

CMS High School Attendance and Absentee Policy

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEE PROCEDURES

If any student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan conflicts with this policy, the requirements of the student's IEP or 504 Plan take precedence.

Education is more than the grades students receive in their courses. Important as that is, students' regular attendance at school is essential to their social and cultural development and helps prepare them to accept responsibilities they will face as adults. Interactions with other students and participation in the instruction within the classroom enrich the learning environment and promote a continuity of instruction, which results in higher student achievement.

"Parent" for Compulsory Attendance

Arkansas code concerning attendance requirements for children between the ages of five (5) and seventeen (17) is amended to add to those under which there is a penalty for noncompliance regarding school attendance requirements:

- Every parent
- Legal Guardian
- Person having lawful control of the child, or
- Person standing in loco parentis

Educational Neglect to Include Custodians

Custodians of a child are now included with parents and guardians concerning educational neglect, and reports of educational neglect made to the Child Abuse Hotline

Studies show students are most successful when they attend school every day. We understand that there are times, due to illness, legal appointments, or personal reasons, when students may be absent from school. The following outlines what are considered excused and unexcused absences, the limit on unexcused absences, and how parents and guardians need to respond to absences. Excessive absences can be detrimental to your child's education. Children should be at school every day and on time. If absences become excessive, parents will be referred to a counselor and/or juvenile court.

Students entering school after 7:40 a.m. must sign in at the office and obtain an admittance slip to be given to that period's teacher. Any student will be considered tardy if arriving after the 7:30 a.m. bell, and considered absent if arriving 25 minutes late to any class.

It is of great importance for students to make up work missed during an absence.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are those where a student was on official school business or when the absence was due to one of the following reasons and the student brings a written statement the day he/she returns to school from the parent or legal guardian, stating such reason. The parent or guardian has **5 days** from the date of the absence to turn in any written or medical excuse.

★ ***A maximum of six (6) days will be allowed, per semester, with a written statement.***

For the absence to be considered **excused**, the student must:

- a. Bring a written statement to the principal or designee within **5 days** of the student's return to school. from the student's parent or legal guardian or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence: or
- b. If the student is attending the district's courses digitally, upload a written statement from the student's parent or legal guardian stating the reason for the student's absence through the district's digital course management platform for review by the principal or designee.
- c. Provide documentation as proof of a student's participation in an activity or program scheduled and approved by the 4-H program that is provided by a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program.

A written statement presented or uploaded for an absence having occurred more than five (5) school days before its presentation or upload will not be accepted.

Absences are excused when:

1. The student's illness and attendance could jeopardize the health of other students. A maximum of six (6) such days is allowed per semester unless the condition(s) causing such absences are of a chronic or recurring nature, are medically documented, and approved by the principal.
2. There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family.
3. Observing recognized holidays based on the student's faith.
4. Attendance at an appointment with a government agency.
5. Attendance at a medical appointment.
6. Exceptional circumstances with prior approval of the principal.
7. Participating in a club, or school-sponsored athletic or academic activity.
8. Participating in the election poll worker program for high school students.
9. Absences are granted to allow a student to visit his/her parent or legal guardian who is a member of the military and has been called to active duty, is on leave from active duty, or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. The number of additional excused absences shall be at the discretion of the superintendent or designee.
10. Absences granted, at the superintendent's discretion, to seventeen (17) year-old students who join the Arkansas National Guard while in eleventh grade to complete basic combat training between grades eleven (11) and twelve (12).
11. Absences of students excluded from school by the Arkansas Department of Health during a disease outbreak, because the student has an immunization waiver, or whose immunizations are not up to date.
12. Absences due to pregnancy and parenting, including but not limited to:
 - o Labor, delivery, and recovery.
 - o Prenatal and postnatal medical appointments and other medically necessary pregnancy-related
 - o Absences.

- o The illness or medical appointments of a child belonging to a parent who is enrolled in a District School.
- o A legal appointment related to pregnancy or parenting, including or not limited to Adoption, custody, and visitation.
- o A reasonable amount of time to accommodate a lactating student's need to express breast milk or to breastfeed the student's child on the district's campus.
- o At least 10 school days of absences for both a parenting mother and a parenting father after the birth of a child.

Up to one time during each scheduled election, a student shall not be considered absent from school for the time the student accompanies the student's parent when the parent is exercising the parent's right to vote in a scheduled election.

13. Absences for a student who is the child of a fallen service member or fallen first responder:
 - a. Due to a mental health concern, or
 - b. To attend an event from a sponsoring organization that provides support to families of fallen service members or first responders, or provides support for traumatic loss, grief, or resiliency.
14. Upon the written consent of a student's parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or person standing in loco parentis to the student, the District shall grant an excused absence for the following purposes:
 - a. Social or public policy advocacy; or
 - b. Attempts to influence legislation or other governmental policy-making at the local, state, or federal level.

