



John Overton High School 2021-2022 Attendance Expectations



Dear Parent or Guardian:

We recognize that many students and families occasionally have challenges and concerns, and we want to do all we can to support our families. Last school year, we had a state waiver known as the Continuity of Learning Plan that was designed for districts to adjust to the pandemic and prepare for remote or in-person instruction. That waiver process will not be available to school districts in the 2021-22 school year, which means that all students enrolled in a traditional, magnet, or charter school will be required to attend in person. We will have safeguards in place and follow CDC health guidelines to protect all who enter our building.

Tennessee law for compulsory attendance requires children ages 6 through 17 to attend school. When students attend school daily, they will have a better opportunity of having higher student achievement and feel confident about their work at school. Our goal is for every student to have **Satisfactory Attendance**, meaning that they attend 95% of all school days and have 8 or fewer total absences (including both excused and unexcused) during the school year.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) of the school year increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Late arrivals and early dismissals contribute to loss of instructional time.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
- By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We miss your student when they are gone, and we value their contributions to our school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact **Julie Keeton** at Julie.Keeton@mnps.org. Students must submit an excuse note within 3 days of an absence to the office manager in their Academy Office. Parent or guardian absence notes will not be accepted after 5 absences, regardless of whether the absences are consecutive or not. Physician notes will be required for students after reaching this number of absences.

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Students sent home to isolate or quarantine after testing positive for Covid-19 or being determined to be a close contact may attend school remotely, in accordance with TN state board and MNPS policy, if able to participate and complete ongoing assignments. Isolated students will be coded as present, if all work is completed. Students who are unable to actively participate due to illness should be coded as an excused absence and provided the opportunity for make-up work upon their return.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school, from health concerns to transportation challenges. There are many people in our building prepared to help you if

you or your student face challenges in getting to school regularly or on time. Please reach out to the following school counselors for assistance:

AIR – Mr. Steve VanDriest	Steve.VanDriest@mnps.org
ENG – Ms. Carol Chaparro	Carol.Chaparro@mnps.org
FA – Ms. Danielle Thweatt	Danielle.Thweatt@mnps.org
HS – Ms. Amber Nelson	Amber.Nelson@mnps.org
IT – Ms. Elizabeth McClurg	Elizabeth.Mcclurg@mnps.org

We promise to track attendance daily, to notice when your student is missing from class, communicate with you to understand why they were absent, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your student attend school.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

Students attending school in person must attend at least 50% of the scheduled school day to be counted present for the day. A student is considered to be truant after he or she has more than four unexcused absences in a school year. Each time a student accumulates five unexcused absences, the State of Tennessee requires us to send home a truancy notification letter. When a student is truant, the principal may make a referral to Juvenile Court so the court can intervene with the student's truancy if school-level interventions have failed. For more information on district attendance policies, please review our district's Student-Parent Handbook, available on the MNPS website at www.mnps.org.

WHAT ABSENCES ARE COUNTED AS EXCUSED ABSENCES?

- Student's personal illness
- Family member's illness that requires the student's temporary help
- Death in the family (up to three days)
- Deployment of a parent or guardian serving in the military (one day for deployment, one day for return, and up to 10 days when the service member is on temporary leave at home)
- Head lice (up to three days per infestation)
- Recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child's faith
- Court appearance or legally mandated meetings
- Documented college visitations (up to three days per year for juniors and seniors)
- A principal may allow the following circumstances to be considered an excused absence if the parent or guardian submits a written request:
 - Unexpected emergencies such as car problems
 - Job interview or conference
 - Doctor or dental appointments
 - Other circumstances requested in writing by the parent or guardian that the principal considers requiring a child's absence

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for attending school if something comes up. Contact family members, friends, or other parents for help.
- Keep track of your student's attendance through the ***Campus Family Portal***.
- Talk to your student's teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.