



Lumpkin County Schools System Attendance Guidelines 2020-2021

Revised 5/2020

Board of Education

Lumpkin County Board of Education will monitor student attendance daily. Codes for attendance used in the student information system (Infinite Campus) will be used to indicate excused absences, unexcused absences, tardies, and early dismissals. The Board of Education will adopt policies and procedures outlining how attendance will be monitored and addressed. Each school will create a building level procedure in accordance with this policy. Individual schools will develop attendance incentives to encourage good attendance.

Parents and guardians will be given notice of the attendance policy, including a list of excused absences and possible consequences and penalties of excessive absences upon enrollment and registration each school year pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690-1. All students age ten or above as of September 1 of the school year will also receive this notice. The schools will make reasonable efforts to ensure that the notice was received and understood by requesting signatures from parents/guardians and students (age 10 or older) acknowledging receipt.

Attendance Terms

Absence:

A student is considered absent any time he or she is missing from any assigned class or school activity, with or without parent permission.

Excused Absence:

An excused absence is an absence that is the result of one of the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others. This includes appointments with health professionals, i.e. doctors and dentists.
2. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family—father, mother, grandparent, brother, sister, husband, wife, child, or relative residing permanently and continuously in the student's home.
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. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A period not to exceed one day is allowed, at the discretion of the local unit of administration, for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. 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. Students whose parents are currently serving or previously served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces, Reserves, or National Guard on extended duty may be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of 5 days per school year (not to exceed two school years) for the day(s) missed from school to attend military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation **prior** to the absence.
8. A student will be counted PRESENT (supplemental attendance) for the following:
 - a. When they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly;
 - b. Students in foster care shall be counted present while attending court proceedings relating to their foster care.
9. Discovery and treatment of pediculosis capitis (head lice) - Only 1 nurse's medical excuse or written parent note (limit of 7 days per school year) per head lice occurrence.
10. Seniors & Juniors may be absent up to 4 days per school year to visit colleges with PRIOR administrative approval. Students will be required to provide a letter from the college attended to excuse the absence from school.
11. Other absences can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and excused at the administrator's discretion.

Process for Excusing an Absence

In order for an absence to be excused, the school must receive written notice from a parent/guardian or a doctor's office as to why the student was absent. This written notice must be received within two days of the student's return to school following the absence.

Doctor Excused Absences

- There is no limit on the number of doctor excused absences that a student is allowed to have in a school year. However, additional documentation may be required for student absences exceeding 10 medically excused days. At 10 medically excused days a medical release form will be sent home for the parent/guardian signature. Upon receipt of a signed release, the school may follow-up with the physician office to determine if additional attendance support services are needed. (Intermittent Hospital Homebound, Hospital Homebound, or school nurse assistance while at school). Schools may verify all excuses from medical offices once 10 medically excused absences are accrued. An exception is allowable with proper documentation from a medical or mental health practitioner indicating current treatment, the student's diagnosis, and that their condition may require absences that do not necessitate an office visit, per treatment plan. Schools will use discretion on a case by case basis.

Parent Excused Absences

- Students are allowed 7 days each school year to be excused by a parent note in Grades K-12. After the seventh absence excused by a parent note, each subsequent absence will be considered unexcused unless the school receives a doctor's excuse.

Out of School Suspension:

Does not count as excused absences, but do not count towards the student's total number of absences when counting absences towards truancy charges.

Unexcused Absence:

An absence without a valid written excuse is considered unexcused.

Tardy:

A student is tardy when he/she is not in class when the bell rings to start the class.

8:00 A.M. at Elementary Schools

7:45 A.M. at Middle School

7:45 A.M. at High School

8:00 A.M. at Summit Academy

Early Dismissal:

When a student has checked out early before the end of the school day.

Detention:

Work/study session outside of regular school hours.

Truant:

Any child subject to compulsory school attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than 10 unexcused absences (per CHINS protocol) is considered truant.

Lumpkin County School System (K-12) Attendance Procedures

Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). While the following procedures indicate the required contacts on behalf of the school, the principal or his/her designee may at his/her discretion contact parents/guardians by phone, mail, or in person, at any time school attendance is a concern. Each school will establish an Attendance Support Team, (hereinafter, AST). The school principal will appoint an administrator as the Attendance Support Team Coordinator. The school based panel may consist of the Attendance Support Team Coordinator, school administrator, school counselor, system school social worker, classroom teacher, or any other staff involved with identifying and addressing attendance concerns within the school. The AST meeting will be lead by the Attendance Support Team Coordinator. The system school social worker will be invited to all AST's, but will come specifically when requested by the school.

1. At the beginning of the school year, a letter from the principal and a copy of the attendance procedures shall be sent home with each student. The Notice of Compulsory Attendance Law and Expectations will be printed in each school's handbook. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be required to sign this notice at the beginning of each school year and their signature will be kept on file for that school year.
2. When a student has 3 unexcused absences, the school will make an automated phone call to the parent(s)/guardian(s). The school will attempt a human contact via designated staff member if a student reaches 3 consecutive absences.
3. When a student has 5 unexcused absences, the school will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) by letter to notify them of the law, attendance procedures, and possible consequences and penalties of absences. As the law instructs, after two reasonable attempts have been made to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) with no response, a letter will be sent via certified return receipt mail. Another copy of the Notice of Compulsory Attendance Law and Expectations will be sent home for signature.
4. When a student has 7 unexcused absences, an Attendance Support Team (AST) meeting will be requested. An AST meeting will be held at the discretion of the Attendance Support Team, and may consist of the Attendance Support Team Coordinator, school administration, school counselor, system social worker, school nurse and the school resource officer. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and student (ages 10 and older) may be asked to sign an attendance contract. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to attend, the Attendance Support Team Coordinator will attempt to reach the parent(s)/guardian(s) via phone to review contract and send home for signature.
5. The school will continue to monitor the student's attendance. When the student reaches 10 or more unexcused absences, the school will make a referral to the school social worker. The school social worker will schedule a second attendance support team meeting. For elementary age students this meeting will be held at the Board of Education Office with the Associate Superintendent, Student Services Director, School Principal/designee, School Resource Office and the School Social Worker. For middle and high school age students this meeting will be scheduled at their respective school with the School Social Worker, administrator, and school counselor. Continued unexcused absences after the school social worker makes contact may result in a Juvenile Court referral for truancy.
6. Prior to a truancy /educational neglect referral to Superior Court at 15 unexcused absences for elementary age students, the parent/guardian will be notified by certified mail. Prior to a truancy referral to Juvenile Court for middle and high school age students (under age 16), the parent/guardian will be notified by mail.
7. When a student reaches 10 tardies the school will make an automated phone call to the parent(s)/guardian(s). An automated phone call will be made every 10 tardies (ie. 10, 20, 30, 40, etc.)