absences and must be made up using alternative time options if the student has exceeded the absence limit.

### **Court Involvement**

Section 25.093 of the Texas Education Code empowers a school district to proceed with filing a complaint in a court against a parent who commits an offense of thwarting compulsory attendance. Additionally, Section 25.094 allows a school district to file a complaint against a student for failure to attend school.

### **Notification of Student, Parent or Guardian**

Attendance personnel shall attempt to contact a parent or guardian by telephone of the first absence or be contacted by the electronic attendance system. Attendance personnel may also correspond by mail with parents concerning student absence totals.

Please see **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING TRUANCY FORM** on the last page of this document.

Students or parents who desire to petition the Campus Attendance Committee for restoration of credit may obtain a "Request for Review of Attendance" form from either principal's office personnel or the attendance clerk. The form should be completed and presented to the campus principal along with any pertinent documentation such as physician's statements.

The petition to the Attendance Committee must be submitted no later than ten school days before the end of each semester. Failure to petition the Attendance Committee in a timely manner will result in assignment to alternative time requirements. Failure to attend alternative time requirements will result in a loss of credit.

The Campus Attendance Committee will meet within three (3) school days of the receipt of the completed Request for Review of Attendance form. Committee decisions will be communicated to parents within three (3) days of the meeting date. Attendance committees may meet periodically to review all situations in which students have lost credit as the result of excessive absences.

### **Attendance Committees**

The Board of Education of the Carthage Independent School District has approved the operation of an attendance committee on each of the district's campuses for the purpose of hearing student petitions related to loss of credit due to excessive absences. A student who exceeds the number of allowable absences, regardless of the reason, loses credit. If petitioned, the Campus Attendance Committee has the obligation to determine if the student's absences were due to extenuating circumstances and/or if options for regaining credit have been completed. Each attendance committee shall be composed of at least three from the following:

Campus Principal    One or More Teachers    Counselor

The committee chairperson shall be responsible for scheduling all meetings and shall have the responsibility for assuring that committee members have access to all pertinent documentation. The committee has the option to require alternative methods for regaining credit. They may include, but are not limited to, Target Practice, State Assessment Remediation, Saturday Class, Evening Classes, Summer School, or Holiday Classes which are described below. A student whose excessive absences have been excused by the committee will continue to be monitored. The committee may meet again if attendance problems continue and makeup may be required.

#### **Alternative Methods for Regaining Credit**

A student who has lost credit as a result of excessive absences may regain credit through participation in one or more alternative time options. The student will be required to utilize alternative time options to recapture only the number of absences which exceed the limit. Some of the options require a fee and others do not. The options available may include but are not limited to the following:

1. **After-School Session:** Attendance at one regularly after-school session shall be equivalent to ½ day of alternative time. Individual campus after school schedules shall be communicated to all students and parents. (Grades PK-8 only).
2. **Saturday Class:** A student who attends a Saturday class must be present during the entire session in order to receive alternative time credit. Saturday classes will be scheduled from 8:00 to 12:00. A student will not be admitted to the class late. **PLEASE NOTE:** The student must register for the Saturday class no later than the Friday morning before the time makeup class. A fee of \$2.50 will be assessed for each hour of attendance for Saturday class. The fee must be paid at registration. Each hour attended will be considered as 2 hours of class time.
3. **Evening Classes:** The District may arrange for evening classes as an option in accumulating alternative time. Evening classes may be attended only by students in Grades 7-12. **PLEASE NOTE:** A fee of \$2.50 per hour will be assessed for Evening classes. The student must register and pay for the Evening class no later than one day before the time makeup class.
4. **Summer School:** A student who has accumulated more absences than could physically be made up in the remainder of a school year could face the possibility of attending summer school in order to recapture credit. Transportation to and from summer school may be the responsibility of the student or his/her parent. Registration and fees will be assessed at the set rate as other Summer School attendance. (Grades PK-8)
5. **Holiday Class:** Classes may be scheduled during certain holidays as an alternative method for regaining credit. **PLEASE NOTE:** The student must register for the Holiday class no later than the school day before the time makeup class. A fee of \$2.50 will be assessed for each hour of attendance for Holiday class. The fee must be paid at registration. Each hour attended will be considered as 2 hours of class time.
6. **State Assessment Preparation Session:** Attendance at one regularly scheduled state testing preparation session shall be equivalent to 2 times the clock hour of alternative time.

A student attending a Saturday, evening or Holiday class will be required to bring assignments on which to work during the complete session. All school rules and regulations will apply to student behavior, and a student who violates one or more of these standards will be removed from the class and no credit will be awarded for the time spent that day. Additionally, a student participating in an alternative time session for disciplinary violations may not earn concurrent credit for purposes of recapturing attendance time. A student participating in any alternative time opportunity shall be responsible for transportation to and from school.

Each student bears the responsibility of providing materials on which to work. Students who fail to bring sufficient materials will be assigned study packets related to mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills. These must be completed in order to gain credit for the alternative time. Additionally, students who participate in an alternative time option offered after the end of a semester will be required to participate in a supervised curriculum which emphasizes STAAR objectives, critical thinking skills, and/or study skills.

#### **Credit by Exam**

In certain instances, the Campus Attendance Committee may allow a student the opportunity to regain credit lost due to excessive absences through the passage of an appropriate subject exam (s) with a grade of 80 or above. Students with unexcused absences may not use this option to regain credit. Additionally, a fee may be charged to defray the expense of copy work and grading.

Students interested in this option of regaining credit lost due to excessive absences should see the campus principal.

#### **Handicapped Students**

For students identified in TAC, Section 89.211, as handicapped students, the admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee shall determine absences due to the handicapping condition as extenuating circumstances. The ARD committee shall determine any modifications necessary regarding work to be made up by the handicapped student in order to regain class credit lost due to the absences.

## School Responsibilities Regarding Truancy

