

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Definition of Attendance & "8 Event" Policy

Thornwilde's Attendance Policy is in compliance with the Boone County Schools Attendance Guidelines as well as Kentucky State Statutes. Students are required to attend school regularly and punctually. Time lost in the classroom is never fully recovered. Most of what occurs during the school day cannot be made up with worksheets or take-home assignments. Attendance is monitored through Boone County Schools software program *Infinite Campus*.

In grades K – 5, all absences, tardies, and early dismissals are considered "events" and will be recorded on your child's attendance record – whether excused or unexcused. Event examples include, but are not limited to:

- *Absence* for half or whole day
- *Vacation* (**each** day missed is defined as an event)
- *Tardiness* (by any time amount; i.e.: one minute tardy constitutes an event)
- *Early Dismissal* from school (by any time amount – one minute or more - constitutes an event.)
 - Early Dismissal includes events initiated by parent or school. An early dismissal is allocated when you pick up your child early from school for any reason and when we notify you to pick up your child early due to sickness, injury, lice, behavior, etc.

According to state law, any time a student misses one minute or more of school, it is considered an event. It does not matter if your child misses one minute, one hour, half a day, or the whole day, or if they come back to school after an appointment – it is **calculated by child, by day, by event**.

All events are considered unexcused until a parent note or a doctor's note is received by the school. **Parent or doctor notes are required for all events – whether parent or school initiated.**

We will accept an accumulation of 8 events documented with a parent note for the entire school year. This policy is set by our Site Base Decision Making Council. Though we highly recommend that all parent notes be received by the office the week or day of the event, technically parents have up to two weeks after the event to submit a parent note to the office before the event is considered unexcused. **After 8 parent notes/events, all attendance events will be unexcused.**

Absent Versus Tardy

In accordance with Boone County Schools Attendance Guidelines and Kentucky State Statute, attendance is tabulated as "whole day" or "half day" absences. **If a child misses more than 60 minutes of class time, this constitutes an "absence."** **If a child misses 60 minutes or less of class time, the child is considered "tardy."** Remember that absences are accumulative – and each day a child is absent will count against the 8 events allotted to each student (unless a doctor's note is submitted to the office.)

Arriving Late to School

Any student not seated in their homeroom by their official start time (8:40 am) will be considered tardy and must report to the office for an admittance slip.

If a child is tardy, a parent or guardian must accompany the child into the office and sign them in. Do not drop off your child and drive off; you must enter the building with them to sign them in. Plus, doors are locked, and no staff member is available outside to assist. In addition, a note signed by the parent regarding the tardy or a doctor's note must be provided. Traffic does not exclude a student from receiving a tardy.

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Truancy

After **8** parent notes, all events will be unexcused unless a doctor's note is received within **two weeks** of the event. **All unexcused events will be counted toward truancy.** K.R.S 159.150 defines truancy as any child who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for three (3) or more events. Truancy shall be reported to the Principal and/or Director of Pupil Personnel, who shall take action per Boone County School guidelines. Letters regarding truancy will be sent directly to the parent. Any child who has been reported truant two (2) or more times is a habitual truant and will result in a referral to court.

Absence Due to Funeral

Absences due to a death in the immediate family will be excused and not count against your allotted parent notes if you submit a funeral program/in memoriam card with your parent note for the days missed. Students will have up to 3-days excused due to a death in the family.

Absence Due to National Take Your Child to Work Day

If your child is participating in this national event, an EHO application must be submitted in advance! If *Take Your Child to Work Day* falls within the testing window, an absence/tardy for this purpose will not be excused and EHO approval will not be granted. See page 18 for more information about EHO process.

Doctor Notes for Absence

If your child visits the doctor, please send in a doctor's note. **If a doctor note is received documenting your child's attendance event – it will be excused and not count against one of the 8 allotted event/parent notes you have for the year!** Doctor's notes must be submitted within two weeks of the event in order to be excused. **Only the dates on the original doctor's statement will be excused for a medical reason.**

If a child is late to school from a morning doctor's visit, but a doctor's note was not secured - a parent note can temporarily be accepted and can then be replaced with a doctor's note when the child returns to school.

Parent Notes for Absence

All parent notes documenting an event for absences, tardies, early dismissal, etc., need to include all the basics! Remember that more information is better than less. It's important to **print clearly and legibly and include all requested information!** Your parent note may start with your student handing it off to their teacher, but it will be processed by an office staff person – who may not be as familiar with your child's pertinent information!

Parent notes referring to your child's attendance (absences, tardies, and early dismissal) should include:

- ❶ **Student's first and last name,**
- ❷ **Teacher's name,**
- ❸ **Date(s) impacted,**
- ❹ **Reason for absence, tardiness, or need for early dismissal** ☆

☆ **If you are writing a Parent Note concerning an early dismissal, the name of the person picking up the student is also required!**

- Please remind them to bring their photo identification when picking up your child.
- We will NOT simply dismiss your child to an individual because they are on your emergency list. You will need to state, by name, who we should release your child to.
- Please also be sure to **clearly state in the parent note that your child is being picked up EARLY** and not at the end of the normal end of day pickup time.
- Do **not** use nicknames/relationships to document who is picking up your child. "Grammy," "the neighbor," "Bob," or a scribbled signature, does not give us the necessary information to ensure the safety of your child.



