



Book	District Policy
Section	J - Students
Title	Attendance and Absences
Code	JBD
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The Fulton County Board of Education considers regular school attendance essential to successful school progress. Students must be present to take full advantage of available educational opportunities.

The Board supports vigorous enforcement of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law which makes school attendance the responsibility of the parent and the student. When possible, parents should avoid scheduling or arranging activities that require absences during the school day due to the detrimental impact on the student's access to, and progress in, their educational program. Any child in the state of Georgia subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences is considered truant (Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10). Board Policy JD, Student Discipline, outlines consequences for failure to comply with this law.

The district also maintains a Student Attendance Protocol pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.2 which contains detailed information regarding truancy procedures and referrals. A copy of this Protocol can be found on the district website.

A. Late Arrivals/Early Checkouts

1. To be considered in attendance for a school day, a student must be present for at least one-half of the school day, excluding the lunch period. Students leaving school before meeting this requirement will be considered absent for a school day.
2. A parent or guardian may be required to bring appropriate documentation for early checkout at the time the student is released from school or late arrival at the time the student arrives at school.
3. A student is tardy when he/she arrives to school after the beginning of the official school day or is not in the assigned class at the official beginning of the class period.
4. A student tardy may be classified as excused or unexcused based on the circumstances defined in this policy. Principals may develop additional guidelines concerning tardies in their buildings.
5. Fifteen (15) unexcused tardies result in a referral to the school social worker.

B. Excused Absences

In accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, a student's absence from school or class will be considered excused when it is due to any of the following circumstances.

1. Personal illness of the student.
2. Attendance at school would be detrimental to the health of the student or others.
3. A serious illness or death in the student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.

4. Compliance with a court order or an order issued by a governmental agency, including an order for a pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
5. Observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
6. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety.
7. An absence not to exceed one-half day for registering to vote. Students may register to vote at their high school.
8. Up to six (6) school days per year to visit with a parent or guardian who is on leave from, or is being deployed to, military service.

Additionally, the District allows excused absences for the following:

1. Absences not exceeding a cumulative total of six (6) days per school year for the following reasons, but only if the absence has been pre-approved by the principal or designee:

- a. scholarship interviews/college visitations,
- b. travel opportunity with educational benefits,
- c. graduation or wedding of an immediate family member,
- d. specialized, supplemental or extracurricular experience,
- e. other circumstances that are mutually agreeable to the parent and principal,

2. Individual or groups of students may be absent from a segment or period of the instructional day for school-sponsored, non-instructional activities as defined in Policy IED – Uninterrupted Instructional Time. The principal shall ensure that an accurate record of all such absences is maintained.

3. School days missed as a result of an assigned out-of-school suspension /expulsion of 20 days or less.

4. Additional absences due to medical appointments may be excused by the principal or designee. These absences must be approved by the principal or designee in advance of the absence occurring. The parent/guardian must provide appropriate documentation as outlined in this policy. The final decision to excuse such an absence rests with the principal.

5. Students participating in dual enrollment should not be counted as absent.

It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent/guardian to present a satisfactory written excuse to the principal or designee(s) within five (5) days of returning to school from an absence in order for the absence(s) to be recorded as excused. The excuse must state the reason for the absence and be signed by the student's parent or guardian. Excuses will be kept on file at the school at least until the beginning of the next school year. Students who have missed ten (10) days of school or more in a school year will be required to provide additional written verification such as doctors' statements.

C. Absences Recorded as Present

1. Students serving as pages in the Georgia General Assembly shall be recorded as present.

2. Foster care students are students who are in a foster home or otherwise in the foster care system. A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care should be recorded as present by the school and should not be counted as absent for any day or portion of day.

D. Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school or class for any reason other than those listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. [Unexcused absences may result in disciplinary action. Please see Operating Guideline JD – Student Code of Conduct, Attendance Section and Rule 12: Unexcused Absences for additional information.]

E. Make-up Work

1. Principals should ensure procedures are in place for the timely provision of make-up work.

2. Make-up work may be requested before, during or after the student's absence. However, availability of make-up work prior to an absence will be provided at the discretion of the teacher.
3. Textbooks and other instructional materials may be requested for the student's use during the period of absence and must be returned promptly when the student returns to school.
4. Upon returning to school following an absence, it is a student's or parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the teacher or teachers to request make-up work. The contact should be made on the day the student returns to school unless the teacher allows a longer time.
5. School days missed as a result of an assigned out-of-school suspension/expulsion of 20 days or less are considered excused absences (see circumstance 3 under "Excused Absences" above). Therefore, students who are assigned a suspension/expulsion for twenty (20) school days or less who are not participating in the alternative education program are permitted to make up their work pursuant to the provisions of this policy.
6. Make-up work must be completed by the student within the time specified by the teacher. Work missed during the last week of the semester must be made up by the tenth school day of the next semester.
7. Grades for make-up work will be earned per the following:
 - a. Elementary students will receive the actual grade earned on any make-up work submitted on time, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
 - b. Final course grades of middle and high school students shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met (1) the absence is for one of the reasons listed as excused previously; (2) a written excuse has been submitted in accordance with this Board policy; and (3) the make-up work has been completed satisfactorily within the time specified by the teacher.

F. Parent Notification/Involvement

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to take attendance and notify the school administration of absences. Local school administrators shall establish effective means of communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) about students regarding individual student attendance.

Each school is required to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five (5) unexcused absences. The notice shall outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. After two (2) reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student the school shall send a written notice via first class mail.

If a student has ten (10) or more school days of unexcused absences in the current academic year or ten (10) or more unexcused absences in the previous academic year, his or her opportunity to receive or retain a driver's license will be impacted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 40-5-22.

The school principal or the principal's designee shall use his or her best efforts including first class mail to notify a student age 14 or older when the student has only three (3) absences remaining before violating the state's attendance requirements pursuant to O.C.G.A. 40-5-22 regarding the denial of a driver's permit and licenses.

G. Recognition and Incentive Programs/ Attendance Awards

Each school may develop programs to encourage regular school attendance.

Georgia has adopted the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Senate Bill 227; O.C.G.A. 20-17-1, et. seq) which impacts provisions of this policy. See Policy JG, Opportunities for Military Children, for detailed information.