

Board Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses

Status: DRAFT

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Student academic progress in general, is more likely to occur when the student attends school regularly. For this reason, students are required to attend school unless they cannot be present due to an excused absence. Parents or legal guardians are strongly urged to help their children attend school on a regular basis.

A. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

All students of the Henry County School System are required to attend school and all scheduled classes. Whenever students are absent, for any reason, students' parents or legal guardian must send a signed and dated written explanation of the absence to the school administrator no later than the first day students return to school after the absence. School administrators may allow a grace period for the receipt of the written explanation of the absence. The absence will be unexcused if the explanation of the absence is not received. Students shall be in attendance at schools in the Henry County School System in accordance with requirements of the compulsory school attendance law and for the number of instructional hours prescribed by law.

B. EXCUSED ABSENCES

The Board of Education of Henry County, in accordance with authority granted by the compulsory school attendance law and State guidelines, defines excused absences as those absences occurring for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or when attendance in school endangers the student's health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death in a student's family necessitating a student's absence from school.
3. A court order or an order by a government agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. The observation of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. Registering to vote or voting in a public election, which shall not exceed one day.
7. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to active duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five (5) school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.
8. A scheduled medical, mental health, dental or eye examination of the student.
9. Attendance upon a trip or event having significant educational value, provided (1) the school administrator is notified of the absence in advance and (2) the school administrator determines if the trip or event has significant educational value.
10. Unusual or urgent circumstances requiring the student's parents or legal guardian to be outside of Henry County overnight and where it is determined by the parents/legal guardian that it would be in the student's best interest for the student to accompany the parents/legal guardian. Where possible, a written explanation should be submitted by the parents/legal guardian before the student is to be absent; 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.
11. Take Your Child to Work Day. Students who participate in this event will be excused but will be counted absent.
12. A post-secondary visit or interview formally documented by the institution or organization.

Documentation may be requested in the event of reasonable suspicion that absences are not due to illness, medical or mental health appointments before it can be determined whether or not to excuse an absence.

Students will be credited as present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly as forth in

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692.

A student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program shall be counted as present and given full credit for the school day during which he or she served in the STEP program. No student shall be permitted to be absent from school or participate in the STEP program for more than two (2) school days per school year as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692 (e).

Georgia law requires that a foster care student (served by Department of Family and Child Services) 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 the day, or days missed from school.

C. EARLY CHECK OUT FROM SCHOOL

When there is cause necessitating an individual student to be excused from school for a portion of the school day, the student shall be released from school only to the student's parent/legal guardian, to a person properly identified to school authorities, or upon request by letter, email, or telephone from the parent.

The Board of Education of Henry County defines excused early checkouts from school the same as those of full day absences as set forth in Section-B of this policy.

D. TARDIES TO SCHOOL

Except for excused reasons set forth in Section-B of this policy, students should be on time to school each day and should attend school for the full day. Students who are late for school disrupt their own learning and the education of others.

E. TRUANCY

Georgia Law defines a truant as any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year, has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences.

For the purpose of determining student truancy, school days missed as a result of an out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused days.

The 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 court having jurisdiction.

F. PERFECT ATTENDANCE

The Henry County Board of Education believes that a student who has achieved a perfect attendance record for the school year may be recognized. Such a record requires both commitment and effort on the part of the student and parents. Perfect attendance not only promotes the student's academic progress in school, but also establishes a pattern for good work attendance as an adult.

G. INTENT

Nothing in this rule shall be construed to encourage student absences, tardies or early checkouts or as an approval for unexcused absences, tardies or early checkouts.

Georgia Code	Description
O.C.G.A. 20-2-0310	Student directory information; voter and selective service registration; pledge of allegiance
O.C.G.A. 20-2-0690.1	Mandatory education for children between 6 and 16
O.C.G.A. 20-2-0690.2	Student Attendance Protocol
O.C.G.A. 20-2-0692	General Assembly pages granted excused absences
Rule 160-4-02-.16	Scheduling for Instruction
Rule 160-5-1-.10	Absences and Excuses

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.
