

Cutter Morning Star High School Attendance Policy 2026–2027



Attendance and Absences

Studies show students are most successful when they attend school every day. We understand there are times, due to illness, legal appointments, or personal reasons, when students may be absent from school. The following outlines 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. Parents will be referred to a counselor and/or juvenile court if absences become excessive.

Students entering school after 7:35 a.m. must sign in at the office and obtain an admittance slip to be given to that period teacher. Any student will be considered tardy if arriving after the 7:35 a.m. bell.

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 five (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 4H 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 are 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 workers 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 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.

Unexcused Absences

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.