

ATTENDANCE POLICY for ALPHARETTA HIGH SCHOOL (FCBOE DISTRICT POLICY: JBD)

In order for students in Fulton County Schools to learn and achieve, it is critical that they attend and engage in the learning process. Student absences impact a child's ability to succeed. Every Alpharetta High School (AHS) student must strive to attend school each day and arrive to class on time ready to learn. Since every day is important, "skip days" are not recognized, condoned, or excused by the AHS administration. Infinite Campus (IC) is an effective resource for following a student's attendance record. For information regarding access to IC, please contact AHS registrar, Donna Byrd at byrdd@fultonschools.org.

The Board supports enforcement of Georgia's Compulsory School Attendance Law which makes school attendance the responsibility of the parent and the student. Parents should avoid scheduling or arranging activities that require absences during the school day due to the detrimental impact on the student's access to, and progress in, their educational program. Any child in the state of Georgia subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five (5) days of unexcused absences is considered truant (Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10). Board Policy JD, Student Discipline, outlines consequences for failure to comply with this law.

Definitions

Late Arrival – Any time a student arrives after the beginning of the instructional day.

- Late arrivals follow the same rules for excused and unexcused as listed below.
- Late arrivals follow the same rules for documentation, but have different thresholds (see below)

Early Checkout – Any time a student leaves school before the end of the instructional day.

- Early Checkouts follow the same rules for excused and unexcused as listed below.
- Early Checkouts follow the same rules for documentation, but have different thresholds (see below)

Tardy – Any time a student arrives after the beginning of a specific class period.

- Tardies will be handled at the school level with guidance from the principal.

Excused Absences – A hold harmless absence that has been documented, and relates to one of the following circumstances in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1.10 and Georgia State Code, O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1:

- Personal illness or when attendance in school would be detrimental to the health of the student or others,
- A serious illness in the student's immediate family necessitating absence from school^[1]
- A death in the student's family necessitating absence from school,
- Observance of religious holidays necessitating absence from school,
- Compliance with a court order or an order issued by a governmental agency mandating an absence from school,
- Visitation with an immediate family member who is on leave from or is being deployed to military service,
- Important family events/celebrations for an immediate family member (graduation, wedding, religious ceremony, etc.),
- Compliance with an order for a pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces,
- An absence for registering to vote or participating as an active voter in a local, state, or federal election,
- A verified interview for college admission or a documented college visit
- A specialized, supplemental, or extracurricular program/event
- Other absences pre-approved by the principal^[2]

Unexcused Absence – Any absence not accompanied with a note or documentation or any absence that does not relate to the circumstances listed above is considered unexcused. The following non-exhaustive list includes examples of unexcused absences^[3]:

- Bad weather
- Missing the school bus
- Car trouble
- Shopping
- Babysitting
- Oversleeping

In-School Suspension (ISS) – the removal of a student from his/her class for at least half of a school day by the principal or a designee and assignment to a location supervised by appropriate personnel in another room on the school premises.[\[4\]](#)

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) – the removal of a student from his/her school for at least half of a school day by the principal or a designee and assignment to the student's home/residence.[\[5\]](#)

- Students who are assigned a suspension/expulsion for twenty (20) school days or less who are not participating in the alternative education program are permitted to make-up their work pursuant to the provisions of this policy.

Absences Recorded as Present:

- Per State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 and O.C.G.A. 20-2-692 & 20-2-292-2, students must be counted present under the following instances:
 - A student who is a Student Teen Election Participant (Maximum Two Days Per Year)
 - A student who is serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly
 - A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care
- Per Fulton County Schools, students must be counted as present under the following instances:
 - Students attending a school field trip or other school-sponsored event.
 - Students participating in dual enrollment or virtual school classes[\[6\]](#)
- Students can substitute up to 5 absences per semester (a max of 10 per year) with a remote learning day by meeting the remote learning participation benchmarks (listed below). Parents and/or students also need to email their teachers and Ms. Mohrig (mohrig@fultonschools.org) at least one day before they take a remote learning day. This would result in the student being counted as present for the day(s) they participate remotely.

