

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Louisiana State Law mandates compulsory school attendance and students are expected to be in attendance every school day scheduled by the local school board until their eighteenth (18th) birthday.

All excuses, including original doctor/dentist verification for a student's absence(s), must be presented to the school within five (5) days of the student's return to school to be considered for extenuating circumstances. All doctor's/ parent's notes presented after this time will NOT be considered. Please be aware that a parental excuse note allows students to make up work missed and is marked excused on the report card; however, the student absence is still calculated in the number of days per year a student is allowed to miss per LDOE policy.

What are Compulsory School Attendance Ages?

Every child in the state is required by state law to attend public or private school from the child's fifth (5th) birthday, who is 5 by September thirtieth of the calendar year in which the school year begins, until his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday, unless the child graduates prior to his/her 18th birthday. Any child below the age of five (5) who legally enrolls in school shall also be required to adhere to school attendance regulations.

What are the current regulations regarding school attendance for Grant Parish Schools?

Our Grant Parish School Calendar this year accounts for 155 student days scheduled for 415 instructional minutes. There are 78 student days in the first semester (32,370 minutes) and 77 student days in the second semester (31,955 minutes). Total of 155 student days (64,325 minutes). The state of Louisiana requires 63,720 instructional minutes a year.

- A. In order to be eligible for promotion, Elementary students (K-8), shall not exceed **9 days** per year of absences.
 - a. Attendance for students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade will be calculated as half and whole day attendance and will be reported to the state as such.
- B. In order to be eligible to receive grades/credits, high school students (9-12), shall not exceed **4 days** per semester of absences in whole credit courses and 2 days in ½ credit courses.
 - a. High School students (9-12) shall be kept on a per period basis.
 - b. For High schools counting attendance by periods, a student shall be present for more than 50% of a period to be counted as being in attendance for that class period.
- C. In regards to tardiness: Accumulated tardiness affects absences.
- D. The principal or their representative should make an effort to verbally contact every student who has been absent for three (3) consecutive unexcused days or more in order to ascertain why the student is absent and to explain School Board attendance policy and procedure to the parents/guardians.
- E. The principal or their representative should send a notification to the parent/guardians to inform them of their student's unexcused nonconsecutive absences from school or classes and will also reconfirm the parish's attendance regulations .
 - a. Elementary will occur at intervals of three (3), six (6), and nine (9) nonconsecutive days.
 - b. Middle School will occur at intervals of three (3), six (6), and nine (9) nonconsecutive days.
 - c. High School classes on a 4 x 4 block schedule should provide notifications to parents that will occur at intervals two (2) and four (4) nonconsecutive days in each Carnegie unit class.
 - d. Other notifications to parents will be handled through verbal contacts and documentation on student progress reports and report cards.

- F. A student's attendance for the year is cumulative and follows a student who transfers between schools during the school year.
- G. Each school shall identify students at their school who could be considered to be high risk for absenteeism. Each teacher of high-risk students should be notified that appropriate intervention strategies will be planned and implemented.

If a student meets the following criteria, he/she will be referred to Truancy Court:

- A. Grant, Montgomery, and Georgetown High School students who exceed 5 days absence per semester in one or more Carnegie unit class or as deemed eligible for referral by the Principal, and who do not provide a valid excuse according to the criteria for extenuating circumstances as listed above, shall be referred to Truancy Court.
- B. All other Grant Parish Schools students who exceed 10 days absence or as deemed eligible for referral by the Principal and who do not provide a valid excuse according to the criteria for extenuated circumstances as listed above, will be referred to Truancy Court.

Are there exceptions to Compulsory School Attendance?

The only exception to the attendance regulation shall be extenuating circumstances that are verified by the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. Only the following shall be considered extenuating circumstances under which absences shall be exempt from provisions of compulsory attendance laws:

- A. Extended personal physical or emotional illness as verified by a physician or dentist.
- B. Extended hospital stay as verified by a physician or dentist.
- C. Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician or dentist.
- D. Extended contagious disease within a family as verified by a physician or dentist.
- E. Prior school system approved travel for education.
- F. Death in the family (not to exceed one week)
- G. Natural catastrophe and/or disaster
- H. For any other extenuating circumstances, parents must make a formal appeal in accordance with the due process procedures established by the school system.

When a student has exceeded the allowable days of absence and no extenuated circumstances are present, the principal or his designee and two teachers (when possible) should review the student's absences before credit is denied. If the committee confirms no extenuated circumstances, the student and parents receive written notification of the decision to deny credit and are informed of the appeal process. **R.S. 17:221**

TRUANCY COURT

If a student meets the following criteria, he/she will be referred to Truancy Court:

1. Elementary School Students (Grades K - 5): Elementary School students who exceed a total of 10 days absence within the second semester or as deemed eligible for referral by the Principal and who do not provide a valid excuse according to the criteria for extenuated circumstances as listed above, will be referred to Truancy Court.
2. Middle School Students (Grades 6 - 8): Middle School students who exceed a total of 10 days absence within the second semester or as deemed eligible for referral by the Principal and who do not provide a valid excuse according to the criteria for extenuated circumstances as listed above, will be referred to Truancy Court.
3. High School Students (Grades 9 - 12): High School students who exceed 5 days absence per semester or as deemed eligible for referral by the Principal, and who do not provide a valid excuse according to the criteria for extenuated circumstances as listed above, shall be referred to Truancy Court.

When will Truancy Court be held?

Truancy Court will be held periodically throughout the school year at the discretion of the Court.

Truancy Court and Discipline Court Notice to Parents/Guardians of School Age Children

The Honorable Judge Willett, in collaboration with the Grant Parish School Board's Child Welfare & Attendance Program, wishes to notify Grant Parish residents of Truancy and Discipline Court.

What is the purpose of Truancy Court and Discipline Court?

The purpose is to alleviate unexcused absenteeism and promote compulsory school attendance. School attendance is the single most important aspect to student achievement and lifelong success. Also, with new state mandates regarding high stakes testing and school accountability, school attendance is a must for academic success, but most importantly, it's the law. It will also help reduce serious discipline infractions in our public schools. Students who chronically violate Grant Parish School Board Discipline Policy shall also be recommended to court. **R.S. 17:233**

PERFECT ATTENDANCE FOR STUDENTS

To be considered for perfect attendance recognition, a student must attend 100% of all school days from bell to bell each and every day. Exceptions are not made for medical, extenuating circumstances, etc. A student who is tardy is not to be considered as in attendance for 100% of the school day.