

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

School Attendance

Compulsory Education Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) requires that every parent/guardian or other person who has control of any child between the ages of 6 and 16 shall enroll and send such child to school. All children enrolled for 20 calendar days or more in the public schools of this state prior to the seventh birthday shall become subject to the provisions of the compulsory school attendance law. State Board of Education policy defines the school year as 180 attendance days or its instructional equivalent.

Full Day Attendance

Students are expected to be in attendance for the full school day. Students who check-in late or check-out early should submit a written note from their parent/guardian explaining their absence. Disciplinary action may be taken against students not in attendance for the full school day for reasons that cannot be excused.

Student Absences

Whenever students are absent, for any reason, their parent/guardian must send a signed and dated written explanation for the absence to their child's teacher no later than the **third day** following the student's return to school after their absence. After five (5) personal notes written by the parent/guardian for excused absences, the school administration may request appropriate medical documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating the absences. Academic work missed due to an absence should be made up when a student returns to school.

Excused Absences

As permitted under the state law and State Board of Education policies, students may be excused lawfully for the following reasons (GABOE Rule 160-5-1-.10):

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 immediate family necessitating 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 as determined by the Fayette County School System.
6. Registering to vote or voting in a public election, not to exceed one (1) day.
7. A student whose parent/legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent/legal guardian has been called to 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 school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent/legal guardian prior to such parent's/legal guardians leave. A student whose parent/legal guardian is currently or previously served on active duty in the U. S. armed forces or in the Reserves or National Guard on extended active duty may be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, not to exceed two (2) school years to participate in military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation prior to the absence. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692.1)
8. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the Fayette County Board of Education to have merit based on circumstances.

Local boards of education shall count students present when they:

1. Are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
2. A foster care student 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.
3. 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 school days per school year.
4. Participates in a 4-H sponsored activity or program.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and can result in penalty as imposed by the Compulsory Education Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) and Student Attendance Protocol Committee Law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.2);

1. School will notify by mail parents/guardians of students ages 6-16 who have accumulated five (5) unexcused absences per semester and will include a copy of the summary of consequences.
2. School Operations will notify by letter parents/guardians of students ages 6-16 who have accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences per semester and will report violations to the Student Attendance Protocol Committee with the District Attorney's Office to determine if court action will be pursued for formal intervention.

3. State law requires an unemancipated minor over sixteen (16) years of age to have written permission from his or her parent/guardian prior to withdrawing from school.
4. With no proof of enrollment in another school, other school district, private school, or home study program, a student will be withdrawn from a school after ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences or when there is documentation validating the student no longer resides in the school's attendance zone. (FCBOE Policy JBC – Withdrawal for lack of attendance).

Pre-Arranged Absence

A written request made by the parents/legal guardians to the principal requesting permission for their child to be absent from school to take an educational related trip. A Pre-Arranged Absence Form must be completed and approved three (3) days prior to being absent. Approval does not make the absence excused but does give the student the opportunity to make up missed work. Requests are limited to one per semester.

Reporting Students with Unexcused Absences Consequences for Unexcused Absences

1. Any parent/guardian, or other person who has control of any child who on the tenth unexcused day of absence per semester, and after the child's school system has notified the parent/guardian or other person who has control of any child, of each day's absence from school, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and court action may be pursued for formal Intervention.
2. Penalties:
 - a. Fine – not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00
 - b. Imprisonment – not to exceed thirty (30) days
 - c. Community Service or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court.

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Students are considered tardy if they are not in their classroom/homeroom when the tardy bell/tone sounds. Students who are tardy for school must go to the office to sign-in before going to class. Schools will notify by letter the parents/guardians of students ages 6-16 who have accumulated five (5) unexcused tardies per semester.

Release of a Student

Prior to the end of the school day, students shall be released only to the parents/legal guardians or to persons properly identified to school office personnel by the parents/legal guardians, or upon written request by the parents/legal guardians confirmed by telephone or in person.

Teenage & Adult Driver Responsibility (TAADRA)

Schools must certify that a student is enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school to be eligible for a driver's license or learner's permit. Schools will use a Certificate of School Enrollment form to certify that a student is eligible for a driver's license or learner's permit. A student who intends to get their learner's permit or driver's license over the summer months must request a Certificate of School Enrollment form from their school administration prior to the end of May. An administrative charge for notarizing this certificate may be charged by the school.

Exam Exemption - Applies to High School Students Only

Academic Final Exam Exemption

Each semester, as a reward for academic excellence, a student may choose to exempt up to three (3) final exams(if the student is enrolled in seven (7) classes at the home school) or two (2) final exams (if the student is enrolled in six (6) or fewer classes at the home school) provided the student has a grade of 95 or higher in the selected course(s).

Attendance Exam Exemption

Each semester, a student may exempt one (1) final exam provided the student has seven (7) or less attendance occurrences that semester and has a grade of 70 or above in the class he/she wants to exempt. Attendance occurrences include full day absences, check ins or check outs, and tardy to school.

Senior Final Exam Exemption

A high school senior who will be graduating at the end of the second semester may exempt the final exam in any course(s) provided the senior has a grade of 80 or higher in that course and provided the student has five (5) or less unexcused attendance occurrences.