ATTENDANCE



School Attendance

Attending school regularly is very important if students want to succeed in school. Georgia law requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) attend school unless they have a lawful reason to be absent. In addition, students under the age of (6) who have been on roll for twenty (20) or more days fall under the provision of the Georgia Mandatory Attendance Law, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150(c).

Students who have more than **five (5) days** of unexcused absences during the school year will be considered truant. The legal penalties for truancy include referral of students to Juvenile Court and referral of parents to State Court. Any Georgia resident who has control or charge of a child who is convicted of violating mandatory school attendance requirements will be subject to a fine of not less than $25.00 and not more than $100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties perabsence.

Arrival and Dismissal Times

The beginning time for elementary school is 7:45 a.m., the beginning time for middle school is 8:45 a.m., and the beginning time for high school is 8:15 a.m. Students are expected to report to the school by the respective start times and to remain for the full scheduled day unless authorized by school officials. The ending time for elementary school is 2:25 p.m., for middle school is 3:55 p.m., and high school is 3:15p.m.

The Henry County Board of Education is not responsible for the supervision and safety of students prior to the beginning of the school day or after the end of the school day. The Henry County Board of Education does not expect its staff to exercise control over students who are not part of a school-sanctioned activity and are left at the school campus before the beginning of the school day or who are not picked up after school in a timely manner.

Absences – Tardies - Check Outs

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes on time and each day.

- **Absence** is defined as the non-attendance by a student in an approved regularly scheduled class, program or activity, regardless of the reason for such non-attendance. An exception is when a student participates in an approved program or activity (such as, but not limited to: field trips governed by Policy IFCB: Field Trips and Excursions, academic competition or approved athletic event), he/she may be excused from school, counted present, and shall be responsible for any work missed during the time he/she is away from school. See below descriptions for what may be considered an excused absence versus an unexcused absence.
- **Tardy** is defined as the failure by a student to be in the assigned classroom or instructional space at the assigned time.
- **Check Out** is defined as a student who reports to the school attendance office to leave class, the school, or an approved activity before the assigned time for the end of such class, school day, or approved activity.

On the **first day** students return/report to school (or classes) from an absence, parents should provide the school with a written note explaining the reason for the absence. The note should include the date(s) of the absence, the reason(s) for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student. Parents may be asked to provide additional documentation, such as medical documentation, by the principal or his/her designee for absences, tardies, and check outs. Please see the section entitled "Truancy Intervention Meeting" in this Handbook for more information about situations where a student has too many unexcused absences, tardies, or check outs.

Elementary students who are tardy or who check out should be accompanied by a parent into the front office to provide a written explanation of the attendance transaction. Middle and high school students who are tardy or who check out early must report to the school office and present a written explanation of the attendance transaction to include the parent's signature or medical documentation. The principal may implement a cut-off time for check outs to ensure a safe and orderly school-wide dismissal. Only designated adults listed on the emergency card by the enrolling or authorized parent will be permitted to check out a student. The designated adult must present a valid government-issued photo ID.

Parents are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours. Parents should not check out students for the purpose of avoiding car rider traffic. Disciplinary action may be taken against students not in attendance for the full school day for reasons that cannot be excused. See Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses.

Excused Absences, Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses

Absences will be treated as excused if they occur for any of the following reasons (additional documentation, such as medical documentation, may be required by the principal or designee):

1. Student illness that would endanger the student's health or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in the student's immediate family which would reasonably necessitate absence from school, in the determination of the principal or his/her designee.
3. A scheduled medical, dental, or eye examination.
4. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith. See Policy JBFA: Religious Holidays
5. An order of a governmental agency, such as a court order or a pre-induction physical exam for military service.
6. An inability to attend school due to weather or other conditions making school attendance impossible or unreasonably hazardous.
7. Attendance upon a trip or event having significant educational value, provided the principal is notified of the absence in advance and he/she determines the trip or event has significant educational value.
8. Unusual or urgent circumstances requiring the student's parents to be outside of Henry County overnight, and where the parents determine that it would be in the student's best interest to accompany them. If prior notice cannot be given, a written explanation is to be provided no later than the first day the student returns to school after the absence.
9. Take Your Child to Work Day. Students who participate in this event will be excused, but will be counted absent.
10. To visit with a parent serving in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard. If such parent has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, a student shall be granted excused absences, up to five (5) school days per school year, for the purpose of visiting with his/her parent.

A student who serves as a Page of the General Assembly during the school year shall be counted present at school in the same manner as an educational field trip.

Jessie's Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692.2) states a foster care student (served by DFCS) who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school.

Unexcused Absences

An absence that does not qualify as excused is an unexcused absence. Parents are encouraged to carefully and frequently monitor student attendance through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal and contact the school immediately with any questions about the attendance record. Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and can result in penalty as imposed by the Georgia's compulsory attendance law. Excessive absences may jeopardize a student's ability to earn course credits for the semester or year and/or enrollment status in Henry County Schools in specific circumstances. In addition, withdrawal from school before graduating may jeopardize a student's eligibility to obtain or keep a driver's permit or license. See Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses and Policy JBCD: Transfer and Withdrawals .

Truancy Intervention Meeting

As required by law, Henry County Schools Student Attendance Protocol provides a progressive discipline, parental notification, and parental involvement process for truant students before referring the students and/or parents to juvenile or other courts having jurisdiction. Excessive unexcused tardies/early checkouts may also be addressed through the same process. Guidelines for the Student Attendance Protocol include but are not limited to contact by mail or phone to parents at five (5) and eight (8) unexcused absences. Students who arrive to school late and check out (unexcused) may receive written notification from the school as to the possible consequences of their actions. At ten (10) unexcused absences or twenty unexcused tardies/early checkouts, parents may be required to attend a Truancy Intervention Meeting ("TIM").

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

If a student is marked with an unexcused absence for the school day, the student will not be allowed to participate or attend extracurricular activities scheduled for the same day that the student is absent.

Absences Due to Pregnancy

Any students who is or becomes pregnant during any school semester will not be excused from attending school unless the student's treating physician states, in writing, that the student cannot attend school. Excused absences due to pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition may be made up under the same terms and requirements as any other excused absence upon the student's return to school.

Making up Missed Assignments or Tests

It is the student's and parent's responsibility, not the teachers, to make arrangements for make-up work. Students should ask their teacher for any missed assignments on the first day they return to school. The number of days allowed to complete make-up work will be determined by the principal or his/her designee. The days allowed to make-up work will not exceed the number of days absent except under extenuating circumstances approved by the principal or his/her designee.

Students assigned Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be allowed to make-up work upon return to school. The number of days to complete make-up work is commensurate to the number of days of OSS (i.e. 3 days of Out-of-School Suspension = 3 days to make up work missed).

Supervision of Students at School

Students are under the supervision of school staff during the school day. The school is not responsible for students on school grounds during any time other than the school day or during school sponsored events after the school day. Schools are not responsible for supervising students prior to the arrival of the first bus each morning.