

Board Policy JB: Student Attendance

Status: ADOPTED

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Student Attendance

The Chickamauga City Board of Education recognizes that a major objective of the school is to prepare students for life and to teach them skills necessary to be productive in society. Therefore, good attendance and prompt arrival to school and/or class is expected and necessary.

School attendance is compulsory in Georgia between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16). The State Department of Education defines "truant" as any child subject to compulsory attendance (who has attended twenty (20) days in school) who during the school calendar year has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences.

The Chickamauga City Board of Education shall comply with all requirements of state law, applicable State Board of Education rules, and the attendance protocol developed by the Student Attendance Protocol Committee. The professional staff has the responsibility to enforce the compulsory attendance law where applicable. The school administration shall have in place published rules and procedures governing the enforcement of these academic sanctions resulting from excessive absenteeism. School social workers have the authority and duty to file proceedings in court to enforce the compulsory attendance law.

Students may be counted legally present:

- When actually present;
- When acting as an official page in the legislative assembly;
- When acting as a volunteer poll officer in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program (limited to 2 days per year);
- When present for one-half day or more;
- When assigned in-school suspension;
- When representing the school at a school function;
- When served by a hospital/homebound teacher;
- When attending a school sponsored event/activity;
- When a Foster care student is attending court proceedings related to student's foster care; and
- When participating in an activity or program sponsored by 4-H.

The following reasons have been established as excused absences and students may be temporarily excused from school when:

1. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death in their immediate family necessitates absence from school (immediate family of student is defined as parents, guardian(s), grandparents, siblings, and other adults living in the home).
3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, or by court order.
4. Celebrating religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
5. Conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to their health and safety.
6. Registering to vote or voting for a period not to exceed one day.
7. When visiting with a parent or legal guardian on leave or awaiting deployment to a military combat zone or

combat support posting (limited to 5 days per year).

8. Any other absences not explicitly defined herein, but deemed by the local Board of Education to have merit based on circumstances.

Any absence that does not fall into the above categories must be discussed with an administrator prior to the absence.

When a parent finds it necessary for a student to be out of school for any reason other than those listed above, prior approval must be obtained from the school administrator. While the absences may be unexcused, the administrator may grant permission for work to be made up that would affect a course/subject grade for passing without affecting exam exemptions.

The state requires a daily record of attendance to be maintained. The attendance record must reflect whether each absence is excused or unexcused in accordance with the State Board of Education rule. Attendance is also recorded by class. All attendance requirements will be considered at the class level.

Unexcused Absences: Unexcused absences are absences from school for reasons other than those considered excusable under SBOE rule or this policy.

Excused Absences: An excused absence is any absence permitted by the policies and regulations of the local Board of Education in accordance with State laws and State Board of Education rules and regulations.

The schools realize that occasionally it is necessary to schedule dental or doctor appointments during the school day. This should be kept to a minimum. Parents are urged to arrange dental visits and doctor visits for well health issues outside of school hours. Students with doctor/dental appointments are excused only for the time of the visit and a reasonable time before and after the visit. The remaining portion of the day shall be counted unexcused. Excuses from medical/dental facilities are required to specify the appointment time and the departure time the student was at the medical/dental facility.

Absences

Individual students who must be absent from school for a portion of the school day must attend school for one half of the instructional day to be counted present for that day. However, the student will be counted absent from those classes which are missed because of late arrival or early dismissal. When a student is excused for a portion of the school day, the student shall be released only to a legal parent or guardian, to a person properly identified to school authorities on the student's emergency contact sheet, or upon written request or verified telephone call from the parents or guardian.

Before admission to class upon returning to school following an absence, a student must report to the school principal or his/her designee with a written note from a parent, guardian, physician, or legal authority stating the reason for the absence. These notes should be dated and give the date of the absence, state the reason for the absence and have the parent's/guardian's signature. The principal or designee, at their discretion, may require a physician's statement for absences due to illness if the student has been absent more than three (3) consecutive days. A physician's statement may also be required in instances where a student has utilized the maximum number of parent notes for the respective school. Parent notes for student illness will only be accepted for a maximum of ten (10) days per SCHOOL YEAR at the elementary and middle school levels. For students in high school, parent notes for student illness will only be accepted for a maximum of five (5) days per SEMESTER. Once this number is exceeded, all further absences without a physician's note will be unexcused. The principal has administrative discretion if extenuating circumstances exist. The principal or designee will also determine whether an absence is excused in accordance with policies and regulations of the Chickamauga City Board of Education, which are based on the SBOE rule. Excuses not received within three (3) days of the student's returning to school will not be accepted and the absence will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Grades and Absences

Absences shall not penalize student grades if the following conditions are met:

1. Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.
2. Make-up work for excused absences is completed satisfactorily within the allowable time period. Upon their return to school, students should make arrangements with their teacher(s) in order for missed work to be made up as soon as possible.

Students with unexcused absences will not be permitted to make up work unless extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the principal.

Out-of-school suspensions shall count as unexcused absences in that make-up work will not be permitted.

Notification

1. The school system shall provide to the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a student (hereinafter referred to as "parent") when the student has five (5) unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, the school system will send written notice via first class mail or via certified mail, return receipt requested; and
 2. Prior to any action to commence judicial proceedings to impose a penalty on the parent for failing to comply with compulsory attendance law, the school system will notify the parent by certified mail, return receipt requested; and
 3. Each school will provide to the parent of each student enrolled a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By September 1 of each school year or within thirty (30) school days of a student's enrollment in the school, the parent will be asked to sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten (10) or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the school system's policy.
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