

ESTES April 2024

Know Your Rights: Understanding Your School District's Attendance Policy

Being a teacher requires a delicate balancing act between personal life and professional responsibilities. While unforeseen circumstances can arise, maintaining consistent attendance is crucial to a successful school year; that's why familiarizing yourself with your school district's attendance policy is essential. This policy outlines the expectations for excused and unexcused absences, tardiness, and potential consequences for not meeting these expectations. Understanding these details can help you navigate unexpected situations and protect yourself from unnecessary stress.

A common scenario many teachers face is the need for occasional tardiness due to personal commitments, like dropping off a child at daycare with a limited window. In such cases, it's important to remember that verbal agreements with administrators hold little weight. If you work out an arrangement for recurring tardiness, **be sure to get it documented in writing**.

This written agreement should **explicitly state** the following:

- The specific reason for tardiness.
- · The expected frequency and duration of the tardiness.
- · Any adjustments to your leave time that will compensate for missed time.
- · Whether the tardiness will be considered excused and if it will count against you.

Having a clear, written agreement protects both you and the administration. It ensures everyone is on the same page and avoids any misunderstandings that could lead to disciplinary action down the line.

Here are some additional reasons why knowing your district's attendance policy is crucial:

- **Understanding excused absences:** The policy will detail what qualifies as an excused absence, such as illness, family emergencies, or professional development opportunities.
- **Knowing the proper procedure for reporting absences:** The policy will outline the specific steps to take to report an absence and the required documentation, if any.
- **Avoiding unnecessary disciplinary action:** Unawareness of the policy can lead to misunderstandings and potential consequences for minor infractions.

By familiarizing yourself with the attendance policy, you can ensure a smoother and less stressful school year. Don't hesitate to reach out to your union representative or school administration if you have any questions or require clarification on specific points within the policy. **Remember**, **knowledge is power**, and understanding your rights goes a long way in protecting them.

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JFT BYTES - APRIL 2024



We are planning our next JFT Talks - keep an eye out for an email announcement!

Attend. Know. Follow.

Attend training and pay attention. Know your building's testing plan. Follow the testing plan.

MAAP Testing: Dos and Don'ts

DO:

- Make sure there are 2 adults in the room at all times during testing.
- Use a numbered roster and numbered desks to ensure students can be seated quickly and easily.
- Complete and submit an accurate seating chart.
- Ask for help if you're unsure.
- Actively monitor students during testing.
- · Account for ALL materials both before and after testing.
- Report anything suspicious. You can contact MDE if you feel uncomfortable reporting to your supervisor.
- Follow the Testing Plan!

DON'T (and we mean DO NOT EVER):

- Read/Review/Distribute/Copy testing materials.
- Violate the electronic devices policy.
- Give students answers of ANY kind (verbal or non-verbal).
- Press buttons on a student's computer. Make the student do that or call for assistance and have that person do it (it helps keep you safe!).
- Think that good test scores are more important than your job/license.

RETIREE MEETING

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Join us Wednesday, May 1, at PJ's Coffee in Fondren for our next Retiree meeting. Come learn how you can remain an active union member as a retiree.

PJ's Coffee 3100 Old Canton Rd Jackson MS 39202

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION PLEASE!

JPS is trying hard to prevent us from getting information from them. If you're changing schools next year, we need to know!

Scan the code or click the link below (PDF version only).

<u>Update</u> your info here



To view the JFT Talks episode on MAAP

Training, visit our

website.

JFT BYTES - APRIL 2024

Don't Let Your Rights Disappear: Documenting Workplace Issues

At work, disagreements or unfair treatment can arise. When this happens, **having a clear record of events is crucial**. Documentation protects you and strengthens your position if you need to take further action.

The key is to **start documenting immediately**. Don't wait until a situation escalates. Memory fades, and details blur. Capture everything while it's fresh.

Why documentation is vital

- **Evidence**: If a situation requires formal action, documented details become evidence. Dates, times, what happened, and who was involved all become crucial.
- **Protection**: Documentation can shield you from false accusations. If an employer claims something different transpired, having a record protects your side of the story.
- **Building a Case**: If a legal issue arises, a clear timeline of events is essential. For example, documented instances of harassment build a stronger case than a single, unproven allegation.

Capturing the Details

While physical notes work, consider creating digital records. **Forward relevant emails from your work account to a personal email address.** This creates a copy outside the company's control, and it ensures your access to those records should your employer lock you out of your work email account. And although verbal communication is important, there's no record for it. Always follow conversations with an email that summarizes what was said, and <u>blind</u> carbon copy a personal email address.

What to Include

- Dates & Times: Be specific. Include exact dates, times, and durations of events.
- Names: Record the names of everyone involved, including witnesses.
- **Details:** Describe what happened objectively. Focus on actions, **not** emotions.
- Clear, concise writing: Make sure your notes are clear. Avoid colloquialisms and slang.

Don't Wait Till It's Too Late

The most important takeaway is to start documenting **the minute you sense a problem**. This proactive approach safeguards your rights and ensures a clear picture of events if needed. Remember, thorough documentation is your voice when a situation demands to be heard.



TOP TIPS



- Use a small, spiral notebook for documenting conversations and events. Always keep that notebook with you; don't leave it at work at the end of the day.
- Take time to reflect before responding; <u>choices made in anger cannot be undone</u>.
- Inform your union representative as soon as you think there's a problem. Talk to a building leader, an organizer, or a union officer.

JFT BYTES - MARCH 2024

In Development: Summer PD Sessions, OnDemand Sessions, PD Calendar for 2024-2025

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In-Person PD Sessions

April 20 - Students with Challenges (.6 CEUs)

May 4 - Reading Comprehension Instruction (.6 CEUs) May 25 - Engaging Students' Long-Term Memory (.6 CEUs)

Virtual PD Sessions

April 6, 20, & 27 - Foundations for Effective Teaching, Part III (1.8 CEUs**)
** Must attend all sessions to receive CEU certificates

To sign up, visit www.jftpsrp.com/professional-development.html
For questions, email pd@jftpsrp.com, or call the union office.

In solidarity with our fellow unions



Help us support the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) by donating non-perishable foods! Leave your bag of items at your mailbox on May 11, OR you may bring items to the JFTP&SRP office between May 1 and May 9. We will have a drop-off box you can leave your donated items in.

Fill a Bag. Help Feed

Families.

Ayuda a alimentar a las familias.

Bag healthy, non-perishable food items and place by your mailbox for your letter carrier to pick up and deliver to food banks and pantries in your community.

Donations Stay in Your Community

Second Saturday in May

Help Us Stamp Out Hunger. Spread the Word. Ayúdanos a erradicar el hambre. Envía el mensaje.

Facebook.com/StampOutHunger 🍏 @StampOutHunger

stampouthungerfooddrive.us



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