

## Lee County Attendance Procedures

The attendance policy for the Lee County School System is taken very seriously. There is a direct relationship between attendance and student success. The more students are in the classroom, the more opportunities they have to be successful. We also know that from time to time it is necessary to be out of class/school. Please use the links below to help answer your questions about what to do when you are absent.

### Quick Reference Topics

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- What is the "three-day rule"?
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## Quick Reference Topics

### What do I need to do if I am absent?

The first day that you return, be sure to bring a note from a parent or a doctor to the school office. Notes should clearly list the student's name, the date(s) of absence, and the reason for absence. Notes must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. A parent note can only cover 12 days per school year. Also, be sure to talk with your teachers about the work you have missed. You will only have a limited amount of time to make up work.

### What do I need to do if I am arriving late or leaving early?

Students needing to leave before the end of the school day must present a note from a parent/guardian to the office/teacher. This note must include a date, time, the student's name, and the reason for leaving. Notes will be confirmed with a parent/guardian before the student is released. Notes must be dropped off before the school day starts. Students who return to school before the day is over must sign back in. Otherwise, they are marked absent for the rest of the day. Additionally, failing to sign out properly could result in disciplinary action.

Students who arrive to school late must sign in at the office. Please also note that if half of the class is missed, the student will be marked absent for the entire class

period.

### **What makes an absence excused or unexcused?**

Most unexcused absences are the result of students not bringing notes for their absences within the three-day window.

For all other absences where a note is present, Lee County must follow policy that the state has set forth for excusing absences. There are seven reasons that the state has listed as acceptable reasons for excused absences. They are: (1) Illness or Injury; (2) Death in the Immediate Family; (3) Medical or Dental Appointment; (4) Court or Administrative Proceedings; (5) Religious Observance; and (6) Educational Opportunity. Please note that Educational Opportunities require approval from the principal **prior** the absences.

### **What is the "three-day rule"?**

Lee County Board Policy requires that notes to excuse an absence be submitted within three days of the student's return to school. Failure to do this results in the absence being marked as unexcused.

### **Why am I getting letters and phone calls about my absences?**

Lee County is required by state law to alert parents when their student is absent. Lee County's goal is to keep parents as informed as possible.

Letters are sent to parents when students reach five, ten and fifteen absences. These letters are also a requirement of state law. Please note that these letters are sent whether or not the absences are unexcused or when a student has a well-documented excused reason for being absent.

**Who do I contact if I have questions?** First contact the School Administrator; if further help is needed Lisa Bailey, System Attendance Officer can be reached at 903-2100.

## **Attendance Appeals Information**

### **When are attendance appeals necessary?**

Lee County Board Policy states that students (grades K-12) who accumulate 15 absences or more are subject to being retained in the same grade for next year. Also, students (grades 9-12) who accumulate 15 or more absences in any course will automatically lose credit for that course.

### **How do I know if I need to file an appeal?**

School administrators will send a letter to each student and their parents stating that they need to file an appeal (Grades 6-12). Also, students and parents are invited to request a copy of their up-to-date attendance profile. We recognize fully that some

absences are unavoidable. Our intent with this letter is to invite parents and students who have these extenuating circumstances to appeal the attendance policy.

### **How do I file an attendance appeal?**

A copy of the necessary form is mailed home and is available at the school or the system attendance officer can give a copy.

For an appeal to be considered (Grades 9-12), the student must:

- Submit an appeal form;
- Submit a statement from the student (middle/high school) explaining the circumstances causing the absences and giving a rationale for granting the waiver;
- Submit a statement from the parent/guardian supporting the appeal waiver and giving any additional information necessary;
- Submit documentation from doctor(s) to substantiate any medical reasons for school absences/requesting the appeal; and,
- Submit a statement (if necessary) from Counselor, Teacher, Asst. Principal, etc. who has been working with the student during the semester to develop strategies for making up school work and for being at school more frequently.

If for some reason any of these items are not possible, the student or parent should contact the Assistant Principal working with attendance appeals at respective schools.

In some cases, Lee County personnel are well aware of the extenuating circumstances that have caused excessive absences. In many cases, these are medical issues where the parents have been working with the school throughout the semester to ensure that the student remains successful in their classes. Even in these cases, we still need a completed appeal form. Essentially, we need a formal request on file to waive the policy.

### **What goes into making decisions about appeals?**

Ultimately, the decision as to whether the appeal is granted or not is solely the decision of the committee. The committee is made up of administrator(s), system attendance officer, and teacher/school counselor. In making the decision, they will consider the student's statement on the appeal, any documentation in the student's attendance file, disciplinary record from the semester, grades in classes where the student has exceeded 10/15 absences, feedback from teachers and counselors, etc. The goal is to look at as much information as possible and to be as fair as possible to students while still following Lee County Board Policy.

### **When will I know the outcome of my appeal?**

Appeals are not decided until all grades and absences for the semester are known. Therefore, the committee will not review appeals until teachers calculate final grades.

During the spring semester, seniors will be notified prior to graduation practice.

**Who do I contact if I need help with the appeals process or if I have questions?**

All questions about the appeals process should be directed to the school administrator working with attendance appeals.

## **Lee County School System**

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY APPEAL FORM**

If you wish to appeal the LCSS Attendance Policy, please do the following:

1. Complete this form and return to school administrator no later than \_\_\_\_\_
2. Attach a statement from the student (middle/high) explaining the absences and rationale for waiver;
3. Attach a statement from parents supporting waiver;
4. Attach supporting medical documentation (physician's explanation for absences)

Your attendance records, disciplinary records, and teacher recommendations will be considered in making a decision. You will be notified by mail of the decision of your appeal. Note that appeals are not considered until after all final grades are turned in.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Students in grades 9-12 please complete below:

1. List the course/period for which you are requesting an appeal.

Course Title	Course Teacher
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2. Is there any school level personnel we should contact that you have been working with this semester regarding your attendance issues? If so, who \_\_\_\_\_