

ARDB Attendance and Tardiness Policy (2026–2027)

A. Purpose and Importance

Education is more than grades. Regular attendance is critical to academic success, social development, and preparation for adult responsibilities. Interactions with peers and instructional continuity enrich learning and directly impact student achievement.

B. Definitions

- Absence: Missing more than an accumulation of 3.5 hours (210 minutes) in a school day.
- Tardy: Arriving more than 5 minutes late to a class period without permission.
- Class Period Absence: Missing more than 25 minutes of a single class period.
- Excused Absence: Absence documented and approved based on outlined criteria.
- Unexcused Absence: Absence that does not meet excused criteria.

C. Excused Absences

A written, dated note from the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis must accompany each absence. Medical documentation is required when applicable.

Excused absences include:

1. Illness with medical documentation (up to 6 per semester).
2. Death or serious illness in the immediate family.
3. Observance of religious holidays.
4. Official school business.
5. Participation in sanctioned activities (e.g., FFA, FHA, 4-H).
6. Military deployment-related leave or return visits.
7. Civic responsibilities (e.g., election poll working, court appearances).
8. Visits to prospective colleges (with prior approval).
9. Other exceptional cases with prior administrative approval.

Note: Foster children's grades will not be penalized for absences due to placement changes or court-ordered proceedings per A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f).

Make-Up Work

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.
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 which 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. If a student is absent on the day make-up work is due, the work must be submitted on the day the student returns to school, even if that class does not meet that day.
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

D. Tardiness and Truancy

- 3 Tardies = 1-day lunch detention
- 4 Tardies = 3-day lunch detention, and a phone call home
- 5 or more Tardies = 3-day lunch detention, and parent conference

If a student exceeds 5 minutes late without permission, they are marked tardy. More than 25 minutes late is counted as an absence for that class period.

E. Attendance Thresholds and Notifications

- A student may not exceed 9 unexcused absences per semester or 18 per year (10% of school days).
- At 5 unexcused absences, a notification will be sent to the parent/guardian via phone, email, or mail.
- At 9 or more unexcused absences, the following consequences may occur:
 - Loss of course credit
 - Denial of promotion or graduation
 - Civil penalties as authorized by law
 - Referral of a truancy report to the City Attorney's Prosecution Division for the student's home district through ARDB

F. Make-Up and Support Options

Before reaching the absence limit, students or parents may request special arrangements due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g., illness, accident). If granted, a formal agreement will be written and signed by all parties, outlining expectations and consequences.

G. Suspensions

Days missed due to in-school or out-of-school suspension do not count toward the 9-day absence limit. However, suspension does count as unexcused absences, and work may not be made up for credit.

H. Students with IEPs

Attendance requirements must align with the student's IEP. These plans supersede general policy where conflicts exist.

I. Legal References

A.C.A. § 6-18-209, § 6-18-222, § 6-18-229

A.C.A. § 6-27-113, § 7-4-116, § 6-18-213, § 6-47-406

A.C.A. § 27-16-701

A.C.A. § 9-28-113(f)

*This policy may be revised or amended by the Superintendent at any time as deemed necessary to meet operational, legal, or organizational needs.