Remote Learning Attendance:

Students must meet the following participation benchmarks[\[7\]](#) to receive credit for attending in a remote learning setting:

- Elementary School (Daily Attendance)
 - Participation in synchronous RELA and Math instruction remotely,
 - or participates asynchronously as defined by the teacher.
- Middle & High School (Period Attendance)
 - Must participate in at least over half of the school day to be given credit for attendance,
 - Participation in synchronous instruction remotely,
 - or participates asynchronously as defined by the teacher.

To be considered absent but present, work that is assigned must be submitted within 2 days of absence. Students may not use a remote learning day on a summative assessment day.

Students can be designated as Assigned Remote by the district based on guidance from state/local health officials if they need to be placed in medical quarantine. The Assigned Remote designation is an excused absence and does not require any documentation from the student. Students may participate remotely during an Assigned Remote designation.

Documentation and Thresholds

Students who need to leave campus, must sign out at the AHS Attendance window with a written excuse note from a parent or guardian. In lieu of a written excuse note, the parent or guardian will then come into the school with photo I.D. and sign out the student at the Attendance window.

Special note: For all days preceding a school holiday, a parent/guardian must come in person with photo I.D. to the AHS Attendance window to check out any student.

Documenting illness or the illness of family members:

- After 3 consecutive absences, late arrivals, or early checkouts a doctor's note will be required.
- After 7 cumulative absences and/or 10 cumulative late arrivals or early checkouts, a doctor's note will be required for any subsequent illness-related absences, late arrivals, or early checkouts.
- If there is an on-going medical circumstance that requires a student to be absent, late, or checkout early from school frequently or intermittently, a doctor's note will be required to address medical concerns and need for absences.
- In the event of a serious illness in the student's immediate family, schools may require students to present medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for validating the excused absence, tardy, or early checkout.

Excused Absence Allowances for a death in the family:

- Four days for immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, or anyone else living in the student's household)
- Two days for non-immediate family (any family member not included in the definition of immediate family)

Documentation Requirements

The Attendance window at Alpharetta High School opens at 7:45 a.m. Students must conduct business at the attendance window during non-instructional time. Students will not be issued excused late passes because they were at the attendance office.

Documentation for any absence type must be provided within five days of returning to school for an absence to be excused. Parents and or guardians will send an email or handwritten note to the AHS Attendance Clerk, Donna Mohrig at mohrig@fultonschools.org to document a student absence. If needed, the principal or designee will verify the email address and the credibility of the email. The following must be included in all documentation:

- Student Name
- Student FCS ID Number (lunch number)
- Parent/Guardian Name
- Parent/Guardian Email & Phone Number
- Reason for absence
- Date(s) of absence(s)

Excuses will be kept on file at the school for the duration of the student's enrollment.

Any student who accumulates seven or more days in a given school year for any reason, will be required to provide additional documentation (doctor's note, court order, etc.) for any subsequent absence, whether that absence be excused or unexcused. This excludes days accumulated during an Assigned Remote designation.

Student attendance records shall be corrected from unexcused to excused after proper documentation is provided.

Family Events and Pre-Approved Absences

Students/families must formally request for students to be absent for family events or other pre-approved absences. These requests should be made five school days in advance of the absence. AHS pre-approval forms can be picked up at the Attendance office for f2f students. The forms will stipulate the rules and steps for submission of the form. For remote learning students, the Pre-approved Absence form can be found on the AHS webpage in the Attendance section. All remote learners should be familiar with the rules and stipulations for submitting a Pre-approved Absence form. Remote students can submit their request for a Pre-Approved absence by logging in to the AHS webpage and clicking on Attendance in the Students & Families tab. Only the principal or assistant principal(s) can approve these absence requests.

Before approving these requests, school administration should consider the student's complete attendance record including excused, unexcused, disciplinary, or other absence types. The school administration should also consider the student's academic standing before approving these absences.

School Protocols

Recording Attendance

Elementary School students' attendance shall be marked within the first hour of the instructional day. Middle and High School students' attendance shall be marked each period.

If a student misses more than half of an instructional school day, they will be marked absent for the day.

