



Attendance Accounting Procedures Manual

2019-2020

**Bells Independent School District
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Bells ISD

Attendance Accounting Procedures Manual

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education— to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children in school, e.g., compulsory attendance, the other with how a student’s attendance affects the award of a student’s final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parent

Attendance is a vital part of your child's success in school. Please make every effort to schedule appointments, vacations, and other events around the school day and calendar.

In the event of an absence, notify the campus secretary that your child will be absent. When your child returns to school please send a note regarding your child’s absence. Be sure to include your name, the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence.

Proper documentation and accurate reporting of attendance is crucial to the well-being of school districts.

Accountability for Funding

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires all public school districts in Texas to maintain records to reflect the average daily attendance (ADA) for the allocation of Foundation School Program funds and other funds allocated by the TEA. In order for Bells ISD to receive the maximum amount of funding for all district students, the following personnel must be aware of their individual responsibilities and must work together to assemble the required documentation at the earliest possible time:

- Administrators
- PEIMS Coordinator
- Business Manager
- Special Program Staff
- Teachers
- Campus Administrative Professionals

Responsibilities for Attendance

Campus Principals

- The campus principal serves as the primary authority for making decisions related to attendance on the campus.

From the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

The principal of each campus is responsible for reviewing his or her respective Campus Summary Reports for completeness and accuracy. A principal should compare reports from TEA, which reflect TSDS PEIMS data, to locally produced reports for reasonableness and accuracy. By signing the Campus Summary Report—or, in the case of a paperless attendance accounting system, by indicating his or her approval of data electronically—a principal affirms that he or she has checked, or caused to be checked, the accuracy and authenticity of the attendance data. Important: The principal or superintendent affirms the propriety of student eligibility determinations, including determinations of student eligibility for particular educational programs, when he or she signs affidavits—or, in the case of a paperless attendance accounting system, when he or she indicates electronically that he or she attests to the validity of the determinations.

Campus Secretaries

- Campus secretaries will serve as attendance clerks at each campus.

From the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

The attendance personnel generating absence summaries and transcribing the absences or coding information into the accounting system are responsible for adhering to all laws and regulations pertaining to student attendance accounting. Each person entering data into the attendance accounting 16 19 TAC §129.21(d); TEC, §42.255 17 19 TAC §129.21(a) General Attendance Requirements 2019–2020 Student Attendance Accounting Handbook Page 33 system must sign an affidavit attesting that the data he or she has entered are true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge—or, in the case of a paperless attendance accounting system, indicate electronically that the person attests that the data he or she has entered are true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge.

PEIMS Coordinator

- The PEIMS Coordinator is the district representative for all attendance procedures and compliance.

From the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

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Teachers

- Teachers take attendance each period and are responsible for the accuracy of all attendance documentation relating to the class periods.

From the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

The teacher who initially records an absence is responsible for the accuracy of the report and attests to the validity of the data with his or her signature—or, in the case of a paperless attendance accounting system, with his or her entry of those data using the teacher’s logon with a distinct secret password.

Audit Requirements

The superintendent is responsible for the safekeeping of all attendance records and reports. At the end of each year, all properly certified and required attendance records and reports for the school year are to be filed in the PEIMS Coordinator’s office. A copy of all records shall also be stored electronically. All records should be properly stored at all times and be readily available for audit by the Texas Education Agency. **A paper copy of all required attendance records shall be retained for five years.**

Attendance Procedures Overview

Any student served by the school district is considered enrolled in the district. A student must be enrolled for at least two hours to be considered in membership for one-half day and for at least four hours to be considered in membership for one full day. These time limits refer to instructional time, not including lunch, homeroom, passing periods, or other non-instructional time.

Teachers must check attendance each class period. The teacher is responsible for checking the attendance of students, recording all absences and tardies, and following through with appropriate procedures.

The district must submit attendance of its students to the TEA reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Bells ISD uses the TxEIS system to record student attendance.

- Official attendance is taken every day at 9:30 a.m., as required by state rule.
- A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

Documentation after an Absence

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note. The campus will document

in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused. Note: Unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness

Within three (3) days of returning to school, a student absent for more than five (5) consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws. Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused. [See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

General Rules for Attendance

Compulsory Attendance

Between Ages 6 and 19 State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 19 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

Age 19 and Older A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If a student age 19 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance All Grade Levels

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus; and
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
 - ♣ An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or

- ♣ Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours. As listed in Section I at Children of Military Families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

Other Exemptions

- An absence will also be considered an exemption if a student 17 years of age or older is pursuing enlistment in a branch of the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the absence does not exceed four days and the student provides verification to the district of these activities. Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for:
- An early voting clerk, provided the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; and
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.
- An absence of a student in grades 6–12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran will also be excused by the district. 26

Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

- All Grade Levels
 - School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed "accelerated instruction" by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.
- Students with Disabilities
 - If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD committee or Section 504 committee will be notified, and the committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.
- Between Ages 6 and 19
 - When a student between ages 6 and 19 incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student's parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

Truancy

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is Melissa Flyger. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator. A court of law may also impose penalties against a student's parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. If a student ages 12–18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court. [See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL).]

