

In responding to student attendance issues, the Dade County School System shall comply with all requirements of state law, State Board of Education rule, and the Student Attendance Protocol that has been developed by Dade County's Student Attendance Protocol Committee.

After each absence, a hand-written statement/note indicating the reason for the absence(s) and the date of the absence(s) must be provided to the school. This statement must also include a parent or guardian signature and phone number. Emails and text messages are not acceptable as an official notice. Students with doctor/dental appointments are excused only for the time of the visit and a reasonable time before and after the visit. The remaining portion of the day shall be counted unexcused. Excuses from medical/dental facilities are required to specify the time in which the student was at the medical/dental facility. This includes *the appointment time* and *the departure time*. Such statement/note can be faxed by the medical facility or hand delivered to the attendance clerks or counselors of the school by the parent or student within five (5) calendar days of the return-to-school date.

Excuses not received within five (5) calendar days of the student's return to school date will not be accepted, and the absence will be counted as unexcused. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure that statements/notes are provided to the school.

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 student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U. S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone, or combat support posting will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.
7. The Board authorizes high school administrators to allow for eligible students a period of time for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
8. Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly. Students in foster care shall be counted present when attending court proceedings relating to their foster care.
9. The principal may, in certain circumstances require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

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 excused absences was completed satisfactorily.

Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences: Notification

The school system requires its schools to:

- a. Provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled a copy of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and board policy and procedures regarding attendance.
- b. Notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled of the definition of truancy and a summary of possible consequences and penalties for truancy, including possible dispositions for children in need of services in accordance with the juvenile code and the possible denial of a driver's license or permit.
- c. Notify the students 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 children in need of services in accordance with the juvenile code and the possible denial of a driver's license or

At the beginning of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student and students age ten or older by September 1 shall be required to sign a statement indicating receipt of the documentation listed prior.

Procedure for Board Policy JB – Student Attendance

1. Each school will establish an Attendance Committee. The committee will be composed of an administrator, school counselor(s), the attendance clerk (secretary/registrar), and the social worker. The Attendance Committee will meet once a week to discuss student attendance. This meeting brings discussions of students having attendance issues. The team works on ways to help these students come to school.
2. Ensure the teachers are involved in educating parents on the importance of students attending school. The assistant principal discusses how important it is for teachers to contact parents regarding student absenteeism. The teachers will call when their students have obtained 2 consecutive absences. ALL phone calls regarding attendance, grades, and behavior will be documented under the "Contact Log" tab in Infinite Campus. Notes in the Contact Log tab regarding what the conversation was about do NOT need to be written word for word. Notes should be based on factual information, NOT opinion. They should be brief summaries, such as, "Called mother to discuss [insert student's name] attendance." If the parent notifies the teacher of something that the principal, counselor, and/or social worker should know about the teacher will notify one of the three (or all).
3. Guidance counselors and attendance clerk will call students who have accumulated 3 unexcused absences. This will serve as a way of informing the family that the school is concerned as well as educate them on the school's attendance policy and attempt to get excuse notes or parent notes. This will include information regarding the use of the school nurse, bus routes, and informing the parents that they can use 5 parent notes.
4. At 4 unexcused absences, the attendance clerk will mail out attendance information which will include the number of unexcused absences the student has accumulated and the number of parent notes already used and a reminder of the attendance policy, as well as request excuse notes.
5. At 5 unexcused absences, the assistant principal will call to set up an in-house truancy meeting. This meeting is with the parent(s), an administrator, guidance counselor, the social worker if requested, and the student if he/she is 10 years of age or older. The purpose is to let the parent know where there are in the attendance protocol and look for ways to assist the family as needed. It is also to inform the parent/student of possible consequences for violating the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law and board policy and procedures. This form of notification will be a Student Attendance Contract, which will be signed by both the parent(s) and the student if he/she is 10 years of age or older.
6. After 5 unexcused absences and the school has made a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/student of possible consequences for violating the attendance policies listed above, the student will be referred to the social worker and scheduled to meet with the Truancy Treatment Team (TTT).
7. If the student continues to obtain unexcused absences after both the school and the social worker have made reasonable attempts (2 total attempts) to notify the parent/student through an in-house truancy meeting and referral to TTT, a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) complaint will be filled by the social worker with the Juvenile Truancy Diversion Court.