

Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School  
Attendance Policy

ARKANSAS SCHOOL LAW GOVERNING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Arkansas school law pertaining to school attendance is as follows:

*SECTION 1. Arkansas Code 6-18-222* is hereby amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A) The board of directors of Lighthouse Academies of Arkansas in this state shall adopt a student attendance policy as provided for in 6-18-209 which shall include a certain number of excessive absences which may be used as a basis for denial of course credits, promotion, or graduation. However, excessive absences shall not be a basis for expulsion or dismissal of a student.

(B) The legislative intent is that a student having excessive absences because of illness, accident, or other unavoidable reason should be given assistance in obtaining credit for the course.

(2) A copy of the school district's student attendance policy shall be provided to the student's parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment, whichever event first occurs.

(4) The student's parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis shall be notified when the student attendance policy per semester. Notice shall be by telephonic contact with the student's parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis by the end of the school day in which such absence occurred or by regular mail with a return address on the envelope sent no later than the following school day.

(5) Whenever a student exceeds the number of excessive unexcused absences provided for in LAA's student attendance policy, the school shall notify the prosecuting authority, and the student's parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis shall be subject to a civil penalty in such an amount as a court of competent jurisdiction, presiding in the presence of a representative of the school district, may prescribe, but not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) plus costs of court and any reasonable fees assessed by the court. The penalty shall be forwarded by the court to the school or the adult education program attended by the student."

(6) The penalty set forth in this section is to impress upon the parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis the importance of school attendance and is not to be used as a primary source of revenue. When assessing penalties, the court shall be aware of any available programs designed to improve the parent-child relationship or parenting skills. When practicable and appropriate, the court may utilize mandatory attendance to such programs as well as community service requirements in lieu of monetary penalties.

(7) In cases where the court determines the student's unexcused absences cannot be attributed to the parents, guardians, or persons in loco parentis, the action may be suspended or dismissed conditioned on a petition being filed in juvenile court to seek services on behalf of the student.

(8) As used in this section, "prosecuting authority" means the elected district prosecuting attorney or his appointed deputy for schools located in unincorporated areas of the county or within cities not having a police or municipal court and means the prosecuting attorney of the city for schools located within the city limits of cities having either a police court or a municipal court in which a city prosecutor represents the city for violations of city ordinances or traffic violations.

(9) In any instance where it is found that the school district or prosecuting authority is not complying with the provisions of this section, the State Board of Education may petition the circuit court to issue a writ of mandamus.

(b)(1) Each public, private, or parochial school shall notify the Department of Finance and Administration whenever a student fourteen (14) years of age or older is no longer in school.

(2)(A) Upon receipt of such notification, the Department of Finance and Administration shall notify the licensee by certified mail, return receipt requested, that his motor vehicle operator's license will be suspended unless a hearing is requested in writing within thirty (30) days from the date of notice. (B) The licensee shall

Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School  
Attendance Policy

be entitled to retain or regain his license by providing the Department of Finance and Administration with adequate evidence that:

- (i) The licensee is eighteen (18) years of age;
- (ii) The licensee is attending school; or
- (iii) The licensee has obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent.

(C)(i) In cases where demonstrable financial hardship would result from the suspension of the learners permit or driver's license, the Department of Finance and Administration may grant exceptions only to the extent necessary to ameliorate the hardship. (ii) If it can be demonstrated that the conditions for granting a hardship were fraudulent, the parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis shall be subject to all applicable perjury statutes. (D) The Department of Finance and Administration shall have the power to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the intent of this section and shall distribute to each public, private, and parochial school a copy of all rules and regulations adopted under this section.

**ARKANSAS SCHOOL LAW GOVERNING COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGE**

Arkansas school law pertaining to compulsory attendance age is as follows:

*SECTION 1. Arkansas Code 6-18-201(a)* (Amended by *Act 570 of 1999*) and Act 462 of 2007 is hereby amended to read as follows:

(a) Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within the State of Arkansas having custody or charge of any child or children age five (5) through seventeen (17) years on August 1<sup>st</sup> (August 2011) of that year, both inclusive, shall enroll and send the child or children to a public, private, or parochial school or provide a home school for the child or children as described in 6-15-601 et seq. under such penalties for noncompliance as shall be set by law with the following exceptions:

- (1) Any child who has received a high school diploma, or its equivalent as determined by the State Board of Education, is not subject to attendance requirement.
- (2) Any parent, guardian, or other person residing within the state and having custody or charge of any child or children may elect for the child or children not to attend kindergarten if the child or children will not be age six (6) on August 15 of that particular school year. If such an election is made, the parent, guardian, or other person having custody or charge of the child must file a signed kindergarten waiver form with the local district administrative office. Such form shall be prescribed by regulation of the State Department of Education. On filing the kindergarten waiver form, the child or children shall not be required to attend kindergarten in that school year.
- (3) Any child enrolled in a post secondary vocation/technical institution, a community college or a two-year or four-year institution of higher education, is not subject to this attendance.

