

ORIGINAL POLICY

Board Policy JB: Student Attendance

Original Adopted Date: 01/01/1900

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE

A. Mandatory School Attendance

All children who are between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays and who reside in the DeKalb County School District shall enter school on the opening date and attend regularly thereafter or be enrolled in a private school or home-study program meeting the requirements of state law. This policy excludes children who are specifically exempted according to the rules and regulations of the Georgia Board of Education and/or Georgia law.

If the District is made aware that a child between the ages of six and sixteen is not enrolled in a public school, private school, or home-study program, the Superintendent has the authority and responsibility to file proceedings in court to enforce the mandatory school attendance law.

B. Excused Absences

Excused absences are defined by law and in the rules of the Georgia Board of Education. Students enrolled in the District shall be excused from attending school in the following circumstances:

1. Personal illness;
2. Death or illness in the immediate family;
3. Religious holidays;
4. Instances where attendance by the student will be hazardous;
5. Tests and physical exams for military service and the National Guard;
6. Students eligible to vote in a public election may be allowed no more than one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election; or
7. A student whose parent or legal guardian serving in the U.S. military may be allowed up to five days per school year to visit with the parent or legal guardian either prior to the parent or legal guardian's deployment or while the parent or guardian is on leave from deployment.

Additionally, students shall be marked present and not counted as absent in the following circumstances:

1. Students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly shall be counted as present for days missed from school for such service; and
2. Students in foster care shall be counted present when attending court proceedings relating to their foster care.

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

C. Admission to Class Following Absence or Tardiness

No student should be admitted to class after being absent from school the previous day unless the student holds a legitimate excuse signed by the parent or guardian stating a reason for the absence. If the student does not present an excuse, the principal may use discretion in handling the situation. Admission to class in the case of tardiness shall be handled in the same manner.

D. Unexcused Absences, Tardiness, and Truancy

The Superintendent or his or her designee shall establish procedures aimed at reducing unexcused absences, tardiness, and truancy. Such procedures shall include, but not be limited to, parental notification, and shall be set out annually in the Code of Student Conduct.

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, and provisions for make-up work shall be provided.

E. Grades and Absences

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; and
2. Make-up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily.

F. Excessive Absenteeism and Epidemic Control

Any day that attendance is less than 90 percent at a given school, the principal of each such school shall have the number of absences called in to the Superintendent or his or her designee no later than 11:30 a.m.

If it appears there may be an epidemic or threat of an epidemic, the Superintendent or his or her designee will report this information to the DeKalb County Board of Health.

This information also shall be available for inquiries from local, state, and federal health agencies after noon on each day of such reported absences.

G. Withdrawal

The District shall follow the criteria and procedures for withdrawal of students set forth

in the rules of the Georgia Board of Education, including withdrawal of students based on consecutive absences. All withdrawals shall comply with Georgia and federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).