Absences not defined above or not having an accompanying note from the parent, or legal guardian, person having lawful control of the students, person standing in loco parentis, the student's treating physician, or a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program or have an accompanying note that is not present or uploaded within the timeline required by this policy, shall be considered as unexcused absences. **Students with 6 unexcused absences in a course, in a semester, may not receive credit for that course.** At the discretion of the principal, after consultation with persons knowing the circumstances of the absences, the student may be denied promotion. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student. When a student has **two (2) unexcused absences**, his/her parents, legal guardians, persons with lawful control of the student, or persons in loco parentis shall be notified. Notification shall be by telephone or regular mail.

The following steps will be taken as absences are accumulated each semester:

- (a) 2nd unexcused absence - Parent Letter
- (b) 4th unexcused absence - Parent Letter
- (c) 6th unexcused absence - FINS petition will be filed with the juvenile court

Whenever a student collects **6 unexcused absences** in a semester, the district shall notify the prosecuting authority, and the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of the student, or persons standing in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty as prescribed by law.

Per Act 1322 of 2013, Cutter Morning Star will categorize all absences as either excused or unexcused. A written note is required for an absence to be classified as excused.

To earn credit in a class, a student must be in attendance until the end of the semester and fulfill all class requirements.

Students will be in class for the entire time. When a student is absent for more than half of the class, they will be considered absent.

Excessive absences shall not be a mandatory basis for denial of promotion or graduation but shall be considered with other factors, including, but not limited to, reason for absences, performance on standardized tests, and grades earned during the school year. We stress the importance of regular attendance. Frequent absences affect the scholarship and endanger the level of achievement normally attained. In addition, credit standing may be threatened, forcing repetition of the class or grade. If credit standing is threatened, special arrangements may be granted by the school administration. The arrangements will be formalized into a written agreement to include the conditions of the agreement and the consequences for failing to fulfill the requirements of the agreement. The school administration, guardian, and student must sign the arrangements.

Students who attend in-school suspension shall not be counted absent for those days.

Students who receive out-of-school suspensions will have those days counted as unexcused absences.

Students with 6 or more unexcused absences in a course in a semester may not receive credit for that course. At the discretion of the principal's evaluation of the unexcused absences, the student may be denied promotion or graduation. Excessive absences shall not be a reason for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

Students with 6 or more unexcused absences may have their driving privileges revoked at the discretion of the building principal. AR 6-18-2222

To promote school attendance, certificates will be given to those students who achieve perfect attendance in grades 7 through 12.

College Visitation Days

Seniors and juniors may apply for "College Days" for the purpose of visiting a college or university that they may be interested in attending. College days can be applied for through the counselor's office. College visits must be pre-arranged with the counselor before visiting. Seniors may take up to two (2) college days, and juniors may take one (1) during the school year. The student will be required to bring proof of the visit back to the counseling office in the form of a signature of an official at the college visited.

If a student does not follow all requirements for obtaining a college day, the absence can be counted as an unexcused absence. Any student who has served in ISS or OSS must get permission from the principal to attend college days.

College days will not be granted to anyone after Spring Break. Approved college days will be coded as school business for attendance purposes when documentation of the visit is received.

Tardy Policy

Promptness is the responsibility of each student. Students who are late to class show a disregard for both the teacher and their classmates, which compromises potential student achievement. A student who arrives 30 minutes late to a class period, without a valid excuse from the administration, will be considered absent from class for that period.

Excused Tardy –

- School Bus is Late
- Staff member detains a student after class
- The school program runs late

A pass will be issued to a student by the staff member if they have detained the student, or by the office in the case of a late bus or program.

Unexcused Tardy – Students will be considered late and incur an unexcused tardy for any reason not listed above as excused. A tardy list will be generated weekly, and appropriate consequences will be assigned.

- 2-3 unexcused – Warning. The teacher will notify the parent/guardian
- 4-7 unexcused – 1-4 days After School Detention. The Dean of Students, Principal, or Counselor will notify the parent/guardian.
- 8+ unexcused will require a mandatory parent meeting and 1-3 days ISS

The Building Principal reserves the right to administer alternative discipline for tardiness. After-school detention will be supervised by a school designee. Students will receive a reminder to take home if they have been assigned. Failure to report for an assigned Detention may result in an In-school or Out-of-School Suspension.

To be eligible for perfect attendance, a student must be present every minute of every school day.

**Unexcused Tardies* will affect the eligibility of students 9-12 to be exempt from semester exams. See Semester Exam Policy on page 52.

