



Student Attendance Handbook
2024-2025

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COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Texas Compulsory Attendance Law

Regular school attendance is important. To ensure educational opportunity and remain eligible for advancement, the student and parent should avoid absences whenever possible. The Texas attendance rules say that a student must be in a class at least 90% of the time to receive credit for classes. This rule applies even if the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

The Texas 90% rule applies to both excused and unexcused absences. This means, students risk becoming ineligible to advance to the next grade level if they are not present 90% of the time regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Only absences that are exempt by law are excluded from the 90% rule.

Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

Students enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten are subject to the 90% rule as well. Texas compulsory attendance requirements apply to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students as long as they remain enrolled.

Ages 6-18

State law requires students who are 6 years of age through 18 years of age to attend school each day during the instructional year.

Additionally, students who do not meet the passing standards on state assessments for their grade level and/or the applicable subject area will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer.

Age 19 and older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her nineteenth birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. However, if a student 19 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the District may revoke the student's enrollment.

ATTENDANCE RECORDING

Official Attendance Taking Time

The District will take official attendance every day at 10:00 a.m.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their assigned classrooms when the tardy bell rings; teachers may require students to be in their seats when the tardy bell rings. If a student fails to meet these expectations in any class, he/she may be required to check in through the appropriate campus administrator's office.

Tardiness Recorded as an Absence-Elementary

Students who arrive after the official attendance-taking time will be marked absent for the entire school day.

Tardiness Recorded as an Absence-Secondary

Secondary campuses differ from elementary campuses in that attendance is taken in each class

every day. Students must arrive to class before the official attendance-taking time for each class to be marked present for the class period.

7-Period Instructional Day-Secondary

- Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late to class will be marked absent for the class period.

4-Period Instructional Day-Secondary

- Students who arrive more than 30 minutes late to class will be marked absent for the class period.

Permission to Leave School Early

A student will not be released from school at times other than regular dismissal time unless permission has been granted by the principal, or the parent/guardian has followed the campus sign-out procedures. The teacher will determine if permission has been granted before allowing the student to leave the classroom.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE-FAILURE TO COMPLY

All Grade Levels

School employees must investigate and report violations of the compulsory attendance law. A student who is absent without permission from any class, any required special program, or any required tutorial will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability experiences attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE-EXEMPTIONS

The State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for certain activities and events as long as the student makes up all work from the days missed.

All Grade Levels

Students may be absent:

- To observe religious holy days. This exemption includes one day of travel to and from the site where the student will observe the holy days.
- To attend required court appearances.
- To participate in court-ordered family visitations that cannot occur outside of school hours.
- To participate in activities related to obtaining U.S. Citizenship.
- To attend a U.S. Naturalization Oath Ceremony.
- To receive services associated with their diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder.
- To receive health care services for serious or life-threatening illness and/or the related treatment plans that make student attendance unfeasible. Documentation of the health condition and/or treatment plan from a physician is required.

- If they are in the conservatorship (custody) of the state.
- If they are students of military families whose parent, stepparent, or legal guardian is going to duty, on leave from duty, or returning from certain deployments.

Secondary Grade Levels

- Students who are 15 years of age or older may be absent for one day to obtain a learner’s license and/or a driver’s license.
- Juniors and seniors may be absent for up to two days per school year to visit a college or university.
- Juniors and seniors may be absent for up to two days per school year to investigate a career by visiting a professional at their place of employment to determine the student’s interest in pursuing a career in that profession.
- Students who are 17 years of age or older may be absent for up to four days to pursue enlistment in the U.S. Armed Services or Texas National Guard.
- Secondary students may be absent for up to two days per school year to serve as an early voting clerk.
- Students in grades 6-12 may be absent for the purpose of sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.

TRUANCY

Definition of Truancy

Truancy is defined as any absence that is unexcused by the school. An absence that is excused by a parent but not by school officials will still be considered truant.

Truancy Prevention Measures

Education Code 25.087 requires districts to notify parents of their student’s truant status upon the 3rd day of a recorded unexcused absence within a four-week period. The notice must inform the parent that it is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s school attendance and require the student to attend school. The notice must also warn the parent of the potential to be prosecuted under Education Code 25.093. It is important to keep the District updated with the most current contact information as not receiving warning notices will not void the parent or student of prosecution for truancy.

Please review the following steps as the District’s truancy prevention measures to help families avoid prosecution:

Daily Automated Phone Calls: Parents will receive an automated phone call each day their student’s absence occurred without an excuse. This prevention measure gives the parent ample time to:

- Contact the school attendance office to excuse the absence.
- Address an absence recorded in error.
- Inquire with the student regarding the nature of the absence if truant behavior is reported or suspected.

Automated Notifications: School Status Attend, the District’s attendance tracking software, automatically generates and sends truancy warning letters via US mail (and email if the parent opts in) to the primary address listed in Skyward upon reaching the 3rd, 6th, and 10th day of a recorded unexcused absence. This prevention measure intends to:

- Notify parents of the specific days their student incurred an unexcused absence.
- Remind parents of their responsibility regarding attendance for school-aged students.

