

|   |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Policy Level:<br><b>Board Policy</b>          | Descriptor Code:<br><b>JB</b>       | Rescinds Codes:<br><b>JBD<br/>May 2004</b> |
| Descriptor Term:<br><b>Student Attendance</b> | Effective Date:<br><b>June 2006</b> |  |

Forsyth County Board of Education considers regular school attendance essential to student achievement.

In responding to student attendance issues, the school system shall comply with all requirements of state law, State Board of Education rules, and the Student Attendance Protocol that has been developed by the county's Student Attendance Protocol Committee.

**Attendance**

All children who are between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays and reside in Forsyth County shall enter school on the opening date and attend regularly thereafter or be enrolled in private school or a home study program which meets the requirements of state law. All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in a public school prior to their sixth birthday shall become subject to the compulsory attendance law even though they have not attained six years of age.

If the school system is made aware that a child between the ages of six and sixteen or any child who has enrolled for twenty school days or more in a public school prior to their sixth birthday is not enrolled in public school, private school, or a home study program, the Superintendent has the authority and responsibility to file proceedings in court to enforce the mandatory education law.

**Excused Absences**

It is the policy of the Board to excuse students from school for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school that endangers a 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 governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. The observance of religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A scheduled medical, dental or eye examination of the student.
7. Registering to vote or voting.
8. Visiting with a parent or legal guardian who is in the military service in the armed forces and has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support post. The student may be excused for a maximum of 5 days per school year.

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly.

With proper medical verification, a student may be eligible for hospital / homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education rule 160-4-2-.31 hospital / homebound instruction. A student receiving hospital homebound services will be considered present.

The student's parent or guardian shall submit to the principal or principal's designee a written notice stating the specific date(s) and reason(s) for a student's absence from school. The notice must be signed by the parent or guardian and must be presented to the principal or principal's designee within five (5) school days after the student returns to school. An absence for which a written notice is not received from the student's parent or guardian, or is received after the five-day time limit, will be considered an unexcused absence.

The principal may require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

### Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school or class for any reason other than those listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

In grades 6-12, any consequence for unexcused absences will be outlined in the course syllabus or student handbook.

When a high school student has more than six unexcused absences per semester or three per semester for schools with an AB block schedule in a specific class, the student will meet with the school principal or designee to determine whether the student will receive credit for that course. Upon denial, it can be appealed to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

### Late Check-in / Early Check-out

Late check-in is defined as arriving at an assigned place after the designated time.

Early Check-out is defined as signing out of school prior to the designated time of official dismissal.

An unexcused late check-in or early check-out is defined as any time a student arrives late to school or leaves school for a reason other than those defined by this policy as an excused absence. A combination of three unexcused late check-ins and/or early check-outs will be considered one unexcused absence.

Students who miss more than half of the time in any class will be considered absent for that class period, while students who miss more than half of the school day will be considered absent for the day.

### 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.
2. Make up work for an excused absence was completed satisfactorily. The student has five (5) school days upon returning to school to complete make-up work. The teacher has the discretion to grant a longer period to make up work, if there are extenuating circumstances.

### Uniform Withdrawal Criteria

For the purpose of accurately measuring the academic performance of students continuously enrolled in public schools, the Board adopts the following uniform criteria for withdrawing students.

Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who:

1. Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences;
2. Is not subject to the compulsory school attendance; and
3. Is not receiving instructional services through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
4. The principal or designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance.

An unemancipated minor 16 years of age and older may not drop out from school without the permission of his or her parent or guardian. The school principal or designee shall make a reasonable attempt to share with the student and parent or guardian the educational options available; including the opportunity to pursue a general educational development (GED) diploma and the consequences of not having earned a high school diploma, including lower lifetime earnings, fewer jobs for which the student will be qualified, and the inability to avail oneself of higher educational opportunities. The conference will be convened within two days of receiving notice of the intent of the child to drop out of school.

Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the superintendent or superintendent's 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.

Appropriate school personnel shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

### Notification Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences

1. The school system requires its schools to provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in 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 will be asked to sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local board policy. 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 certified mail with return receipt requested; and
2. The school system requires its schools to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense. The notice shall also notify a student age 14 and older that they have only 5 absences remaining before violating the state's attendance requirements regarding the denial of driver's permits and licenses. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student, the school system will send written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested.
2. Students shall be notified through the student codes of conduct of the definition of truancy and a summary of possible consequences and penalties for truancy, including possible dispositions for unruly children in accordance with O.C.G.A. 15-11-67 and the possible denial of or suspension of a driver's license.

### Truancy and Excessive Excused Absences

Truant is defined as any student subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar has more than five days of unexcused absences. 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.

Truancy and excessive excused absences will be handled in accordance with the protocol that was developed by the county-wide Student Attendance Protocol Committee.

### Student Attendance Protocol Committee

1. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall fully and actively assist in the planning, implementation and evaluation activities of the local school system student attendance protocol committee.
2. The superintendent, a certificated school employee, a local school board member and a certificated school social worker shall serve on the student attendance protocol committee.
3. The local board of education shall consider and publicly announce its decisions regarding the recommendations of the student attendance protocol committee.
4. The local board of education shall report annual student attendance rates to the student attendance protocol committee and the State Board of Education by September 1 following each school year.
5. The superintendent shall be responsible for providing a copy of the written student attendance protocol and any revisions or amendments.

| Georgia Code / Rule  | Description  |
|----------------------|--|
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-150    | Eligibility for Enrollment   |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0699   | Disposition of Children Taken Into Custody                             |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0700   | Reports by Peace Officers to School Authorities                        |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0690.2 | <a href="#">Establishment of Student Attendance Protocol Committee</a> |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0691   | <a href="#">Minimum Annual Attendance Required</a>                     |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0696   | <a href="#">Duties of Visiting Teachers and Attendance Officers</a>    |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0690.1 | <a href="#">Mandatory education for children between 6 and 16</a>      |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0692 | <a href="#"><u>General Assembly pages granted excused absences</u></a>                                       |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0693 | <a href="#"><u>Exemptions</u></a>  |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0694 | <a href="#"><u>Administration/enforcement of attendance reqts.</u></a>                                       |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0695 | <a href="#"><u>Employing attendance officers in addition to visiting teachers</u></a>                        |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0697 | <a href="#"><u>Cooperation of principals and teachers with attendance officers and visiting teachers</u></a> |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0698 | <a href="#"><u>Assumption of temporary custody of truant children by peace officers</u></a>                  |
| O.C.G.A. 20-2-0701 | <a href="#"><u>Mandatory reporting of truants to juvenile or other courts</u></a>                            |
| Rule 160-5-1.10    | <a href="#"><u>Absences and Excuses</u></a>  |
| Rule 160-4-2-2.-31 | <a href="#"><u>Hospital/Homebound Instruction</u></a>  |
| Rule 160-5-1-.02   | <a href="#"><u>School Day for Students</u></a>   |

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.