CMS Attendance Policy for Virtual (4.7.1)

For STUDENTS to be counted Present for any virtual Classes:

General Guidelines and Expectations:

1. All Virtual Students must log into their Virtual Classes each day.
2. All Virtual Students must communicate in some way with their teacher (teachers) each day. This could be an email, a post, a virtual meet, etc.
3. All Virtual Students must attempt to do their assignments as directed by their teacher (teacher) each day.

*(The Building Principal has the discretion to determine if a student should be counted absent based on the above criteria).

*More specific guidelines and expectations may be added by grade level or courses as we continue to advance our virtual learning program.

Failure to comply with the guidelines of the virtual attendance policy in combination with failing 2 or more courses (grades 3-12 or performing below grade level standards for K-2) will result in a FINS petition being filed with the juvenile court.

In addition, students not meeting those expectations will be required to return to school for on-site instruction.

Extracurricular Attendance

Students who miss school for one or more periods during the school day and want to compete in an extracurricular competition must have a medical note, turned in to the principal that day for the missed periods, or they must have approval from the principal. Approval from the principal will be at his or her discretion. Failure to provide a medical note when the student returns to campus or receive approval from the principal will result in the student being ineligible for competition that day.

Check-Out/Check-In Procedures

All students, including seniors, must check in and check out through the principal's office. A parent/guardian signed note with date, time of check-out, and reason for leaving campus must be submitted for each time the student checks out. Parental/guardian phone permission given to an administrator/designee may be sufficient for student release. The early dismissal form must be shown to the supervising teacher before the student can be released from class. Students may check out by note or phone for medical/dental appointments, funerals, illness, or an emergency. Check-outs are considered absences. Proper documentation must be presented upon returning to school. Attendance policy applies.

Students may not check out of school by permission from anyone other than parents or legal guardians, unless specific written instructions from the parents/guardians regarding designated approved adults are on file in the principal's office prior to check-out. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make the school aware of any legal proceedings affecting student check-outs. By law, school grounds are not to be used as custodial exchange sites (AR Code 9-13-104).

Students may not leave campus to run approved school errands unless prior parental permission and/or approval is given in writing and presented before check-out occurs.

Cutter Morning Star School District is a closed campus district. Students may NOT order food or anything else to be delivered to campus. No outside food or drinks may be delivered to the school during school hours by anyone, including parents. Students may not check out during lunch period unless accompanied by his or her parent/legal guardian.

Make-Up Work (4.8)

Make-up work is the responsibility of the student, not the teacher. No credit shall be given for work not made up.

The student shall be allowed one (1) day for each consecutive day's absence to turn in make-up work. For example, for one day's absence, a student will be given one day from his/her return to school following the absence to turn in make-up work. For a two-day absence, the student will be granted two days from his/her return to school. Individual teachers may allow more time if circumstances warrant. This policy does apply to school trips or functions.

Students who miss school due to an excused absence shall be allowed to make up the work they missed during their absence under the following rules.

1. Students are responsible for asking the teachers of the classes they missed what assignments they need to make up.
2. Teachers are responsible for providing the missed assignments when asked by a returning student during the class period with each teacher.
3. Students are required to ask for their assignments on their first day back at school or their first class day after their return.
4. Make-up tests are to be rescheduled at the discretion of the teacher, but must be aligned with the schedule of the missed work to be made up.
5. Students shall have one class day to make up their work for each class day they are absent.
6. Make-up work that is not turned in within the make-up schedule for that assignment shall receive a zero.
7. Students are responsible for turning in their make-up work without the teacher having to ask for it.
8. Students who are absent on the day their make-up work is due must turn in their work the day they return to school, whether or not the class for which the work is due meets the day of their return.
9. As required/permitted by the student's Individual Education Program or 504 Plan.

Work may not be made up for credit for unexcused absences unless the unexcused absences are part of a signed agreement as permitted by policy 4.7—ABSENCES.

Work for students serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion shall be in accordance with the district's programs, measures, or alternative means and methods to continue student engagement and access to education during the student's period of suspension or expulsion.

In lieu of the timeline above, assignments for students who are excluded from school by the Arkansas Department of Health during a disease outbreak are to be made up as set forth in policy.

In addition to the make-up work process above, at the conclusion of a pregnancy-related or parenting-related period of absence, a student may choose from various options to make up missed work, including without limitation:

- o Retaking a semester at the district school where the student is enrolled;
- o Participating in an online course credit recovery program;
- o Being granted six weeks to continue at the same pace and finish the semester at a later date; provided that the student may:
 - o Complete the student's coursework within the current school year; or
 - o Attend previously scheduled summer school classes made available by the district where the student is enrolled; and
- o Receiving home-based instruction services.