

## **4.2 – Student Attendance**

### **I. Philosophy and Intent**

- A. The Van Buren School District supports the philosophy that the instructional program is the vital part of a formal public education. We further believe that it is necessary to require that students attend school a maximum number of days for instructional purposes during each school year. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking students out of school for any reason other than family emergencies.
- B. Students are required to maintain a level of attendance which enables them to meet their responsibilities as learners.
- C. Students and their parents/guardians hold the main responsibility for school attendance and for following the attendance policy. The Board asks for the cooperation of both students and parents/guardians in these matters so that the student can receive the best education possible. A copy of the Van Buren School District's student attendance policy shall be provided to the students' parents, guardians, or loco parentis at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment, whichever event first occurs.

### **II. Compulsory Attendance Law**

- A. This attendance policy for all students uses the Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law as a model and prescription, but is not limited to the law's minimum requirements.
- B. Under such penalty for noncompliance as shall be set by law every parent, guardian, or other person residing within the state of Arkansas having custody or charge of any child age five (5) through seventeen (17) years on or before August 1 of that year shall enroll and send the child to a public, private, or parochial school or provide a home school for the child as described in 6-15-501 et seq. unless the child qualifies for an exception as stated in 6-18-201 et seq.

### **III. Student Drop Out (Act 876 of 1991)**

- A. (b)(1) Each public, private, or parochial school shall notify the Department of Finance and Administration whenever a student fourteen (14) years of age or older is no longer in school.
- B. (2)(A) Upon receipt of such notification, the Department of Finance and Administration shall notify the licensee by certified mail, return receipt requested, that his motor vehicle operator's license shall be suspended unless a hearing is requested *in writing* within thirty (30) days from the date of notice.

### **IV. Notification to Prosecuting Attorney**

- A. School officials will take the following action when a student's absences become excessive:
  - 1. Notify the prosecuting attorney according to Act 876 of 1991 which states in part:

“Whenever a student exceeds the number of excessive absences as provided for in the district’s student attendance policy and the school district notifies the prosecuting or city attorney, the student’s parents, guardians, or parents in loco parentis, shall be subject to a civil penalty in such an amount as a court of competent jurisdiction presiding in the presence of a school representative of the school district may prescribe, but not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) plus costs of court and any reasonable fees assessed by the court...” NOTE: Also, upon notification by the school district that a student is no longer attending school, the Department of Finance and Administration may suspend a student’s learner’s permit or driver’s license.

2. Notify the student and parents that the student has violated this attendance policy by accumulating an excessive number of absences. Accumulating an excessive number of absences will be a basis for denial of credit, promotion, or graduation.

## **V. Absences**

- A. Excused Absences are those due to emergencies such as illness, death in the family and other extenuating circumstances. The parent or guardian of the student should contact the student’s principal or designee and relate the facts causing the emergency. Parents may contact the school by writing a note, by telephone, or in person. Make-up work will be allowed for excused absences and must be accomplished within a reasonable length of time as determined by individual teachers.
- B. Unexcused Absences are all failures to attend school other than those specifically excused by the principal or designee. Truancy and suspension from school are considered unexcused absences. Make-up work for unexcused absences will not be allowed.

Legal References: A.C.A. 6-15-501, A.C.A. 6-18-201, A.C.A. 6-18-207, ACT 750 of 1999, ACT 876 of 1001

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