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, who allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class. If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. [See policy FEC.]

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will review absences incurred based on the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made up the work missed in each class.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.

- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Night School or Saturday School

Students may be assigned Night School or Saturday School as a consequence of failure to meet attendance requirements or excessive tardies. These students may be charged a tuition to cover supervision expenses. Students will receive a letter if they are required to attend Night or Saturday School. It is held from 3:45-7:00 pm. Students must report to the High School commons on time, and they are not allowed to talk to other students or use electronic devices. Students must arrange their own transportation after released from Night or Saturday School. Any student violating these rules will be dismissed with no credit for time served. Dismissal or refusal to attend Night School or Saturday School may result in ISS or loss of credit for the semester.

Driver License Attendance Verification

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student's attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student's attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

General Eligibility Coding from the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

3.2.1 ADA Eligibility Coding

A student's eligibility to generate ADA is reported with an ADA eligibility code. Your district must use the following codes when reporting student attendance. Note: The two-through four-hour rule includes recess and in-class breakfast. Note: For pre-K ONLY, the two-through four-hour rule includes recess, breakfast, and lunch.

3.2.1.1 Code 0 Enrolled, Not in Membership

Code 0 indicates that a student is enrolled but is not in membership. Code 0 applies to students who are scheduled for and provided fewer than two hours of instruction by your district each school day and are not participating in an alternative attendance accounting program.

This code is used for the following: General Attendance Requirements 2019–2020 Student Attendance Accounting Handbook Page 34

- a child who is scheduled to attend for fewer than two hours of instruction each school day, including a high school student who has met all graduation requirements other than passing required state assessments and continues to attend school to participate in a study program for those tests if the student is scheduled for and attending fewer than two hours of study program instruction each day (see

3.2.2.3 Funding Eligibility of Students Who Have Met All Graduation Requirements)

- a child who attends a nonpublic school but receives some services from your district (for example, speech therapy services only)
- a student who is provided instruction totally in a federal Head Start program
- a student who has graduated but returned to school (for fewer than two hours of instruction per day) to further his or her education
- a student who receives all his or her special education and related services through an approved nonpublic school
- a parentally placed private school student with a disability, five through 21 years of age, who receives special education and related services through a services plan (see 4.5 Special Education Services for Private or Home School Students Who Are Eligible for and in Need of Special Education) A student coded with an ADA eligibility code of 0 is not eligible to generate ADA or FSP funding.

3.2.1.2 Code 1 Eligible for Full-Day Attendance Code 1 indicates that a student is eligible to generate full-day attendance. Code 1 applies to all students entitled to enroll under the TEC, §25.001, who are scheduled and provided instruction at least four hours each school day. Note: Districts that offer half-day kindergarten programs must not count students who attend both the morning and afternoon half-day sessions for eligible full-day attendance.

3.2.1.3 Code 2 Eligible for Half-Day Attendance Code 2 indicates that a student is eligible to generate half-day attendance. Code 2 applies to all students entitled to enroll under the TEC, §25.001, who are scheduled for and provided instruction at least two hours but fewer than four hours each school day. These students include prekindergarten (pre-K) students who meet the eligibility requirements in Section 7 Prekindergarten (Pre-K) (see 7.5 Eligible Days Present and ADA Eligibility).

3.2.1.4 Code 3 Eligible Transfer Student Full Day Code 3 indicates that a student is a transfer student who is eligible to generate full-day attendance. Code 3 applies to a student who is a nonresident, legally transferred into your district, and scheduled for and provided instruction at least four hours each school day. This code applies only to a student who transfers from one Texas school district to another. Such a student must meet all eligibility criteria other than residency. Charter schools are only approved to serve students in the geographic boundary authorized in the charter school's charter agreement. Reporting a student with ADA eligibility code 3 would demonstrate that the charter school is serving students outside of its approved geographic boundary and may constitute a material violation of the charter. A charter school should not use ADA eligibility code 3. General Attendance Requirements 2019–2020 Student Attendance Accounting Handbook Page 35 If a nonresident student is not legally transferred into a district, the receiving district cannot claim the attendance. Note: The Student Transfer System (STS) has been closed, and districts are no longer required to report student transfers through the STS. However, your district should maintain documentation related to any transfer locally. Also, your district must report the transfer status of each student who has been transferred into the district in the TSDS PEIMS fall data submission.