- Warn parents of the potential for legal prosecution.

Parent Conferences: After the 10th unexcused absence, the School Status Attend software prompts the campus to request a parent conference in compliance with Education Code 25.095. These conferences aim to:

- Encourage regular school attendance.
- Identify and address any barriers that negatively affect school attendance.
- Collaborate with parents to develop a plan that fosters a supportive and positive environment that results in improved school attendance.

If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the District Student Attendance and Dropout Prevention Coordinator, or any other campus administrator, or visit <https://www.gpisd.org/attendance>.

Consequences of Truancy

Students who have 10 or more days of a recorded unexcused absence within a six-month period in a school year are deemed truant by the State's standards and are eligible for prosecution by a court of law.

- Unsuccessful attempts to reach the parent, or continued unexcused absences after truancy prevention measures have been employed will prompt the District to refer families to Truancy Court.
- The District will file the complaint against the parent if the student is under the age of 12 at the time of the referral.
- In most cases, the District will file the complaint against the student if the student is 12-18 years of age at the time of the referral. The complaint will be filed against the parent if the District finds that the student's truancy is due to the parent's actions, decisions, or negligence.
- The Truancy Court Judge may impose fines and penalties against the student and/or parent for not attending school.

Age 19 or Older

After a student who is 19 years of age or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the District is required to send the student a letter explaining that the district may revoke the student's enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student's enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.

ATTENDANCE FOR CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE

All Grade Levels

Students are expected to attend school regularly for successful academic progress. To receive credit or a final grade in a class, students must attend school at least 90% of the days when school is in session.

Elementary Grade Levels

Elementary students who come to school after the attendance hour are marked absent for the entire day. Regular and on-time attendance is important to ensure the 90% attendance rule is met. A student who has 18 or more absences in a school year risks having to repeat the grade.

Secondary Grade Levels

Middle school and high school students in GPISD have multiple class periods. Students must

attend each class, at least 90% of the time to pass the class. Middle school and high school students may have to repeat a class, even if they received a passing grade, if they did not attend that class at least 90% of the days the class was offered. Full-day attendance helps ensure eligibility for advancement.

High School Credits

Students taking high school courses earn 0.5 credits for each class, each semester. Students must attend each class 90% of the time, each semester, to receive credit.

If a student misses more than 10% of a specific class, they will lose credit for that class. This rule applies to each class, each semester the class is taken. For example, if there are 90 days in each semester, students can only miss 9 days of a single class during each semester to remain eligible to receive credit for that class. Students will need to repeat the semester for each class falling below the 90% attendance rule. Both excused and unexcused absences affect eligibility for attendance credit.

ATTENDANCE RECOVERY

Attendance Between 70% and 90%

Students attending at least 70% but fewer than 90% of the school days may still receive credit or a final grade by completing a principal-approved plan designed to fulfill the class's instructional requirements.

Attendance Below 70% or Non-completion of Approved Plan

If a student fails to complete the principal-approved plan, or if attendance drops below 70%, the parent and student must submit a written petition to the campus Attendance Review Committee for credit consideration. Petitions for credit may be submitted at any time the student receives notice but must be filed no later than 30 days after the last day of classes.

Evaluation of Absences

With the exception of absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, whether excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement. The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following factors when determining if extenuating circumstances prevented the student from attending school and/or completing the principal-approved plan:

1. Whether the student has mastered the essential knowledge and skills and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
2. Whether the student or parent had any control over the absences.
3. Any information presented by the student or parent to the committee regarding the absences.

The committee may decide to award credit with additional days at school, after-school instructional sessions, or deny credit.

Appeals Process

If the Attendance Review Committee denies credit or if there is dissatisfaction with the decision, the student or parent may appeal to the Superintendent's designee. In cases involving criminal or juvenile court proceedings, the judge presiding over the case must also approve credit before it is granted to the student.

ABSENCE POLICIES

When a student is absent, it is important to inform the attendance office of the reason for the absence. Parents must call or send an electronic communication to the school before 10:00 a.m. on the day of the absence for the absence to be excused. If contact is not made on the day of the absence, the absence will be recorded as an unexcused absence. Parents must contact the school within 4 days to excuse the absence. If contact is not made within four days, the absence will remain unexcused.

Procedures for Reporting Absences

Parents may report an absence in the following ways:

- Direct Contact: Parents may call or email the attendance clerk directly.
- Online: Parents may submit an absence request through the Skyward parent portal.
- Send a Note: Parents may send a signed note to the school. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law.

Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the District is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence. The campus will document the attendance records as excused or unexcused according to the District's determination.

Consecutive and Continual Absences

Parents must provide the school with a statement from a physician or health clinic if their student is absent for more than 5 consecutive days due to personal illness. The statement must verify the illness or condition that requires the student to be absent from school for an extended period. Without the appropriate documentation, the student's absences may be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should a student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that requires frequent medical care and absences in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

Partial Absences

Partial absences occur when a student is present in class for part of the day, but not the entire day. For secondary campuses, partial absences occur when a student is present for some class periods, but not all class periods.

