
Type: Policy
Descriptor Code: JBD
Title: **Absences and Excuses**
Status: ADOPTED



The Board emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling pupils to profit from the school program. Since compulsion is the least educationally effective method for securing regular attendance, the staff is urged to make the school program so attractive to each pupil that he/she will not wish to miss school.

A. DEFINITIONS

Truant - any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences. Note: School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Student Attendance Protocol - procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with parents and guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for policies relating to tardiness.

Student Attendance Protocol Committee - a committee established by the chief judge of the superior court of each county for the purpose of ensuring compulsory attendance, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school, and to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this state.

B. EXCUSED ABSENCES

Students may be temporarily excused from school:

1. Who are personally ill and whose attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others;
2. In whose immediate family there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence from school;
3. On special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith;
4. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including preinduction physical examinations for service in the armed forces,

mandating absence from school;

5. When conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.
6. 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 duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a 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 or legal guardian prior to such parents or legal guardians deployment or during such parents or legal guardians leave.
7. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the principal or superintendent to have merit based on the circumstances.

The Board shall count students present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

Students in foster care shall be counted present when they attend court proceedings relating to their foster care.

When a child is absent from school, the parent will furnish the school a written excuse within three school days of the absence. The school will require students to present appropriate medical documentation for absences due to illness upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence after accepting a parent excuse five times within a semester.

With proper verification, a student may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-31.

Students who miss an excessive amount of class time (as defined by school rules) may be required to participate in make-up activities as described by the individual schools. The principals shall work with the Superintendent to develop rules for implementing this policy.

Final course grades of students shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met.

1. Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.
2. Make-up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily.

C. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

The Thomas County School System will notify the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five 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 reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student, the school system shall send written notice via first class mail.

The Thomas County School System will provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance. By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local policy.

D. WITHDRAWALS

The Thomas County School Board authorizes the schools to withdraw a student who:

1. Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences;
2. Is not subject to compulsory school attendance;
3. Is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

If a student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance wishes to withdraw from school, the student must have written permission from a parent or legal guardian prior to withdrawing and the principal will make reasonable efforts to hold a conference with the student and parent prior to such withdrawal.

The Thomas County School Board authorizes the schools to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the local superintendent or designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program. Students shall be withdrawn retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

E. STUDENT RELEASE

A student will not be released during the school day to anyone other than his/her

custodial parent(s) or guardian(s) unless the school is authorized by the student's custodial parent(s) or guardian(s) to release the student to another properly identified person. Each principal will establish procedures for implementing this policy in his/her school.

Thomas County Schools

Last Revised Date: 8/11/2015
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