

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. Doctor's notes presented after this time will NOT be considered. Parent notes for illness are excused for the purpose of making up work but count towards the number of days per year a student is allowed to miss and are NOT considered an extenuated circumstance.

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 seventh (7th) birthday until his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday, unless the child graduates prior to his/her 18th birthday. Any child below the age of seven (7) 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 **171** student days scheduled for 385 instructional minutes per day. **The state of Louisiana requires 63,720 instructional minutes a year.**

- A. In order to be eligible to receive grades, Elementary students (K-8), shall not exceed 10 days per year of absences.
- B. In order to be eligible to receive grades/credits, high school students (9-12), shall not exceed 5 days per semester of absences in whole credit courses and 3 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. 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. 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. A letter to the parent/guardians to inform them of their student's unexcused absences from school or classes will occur at intervals of three (3), five (5), eight (8), and ten (10) nonconsecutive days and will also reconfirm the parish's attendance regulations. The only exceptions will be Grant, Georgetown, and Montgomery High Schools, which operate on a 4x4 block scheduling system or modified block schedule. Letters to parents at these schools will occur at intervals two (2) four (4) and, five (5) nonconsecutive days. Other notification to parents will be handled through verbal contacts and documentation on student progress reports and report cards.
- F. 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.
- G. In accordance with **R.S. 12:221:E**, A child between the ages of seventeen (17) and eighteen (18) may withdraw from school prior to graduation with the written consent of his parent, tutor, or legal guardian.
- H. A student's attendance for the year is cumulative and follows a student who transfers between schools during the school year.

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. Grant, Montgomery, and Georgetown High School students who exceed 4 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.
2. All other Grant Parish Schools students who exceed 8 days absence the first semester or a total of 12 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.

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 life long 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**

If I have questions regarding my child's attendance, whom do I contact?

You first need to contact your child's teacher and/or school principal if you have questions regarding your student's attendance. If you need further assistance, you may contact Rebecca Reeder, Child Welfare & Attendance Supervisor at 627-3274.