3.2.1.5 Code 4 Ineligible Full Day Code 4 indicates that a student is provided instruction at least four hours each school day but is ineligible to generate ADA. Code 4 applies to any student who is scheduled for and provided full-day instruction but does not meet the eligibility criteria for the service he or she receives. The types of students who are coded ineligible are listed below.

3.2.1.5.1 Underage:

- children provided instruction in an early childhood special education (ECSE) services program who are under the age of three, except for children with serious visual or hearing impairments or both
- children provided instruction in pre-K who are under the age of three on September 1 of the current school year
- children provided instruction in any grade (K–12) who are under age five on September 1 of the current school year are ineligible for full-day funding (see the notes under the table in 3.2.3 Age Eligibility for exceptions). However, a four-year-old who is eligible for pre-K is eligible for half day funding even if the student is provided instruction in a kindergarten classroom. The student must be coded with a grade level of pre-K.

3.2.1.5.2 Overage:

- students who are 26 years old on September 1 of the current school year and not enrolled in an adult high school diploma and industry certification charter school pilot program
- 3.2.1.5.3 Other:
 - nonresident students who have not been transferred into your district
 - students who reside outside the boundaries of the state of Texas

- students served by a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP) on the basis of an expulsion under the TEC, §37.007(a), (d), or (e), unless specifically authorized in writing by TEA¹⁸
- students placed in residential facilities within your district whose maintenance expenses are paid in whole or in part by another state or the United States¹⁹
- students who are required, as a condition of obtaining or holding the appropriate US student visa, to pay tuition to your district to cover the cost of their education²⁰

3.2.1.6 Code 5 Ineligible Half Day Code 5 indicates that a student is scheduled for and provided instruction for at least two hours but fewer than four hours each school day but is ineligible to generate ADA (for any of the reasons listed in 18 TEC, §37.011(h) 19 TEC, §25.003 (Adopted tuition charges under this section must be submitted to the commissioner of education for approval.) 20 TEC, §25.0031(c) General Attendance Requirements 2019–2020 Student Attendance Accounting Handbook Page 36 the preceding subsection on code 4). Code 5 applies to any student who is provided half-day instruction but does not meet the eligibility criteria for the service he or she receives.

Examples include the following:

- students enrolled only in pre-K who do not meet the pre-K eligibility requirements in Section 7 Prekindergarten (Pre-K)
- students enrolled in locally funded pre-K programs offered by your district
- students provided instruction by a JJAEP on the basis of an expulsion under the TEC, §37.007(a), (d), or (e), unless specifically authorized in writing by TEA
- students who are required, as a condition of obtaining or holding the appropriate US student visa, to pay tuition to your district to cover the cost of their education²¹

3.2.1.7 Code 6 Eligible Transfer Student Half Day Code 6 indicates that a student is a transfer student who is eligible to generate half-day attendance. Code 6 applies to a student who is a nonresident, legally transferred into your district, and scheduled and provided instruction at least two hours but fewer than four hours each school day. The student must meet all eligibility criteria other than residency. The information on transferring students included in the previous subsection on code 3 applies for code 6 as well. A charter school should not use ADA eligibility code 6.

3.2.1.8 Code 7 Eligible—Flexible Attendance Program Participation Code 7 applies to a student who is eligible to participate in and is enrolled and provided instruction in an alternative attendance program, such as the OFSDP or the HSEP.

3.2.1.9 Code 8 Ineligible—Flexible Attendance Program Participation Code 8 applies to a student who is enrolled and provided instruction in an alternative attendance program, such as the OFSDP or HSEP, but is ineligible to participate in the program.

Specific Program Codes

For specific program codes, reference the [2019-2020 Student Attendance Accounting Handbook](#).

Special Education – Section 4

Career and Technology – Section 5

Bilingual/ESL – Section 6

Prekindergarten – Section 7

Gifted and Talented – Section 8

Pregnancy-Related Services – Section 9

Alternative Education Programs/Disciplinary Removals – Section 10

Nontraditional Programs – Section 11

Virtual, Remote, and Electronic Instruction – Section 12



Bells ISD Absence Note

Today's Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Student's Grade: _____

Student's Campus: _____

Date(s) of student absence(s) _____

Reason for Absence(s):

My child was absent on the above listed days for the following reason:

- Illness - Explain: _____

- Family Emergency – Explain: _____

- Pre-Approved by Principal on (date) _____
- Other – Explain: _____

Parent Signature _____

Please note: Absences due to doctor, dental, or other medical appointments must have a doctor's note in order for it to be considered a medically excused absence. Final determination of whether an absence will be excused lies with the principal of the campus.