Don't forget: When communicating upcoming planned absences/early dismissals, it is important to remember **ALL** involved. Not only does the teacher need the information, but also the TES office staff, Club Sponsors/Teachers, the YMCA, etc. Be sure to communicate to **ALL** involved!

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Reporting Student Absences

School attendance is critical and directly related to student achievement. Attendance is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. **If your child is absent, please call the school before 8:55 a.m. (If your child is in afternoon Preschool, we ask that you call no later than 12:00 p.m.)**

If a call is not received by 9:15 a.m. (12:40 p.m. for afternoon Preschool), the office will attempt to contact you by phone.



You are free to contact your teacher via email or Dojo about your child's absence, however **you will still need to contact the office!**

Teachers are not always able to review emails before the time deadline and messages sent through Dojo cannot be easily forwarded to the office staff.

Please note that even though we require you to call in the absence of your child, **parents must also send in a parent note or doctor's note for the days missed on the first day that the child is back to school.** Remember that absences are accumulative – and each day a child is absent will count against the 8 events allotted to each student (unless a doctor's note is submitted to the office.)

If you know in advance that your child will be out for any given time period, please send a parent note with your child to school so that the teacher is made aware and the attendance clerk can document the information in advance.

Absence Make-Up Work Policy

If your child is absent **two or more consecutive days**, Thornwilde Elementary requests that you contact your child's teacher directly to arrange for homework to be picked up.

Any student with an excused absence/event will be provided the opportunity to make up work missed within one week. It will be at the discretion of the teacher as to whether homework will be provided prior to the absence. If your child has been absent, a note **MUST** be sent to the attention of the teacher and attendance clerk upon his/her return to school, even if you already called the school office, or if the child was absent due to unexcused reasons. **Work missed as a result of a suspension may not receive full credit.**

During this school year we will also have students who miss school due to COVID-19 quarantine protocols. We will handle each situation on an individual basis and provide remote instruction to meet the educational needs of students. It is the expectation that students complete their school work while on quarantine.

Absence and Participation in Before/After School Activities

A student who is absent from school for more than half a school day may not participate in or attend any school related sports, clubs or other events **on the same day**. Extenuating circumstances may be presented to the principal/principal designee for special consideration.

Perfect Attendance

To be eligible for perfect attendance, a student **must not miss a day of school or have more than three tardies for the entire year.** (It does not matter if the absences, early dismissals, etc. are excused or unexcused.) Tardies are defined as missing less than 60 minutes of a student's school day. Students who earn perfect attendance will be recognized annually.

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Educational Enhancement Opportunity (EHO)

EHO days, authorized by KRS 159.035, allow principals to grant students an excused absence to pursue an educational opportunity of significant educational value.

The expectation is that the activity for which the excuse was granted would provide a **high-quality, educationally relevant** experience that supports the student's in-school program, such as participation in a foreign exchange program or an intensive instructional experiential or performance program in one of the core curriculum subjects of: English, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Foreign Language and the Arts.

In order for a principal to approve an EHO, the principal must determine that the activity has **significant educational value**. EHOs may be granted up to a **maximum of 10 school days** during the school year.

In general, family vacations taken when school is in session will not meet criteria for an EHO as intended by KRS 159.035. Please schedule vacations during school breaks to ensure that your child does not miss valuable instructional time.

No EHO approvals will be granted during the testing window in the spring – no exceptions.

Gaining approval for an absence as an EHO is a two-step process. Families ❶ apply for tentative approval in advance and then ❷ based on submitted student work upon return, the student will or will not gain EHO approval for their absence. EHOs are reviewed and approved by the principal on an individual basis. Parents/Students will be notified as to the specific requirements for the EHO student work assignment during the application process.

The EHO Approval Process includes:

1. Request an **EHO (Education Enhancement Opportunity) Application** in advance. You can request this form from the TES office or your child's teacher.
2. Submit application to the Principal for approval a **minimum of 10 school days prior** to the first day of absence.
 - a. A delay in submitting an application for consideration will cause a delay in or a rejection of the tentative approval!
 - b. Tentative approval must be secured in advance – not after the fact!
3. EHO Applications are reviewed and either **tentatively** approved or denied. Parents will be updated as to the status of their application prior to the scheduled date of absence.
4. **Within 7 days of returning back to school**, students must submit their required work showcasing the content learned/covered during their absence.
5. Students will share their EHO student work with their teacher/classroom to present their learning.
6. Upon completion of the presentation, the teacher will discuss with the Principal recommendations and feedback on the EHO assignment.
7. The principal will officially approve or deny the EHO Application. **Submitted work must be approved by the principal in order for the EHO to be documented as excused.**
8. Parents will be notified as to the status update of the EHO application after it is reviewed by the Principal. Student work will be returned.