TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY	4.100

1. Compulsory Attendance

a. The compulsory attendance law requires all children in Tennessee to attend school between six (6) and seventeen (17) years of age, both inclusive. T.C.A. §§ 49-6-3001 and 49-6-3005 provide that the following children may be exempt from compulsory attendance law:

i. Children mentally or physically incapacitated to perform school duties, such disability to be attested by a duly licensed physicians in all cases;
ii. Children who have completed high school and hold a high school diploma or other certificate of graduation;
iii. Children enrolled and making satisfactory progress in a course of instruction leading to a High School Equivalency Diploma;
iv. Children temporarily excused from attendance in school under rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education, which rules and regulations shall not be in conflict with T.C.A. § 50-5-103 or any other law governing child labor in this state;
v. Children participating in a program of hospital or homebound instruction administered or approved by the LEA;
vi. Children six (6) years of age or under whose parent or guardian have filed a notice of intent to conduct a home school as provided by T.C.A. § 49-6-3001 or who are conducting a home school as provided by T.C.A. § 49-6-3050;
vii. Children enrolled in a home school who have reached seventeen (17) years of age; and
viii. Children who have attained their seventeenth birthday and whose continued compulsory attendance, in the opinion of the board of education in charge of the school to which the children belong and are enrolled, results in detriment to good order and discipline and to the instruction of other students and is not of substantial benefit to the children.

2. Excused Absences

a. A school principal may excuse a student from school attendance to participate in a non-school-sponsored extracurricular activity if the following conditions are met:

i. The student provides documentation to the school as proof of the student's participation in the non-school-sponsored extracurricular activity; and

ii. The student's parent, custodian, or other person with legal custody or control of the student, prior to the extracurricular activity, submits to the principal or the principal's designee a written request for the excused absence. The written request shall be submitted no later than seven (7) business days prior to the student's absence.

iii. The principal or the principal's designee approves, in writing, the student's participation in the non-school-sponsored extracurricular activity.

b. The principal may limit the number and duration of non-school-sponsored extracurricular activities for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

c. The principal shall excuse no more than ten (10) absences each school year for students participating in non-school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

d. Students who serve as pages for the general assembly during the school year, either at regular or special sessions, shall be credited as present. The student’s participation as a page shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused..

e. If a student's parent or legal guardian is a member of the United States armed forces, including a member of a state national guard or a reserve component called to federal active duty, a public school principal shall give the student:

i. An excused absence for one (1) day when the member is deployed;

ii. An additional excused absence for one (1) day when the service member returns from deployment;

iii. Excused absences for up to ten (10) days for visitation when the member is granted rest and recuperation leave and is stationed out of the country; and

iv. Excused absences for up to ten (10) days cumulatively within the school year for visitation during the member's deployment cycle. The student shall provide documentation to the school as proof of the service member's deployment.

v. Students shall have the opportunity to make up school work missed and shall not have their class grades adversely affected for lack of class attendance or class participation due to the excused absence.

f. Local boards of education may adopt a policy that excuses a student from school to attend a released time course in religious moral instruction for up to one (1) class period during each school week in compliance with T.C.A. § 49-2-130.