Our goal is for every student to attend school every day. Our school has a goal of 95% attendance for the year. Regular attendance in classes is of vital importance if a student is to succeed in school and be prepared for college work. Absences for any reason hinder learning and should be avoided. The only —excused||

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## Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School Attendance Policy

reasons to miss school are religious observances, illness, a death in the family, or a family emergency. Half day absences are recorded and will be counted as part of the total days present or absent for the year.

Please notify the school office via phone, voicemail, or letter by 8:00 A.M. if a student must be absent from school for any reason. Upon return to school, the student must submit to the teacher a note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian. All absences must be documented at the school through a written/typed, signed letter from a parent/guardian, or if the absence is three days or more due to an illness, a doctor's note is required, that includes the date(s) and reason for the absence. Any absence not documented at the school through a letter will be considered an —unexcused|| absence.

### **Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School Attendance Policy**

**Enrollment:** Date of Birth documentation should be established by providing a birth certificate, registrar statement, baptismal certificate, passport, affidavit, military i.d., or previous school records. Social Security numbers are not made public and students are assigned a school i.d. number when enrolled.

**Absences:** Students may be excused from classes for medical or dental appointments; required court appearances upon presentation of documentation by the court; absences due to family emergencies in cases of serious illness or death within the immediate family; religious or specific holy days or other reasons acceptable to the principal.

In the case of an absence in excess of three (3) days and in all cases of contagious diseases, a doctor's note may be required for re-admittance to the classroom. If you suspect or a staff member reasonably believes your student may have a contagious disease, such as —pink eye,|| the student may not come to school until he/she has been examined by a doctor. This is in consideration of other students and staff.

The school may notify the parent/guardian that a student needs to be picked up early. This may be because of illness, behavioral issues, or other reasons. The scholar must be picked up within one hour of the notification, and the appropriate early dismissal or absence policy will apply. Therefore, all families must have a plan in place as to who will pick up a child early when necessary.

Scholars with five (5) or more absences will be notified in writing that their attendance is not satisfactory and may result in their being retained at the end of the school year. Upon the 7<sup>th</sup> absence, the school will arrange a conference to discuss the absences with the parents/guardians. Scholars with ten or more absences may not be able to advance to the next grade and will face additional consequences such as additional time required at school (including summer school). Course credit will be denied when a student has 10 or more unexcused absences and when the administrative conference has been held, unless the principal finds there are extenuating circumstances such that to deny credit would be unfair. As state above, Arkansas law requires us to report to the government social services agency that the student is not attending school, this report will occur upon the 11<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence. A voluntary withdrawal will occur when a scholar misses 20 total absences excused or unexcused or 10 consecutive days without approval from the principal.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, suspensions and expulsions become part of the student's permanent record. This record follows the student to the next school requirement. Page 31 of the handbook discusses expulsion proceedings.

Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School  
Attendance Policy

**<sup>1</sup>Military Family Absentee Policy**

JLCS understands the tremendous contribution of military members and their families to the defense of this great nation. Military members must be ready at a moment's notice and often times can affect the children drastically. Those military parents whose child/children must miss one to several days due to a deployment should write an Official Memorandum explaining the circumstances and provide a copy of their orders. JLCS will excuse any absence incurred and provide class work prior to the parent's official deployment date.

**K-8 TARDY AND EARLY CHECK-OUT POLICY**

**Definition**

A student receives a tardy when he/she fails to be in the classroom or other assigned location by the designated time. A student receives an early check-out when he/she exits school prior to the end of the school day.

**Conditions**

1. There are generally no excused tardies or early student check-outs. However, an exception will be made if the student is delayed or checked out early due to official school business, illnesses or medical appointments (documentation is required on the day the child returns to school) or for other reasons approved by the building administrator, such as an accident or other emergency.

**Procedure**

1. On the third tardy, a parent conference will be held. The conference may be held via telephone.
2. On the fourth and fifth unexcused tardy or unexcused early check-out, the building
3. administrator may elect one of the following procedures, based on the conditions existing in his/her school. A disciplinary sanction will be assigned from the following alternatives:
  - a. Early morning, after school, lunch, or recess detention hall
  - b. In-school time out, or in-school suspension
4. On the sixth and seventh unexcused tardy or unexcused early check-out, the student will receive a two-day short-term suspension.

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<sup>1</sup> Revised to comply with ADE Standards 28,29,30, 31, 32, 34, 35