Locate, Assess, and Connect

To be proactive in identifying students who may need attendance/engagement support, school social workers will utilize the locate, assess, and connect protocol (LACP). The locate, assess, and connect protocol should be used for students who demonstrate the following attendance concerns in either a virtual or traditional school format:

- Students who do not attend during the first two days of school (no shows).
 - LACP must be conducted before these students are withdrawn.
- Missing three consecutive or more days of school without documentation
- Any student who has missed 10% or more of the school year at any given time.

The LACP should include the following preventative measures (not an exhaustive list):

1. School social worker should connect with families on their current caseload who are exhibiting attendance concerns.
2. School social worker will organize a team and create lists for team members of students that need to be located and assessed.
3. Support staff will connect with all students on their respective lists (phone/text/email)
4. After three unsuccessful attempts to locate and assess student (phone/text/email), a home visit will be conducted.
5. School social worker will organize supports and materials to student and family to remove barriers to attending/engaging.

Documenting Lost Instructional Time

- Ten late arrivals or early checkouts will result in a parent notification.
- Fifteen late arrivals or early checkouts will result in a referral to the school social worker.

Mandatory Withdrawal

- All attempts should be made using the Locate, Assess, and Connect protocol before withdrawing a student.
- If a connection cannot be made and a student is absent for 10 consecutive days with no parent notification/documentation, on the 11th day they will be withdrawn.
- Schools must demonstrate documentation from the LACP before withdrawing a student.
- Withdrawn students are not excused from mandatory school attendance requirements and are expected to reenroll as soon as possible.
- Students who withdraw to attend a non-FCS school should notify FCS as soon as possible and make reasonable attempts to follow the withdrawal procedures as determined by the school.

- School principals must sign off on all mandatory withdrawals before they are processed.

Make-Up Work

Students should make every effort to complete any missing work in a timely manner. Student must complete any make-up work at least ten (10) school days prior to the end of the grading period. The student and/or parent/guardian must assume the responsibility for contacting the teacher about any missing work. If the work is satisfactory, no matter if the absence was excused or unexcused, full credit should be given.

Teachers should make every effort to make sure make-up work is standards-based and focused on learning objectives that are necessary and crucial to master the content. Teachers should work within their professional learning communities to determine the appropriate amount of make-up work to determine student mastery.

The following provisions should be considered when assigning make-up work:

- Textbooks or other instructional materials may be requested for the student's use during the period of absence and must be returned promptly when the student returns to school.
- Work missed during the last week of the grading period must be made up by the tenth school day of the next semester.
- All efforts should be made to conduct student assessments in-person rather than remote.

Exam Exemption

Attendance should not be used to determine exam exemptions status for students. Please see Board Policy IHA: Grading and Reporting System for guidance on exam exemption.

Parent Notification & Involvement

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to take attendance and notify the school administration of absences. Local school administrators shall establish effective means of communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) about students regarding individual student attendance. Schools will review student attendance as a part of the multi-tiered system of supports and should be considered during any and all discussions about student performance, behavior, and needed interventions.

Each school is required to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the student when a student accrues the following:

- Three consecutive unexcused absences without notification from parents
- Five cumulative unexcused absences
- Seven cumulative absences
- Ten late arrivals or early checkouts

The communication should include, at a minimum, the importance of attending school and the total number of attendance records to date.

After two (2) reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student the school shall send a written notice via first class mail.

[1] Immediate family is defined as a parent/guardian, sibling, grandparent, or any other family member living in the student's household.

[2] See Operating Guideline JBD: Excuses and Absences for more information on pre-approved absences.

[3] Unexcused absences and/or the accumulation of unexcused absences will result in school-based interventions and/or disciplinary action. For more information, see Operating Guideline JBD: Excuses and Absences and Operating Guideline JD: Student Code of Conduct

[4] In-School Suspension (ISS) will be coded on the student's attendance record by the appropriate staff.

[5] Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be coded on the student's attendance record by the appropriate staff.

[6] Virtual classes are a designation separate from remote learning.

[7] Parent/guardian or student must notify teacher prior to the start of the instructional day to utilize the participation benchmark rule. Teachers will make a concerted effort to provide synchronous and/or asynchronous learning opportunities for students who provide sufficient notice.