A student who needs to leave school early or arrives to school late must check in or check out through the attendance office. Any unauthorized absence, or absences without parent knowledge, will be considered truant. Absences due to truancy may require a parent-student conference with an administrator.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Certain absences, such as a documented illness, family emergencies, or other extenuating circumstances, may be considered excused. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the appropriate documentation and communicate with the school within 4 days of the absence to obtain excused absence status. Absences reported after 4 days will remain unexcused.

Absences that do not meet the State or District guidelines will be recorded as unexcused absences. Unexcused absences also occur when the parent cannot produce any documentation that explains the absence or account for the extenuating circumstance that caused the absence. Absences due to non-extenuating circumstances are unexcused.

Extenuating and Non-Extenuating Circumstances

Examples of extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Hospitalization
- Chronic Health Condition
- Prolonged illness or injury
- Personal or family emergencies or crisis situations
- Funeral of an immediate family member, including one (1) day of travel to and from the funeral
- Unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances approved by the Attendance Appeal Committee

Examples of non-extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Skipping classes
- Vacations
- Personal vehicle/transportation problems
- Babysitting or attending to younger siblings
- Job interviews
- Practice, permit, and driving tests
- Private lessons
- Truant conduct

Religious Observances

The District will excuse absences for students who miss class for religious observances. Students will not be penalized or deprived of a reasonable opportunity to make up missed schoolwork.

Parents should submit a written request to the school before the absence to excuse the student for the religious observance. If the religious event is out of town, the excused days will include one (1) day of travel to and from the religious observance site. A student not attending school due to an excused absence under this policy may not be penalized and shall be counted as if they attended school.

ABSENCES-ACADEMIC RECOVERY

Makeup Work

It is the responsibility of each student to ensure they obtain and complete any missed assignments when absent from school. Upon returning, students must promptly contact their teachers to acquire makeup work. A student will be granted a minimum of one day for each day of absence to complete missed assignments. Teachers may extend this timeframe at their discretion, but it will never be less than one day per day of absence.

Failure to complete assigned work within the designated timeframe will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. However, students will be allowed to make up tests and turn in any projects due during their absence. Teachers may impose a late penalty on long-term projects that follow the timelines approved by the principal and communicated to students beforehand.

For unexcused absences, the maximum grade achievable for makeup work is a 70. There will be no grade penalty for makeup work following a suspension-related absence. It is important for students to prioritize catching up on missed work to maintain academic progress.

Parents may contact the school to obtain missed assignments for students who have two or more consecutive absences. Parents should contact the school by 8:00 am to facilitate this process effectively. This ensures teachers can utilize their conference periods for preparation. Arrangements must be made to pick up the assignments after school on the same day of the request.

If a student is present on the day an assignment is given but absent on the day the assignment is due or a test is given, the student is responsible for completing the assignment or taking the test upon their return to school.

Makeup Work Due to School Suspension

During periods of In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), the District will ensure that students have access to all coursework associated with the foundation curriculum classes missed as a result of the suspension.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COURSE COMPLETION -DISCIPLINARY SETTINGS

ISS and OSS Placement

Students who are placed in In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be granted the opportunity to fulfill the requirements of each course they were enrolled in at the time of their placement before the beginning of the next school year. The District may provide this opportunity through alternative methods including correspondence courses, other distance learning options, or participation in summer school programs. The District will not impose charges on students for utilizing any completion method provided by the District.

High School DAEP Placement

High School students enrolled in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the academic year will be granted the opportunity to fulfill the requirements of the foundation curriculum courses they were enrolled in at the time of their placement in DAEP. They will have the opportunity to complete these courses before the beginning of the next school year. The District may provide this opportunity through alternative methods including correspondence courses, other distance learning options, or participation in summer school programs. The District will not impose charges on students for utilizing any completion method provided by the District.

ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

Student Registration

As part of the student registration process, parents will be required to complete an Attendance Acknowledgement form for each enrolled student. The purpose of this form is to signify acknowledgment and acceptance of the attendance policies outlined by the District.

Student Withdrawals

To ensure a smooth withdrawal process, parents or guardians are asked to notify the school campus at least one day in advance of their intent to withdraw a student. Upon notification, the parent or guardian must complete the necessary withdrawal procedures and paperwork as outlined by the school administration.

Records will be transferred to the receiving school once all required textbooks and devices have

been returned, and any outstanding fines have been settled. Proper request forms must be submitted for record transfer.

Students who are 18 years of age or older, married, or emancipated by court declaration may withdraw from school without requiring a parent signature.

School of Choice Eligibility

Excessive tardiness, and excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, may negatively impact a student's School of Choice eligibility. A student missing more than 10% of the school year may be denied transfer status and/or readmission to the School of Choice Program.

ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION

A student who demonstrates exemplary attendance throughout the school year by not being tardy or absent from any class will be eligible to receive a Perfect Attendance Certificate. To qualify for this recognition, the student must have been officially enrolled on the first regularly scheduled school day and must have consistently attended each school day for the entirety of the academic year.

Students who maintain excellent attendance with no more than three absences will be awarded an Excellent Attendance Certificate. Three tardies will be considered equivalent to one absence for the purpose of this award.