

## Student Attendance Protocol

In order to receive maximum benefit from the instructional activities, students are expected to be in school each day unless excused for legitimate reasons. Good attendance habits positively impact the learning process and carry over into the world of work. It is the position of the Polk School District Board of Education that every day at school is important and that no student should be absent except for extraordinary reasons.

In accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-5-1.10, students may be **temporarily** excused from school who are:

- 1). 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). Serving as Pages of the General Assembly during the school year (Pages shall be credited as present by the school in which enrolled);
- 5). Registering to vote or voting for a period not to exceed one day;
- 6). When conditions render school attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety; or
- 7). Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including preinduction physical examinations for service in the armed forces and court orders.

Any absences, which are not permitted under the Compulsory School Attendance Law and by policies and regulations of the school system Board of Education will be considered unlawful (unexcused).

### **Very Important-Please Review Carefully!!!**

As of July 1, 2004, Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law 20-2-690.1 became much stricter in regard to truancy. **The new law states that more than five (5) unexcused absences constitute truancy. The law also states that possible consequences for parent(s)/guardian(s) of student's whose unexcused absences exceed five (5) days may be:**

- **At least a \$25 and not more than a \$100 fine;**
- **Up to 30 days of jail time;**
- **Community service; or**
- **Any combination of these penalties**

Beginning the 2004-05 school year, the school will make a reasonable attempt to contact the family each day a student is absent.

The school will accept excuses from parents/guardians for five (5) total days of absence **each semester** and will use the Georgia Board of Education Rules above to determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

A parent can write an excuse for five (5) total days **each semester**, but after five (5) total days **each semester**, a medical excuse will be required from a doctor or other qualified medical practitioner.

At three (3) unexcused absences, the school will mail a notice to the family, requesting that a family member schedule a meeting with school staff to resolve the absence status of the student.

If the student reaches five (5) unexcused absences, the family will receive a hand-delivered or certified letter with official notification that any further unexcused absences will result in charges being filed as required by state law and local protocols. The letter may be delivered as described below.

**Truancy Intervention meetings will be held with parents and students when they reach the 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence. The meeting will be for the purpose of intervening and helping the parents find solutions to the problem of truancy in their family. The meetings will be on the first Monday of each month beginning in September and on Mondays as needed throughout the month.**

Certain **unexcused educational absences** may be permitted without the make-up work penalty, provided arrangements are made with the local school administration prior to the absence.

**Family vacations are not excused absences** in accordance with state of Georgia Board of Education rules.

If the student accumulates **three unexcused tardies to school, three unexcused check-outs, or any combination of the two, this will constitute one unexcused absence** for truancy purposes only. **Unexcused tardies and check outs can be defined as convenience tardies or check-outs.**

If a student wishes to obtain an employment certificate (**worker's permit**), the student must obtain a letter from the school principal indicating that he/she is enrolled in school full-time and has an attendance record in good standing for the academic year.

If a driver is younger than 18 years of age, a **driver's permit or license** can only be received if the student is enrolled in and not under suspension from school and has satisfied relevant attendance requirements for a period of one academic year prior to his/her application.

If a student has more than ten school days of unexcused absences (cumulative) in any semester, the school system will submit a Certificate of Non-Compliance to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the student's license will be revoked by the DMV.

If a student under 18 drops out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for ten consecutive days, the school system will submit a Certificate of Non-Compliance to the Department of Motor Vehicles and the student's license will be revoked by the DMV.

All students 10 years and older by September 1 and all parents will be asked to sign an Acknowledgement Form, on page 3 of this handbook, verifying that they have been given a copy of, and are aware of these attendance procedures.

If you have questions about the attendance procedures, contact one of your local building administrators, your child's classroom teacher, or Buddy Harrison at the Polk School District Central Office at 770-748-3821.

## **Definitions**

Truancy	More than 5 unexcused absences from school without a valid written excuse.
Tardy-to-class	Arrival at a classroom after the tardy bell at his/her school.
Tardy-to-school	Arrival to homeroom in the morning after the tardy bell.
Early-check-out	Signing of a student out of school before the end of the school day by a parent or designated individual.
Exception-for-suspension	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.

## **Court Procedures**

- A. The following procedures will apply when the limit of unexcused absences has been exceeded.
1. A warrant will be taken through the Magistrate Court against the parent or legal guardian.
  2. Parents have a right to bring a lawyer.
  3. Requirements can be set by the Magistrate Judge.
  4. **The following penalties may be assessed:**
    - a. **At least a \$25 and not more than a \$100 fine;**
    - b. **Up to 30 days of jail time;**
    - c. **Community service;**
    - d. **Any combination of these penalties;**
- B. Students who are 13-15 years of age who have exceeded the allowable number of absences will have juvenile charges filed against them through the Department of Juvenile Justice.
- C. Parents of students who are 13-15 years of age who allow their child/children to exceed the allowable number of absences will also have a warrant filed against them through the magistrate court.