



ARKANSAS DIVISION of YOUTH SERVICES

School Attendance Expectations and AMI

2023-24 School Year

In accordance with Arkansas state standards, DYS youth will attend school four days a week for 7.5 hours per day for a total of 30 hours per week. Fridays will be utilized for individual, group, and family therapy sessions, as well as credit recovery, tutoring, and remediation. At any such time that these minutes cannot be or are not met, the educational time must be made up.

Alternate Method of Instruction (AMI) days must be approved by the DYS Superintendent of Education and are only appropriate when there is an emergency such as a COVID-19 outbreak, inclement weather, power outages, or an act of God.

In the event circumstances require that a facility, class, pod/group, or an individual miss a day(s), of school, it is the responsibility of the district principal, building-level director, or other designee to notify the DYS Superintendent of the dates and times missed and to present a proposal for how and when the missed educational time will be made up.

ADE STANDARD REGARDING INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES REQUIRED PER DAY

1-A.5.2 Except where otherwise allowed by law, each public school shall provide a planned instructional day that averages no less than six (6) hours per day or thirty (30) hours per week. Any day in which fewer than six (6) hours of instruction time is provided to students shall be counted as one-half (½) of a school day if at least three (3) hours of instructional time is provided to students. Any day in which fewer than three (3) hours of instructional time is provided to students shall not be counted as part of a school day.

COVID-19 has caused some facilities, groups/pods, individuals to have to be isolated or to quarantined for a specified time. DYS has established a protocol that allows for students to receive printed materials created by Virtual Arkansas teachers that are prepared in advance. This allows students to keep up with schoolwork (if they feel well enough to do so) preventing them from falling behind in their studies. If they are too ill to complete their work while experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, students will be provided extended time to make up their work. Teachers and classroom academic coaches will assist as needed to ensure students are able to master the skills that were taught while students were out of a classroom setting.

ALTERNATE METHOD OF INSTRUCTION (AMI)

- A. If school is canceled due to an emergency, or exceptional circumstances, explain the process by which the district shall determine it if will be an AMI, or make-up day.** Requests for a day to be deemed an “AMI day,” will come from each facility (individually) and will be initially submitted by the district principal. All requests for AMI days must be approved by the DYS education superintendent. She will make the determination of whether the day will be counted as an AMI day, or a make up day. Dr. Dalla Rosa, DYS Education Superintendent, will consider the appropriateness of using an AMI day in accordance with ADE guidelines and examples used in Commissioner’s Memo COM-22-144, which lists exceptional or emergency circumstances such as, a contagious outbreak, inclement weather, utility outage, or an act of God. Being a 24/7 facility in which students are residents and live ON campus, this enables DYS/ROP students to attend school when some public schools might not be able to for reasons, such as hazardous travel due to weather. Each request that has been submitted by the district principal will be considered and a decision determined on a case-by-case basis. The goal is to minimize disruption(s) in the normal, routine school day.
- B. Provide a description of the AMI assignments and materials used at each school within the district to effectively facilitate teaching and support learning for the benefit of the students.** Students working to earn a high school diploma are enrolled in Virtual Arkansas (VA) classes and lessons are typically designed for the computer; however, facility personnel make hard copies of the material(s) students need to carry on with lessons which were created by the VA teachers. Virtual Arkansas lessons are planned and listed in a published syllabus that is posted online. Some parts of a lesson may not lend itself to being “printable,” and teachers plan accordingly to make the lesson cohesive, meaningful, and in line with state standards/frameworks. Packets containing hard copies of lessons are mostly used when there is a power outage, or when one or more students must be quarantined due to COVID-19.
- C. Describe how student attendance will be determined for an approved AMI day.** Just as in public school, DYS/ROP facilities perform “counts” frequently to make sure all students are accounted for. Other than being physically present, a student must submit all work assigned to him/her on a particular AMI day. If a student makes a failing grade on an assignment, the teacher(s) will allow up to, but no more than, 3 days for the assignment to be resubmitted. The most important factor is that the student learns the skill, or material.
- D. Describe how the district will ensure implementation of Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities on AMI days.** The DYS records clerk requests, secures, maintains, and disseminates student files as necessary. The purpose of sharing the IEP is to support the learner with identified accommodations. All teachers who are to serve as instructors to a special education student receive either a printed copy, or an online, electronic copy. When packets are prepared for emergency circumstances, all teachers, including special education teachers, adhere to the accommodations identified in the student’s IEP. Even though the delivery of instruction may change, the identified accommodations remain consistent. A committee of professionals met and decided what accommodations would benefit the student the most.
- E. Describe how the district will communicate with parents and students the purpose and expectations for an AMI day.** The DYS education superintendent must approve all requests to use an AMI day. Once approved, the district principal is responsible for communicating learning and behavioral expectations to students. All facilities have student handbooks, and a section is devoted to explaining the learning and behavioral expectations should the need arise to utilize an AMI day. If it has been determined that students are to remain in their living units, the counselor, or lead teacher, or designee will distribute learning packets at the beginning of the day. An academic coach, or teacher will provide general instructions to students, such as procedures and processes to be followed when printed, packet work becomes necessary and is assigned. Packets are prepared for multiple subjects and contain lesson specific instructions inside the packet.