

ATTENDANCE- Calhoun Middle School

The Calhoun City Board of Education believes that regular attendance and promptness are habits, which should be developed early, adhered to through a student's school life, and carried over into adulthood. In addition, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more prior to their seventh birthday are subject to the compulsory school attendance law as stated in O.C.G.A. 20-2-150 (c). Students shall be temporarily excused from school for the following:

1. When personally ill to the extent that school attendance would endanger their health or the health of others;
2. When in their immediate family there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence from school; (immediate family is limited to the student's father, mother, sister, brother, child, spouse, grandparent, legal guardian, or other relative living in the residence of the student);
3. On special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith, upon written verification by their church leader to the principal of the local school prior to the religious holiday;
4. When mandated by order of governmental agencies, i.e.; pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces, court order, detention by law enforcement officials;
5. When prevented from attendance due to conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety;
6. When a student registers to vote (not to exceed one day);
7. When a student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave. Other absences in extenuating circumstances approved by the Superintendent or designee
8. Any other absence not explicitly defined but deemed to have merit based on circumstances as determined by the Principal and/or Superintendent prior to the absence being taken.

All other absences shall be considered unexcused. See CCS Board Policy JBD.

The principal or his/her designee may in certain circumstances require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.

School days missed as a result of out of school suspension shall not be counted as unexcused for the purpose of determining truancy but shall be counted as unexcused for all other purposes.

In keeping with the regulations set forth in State Law, students shall be marked present at school when the following conditions are met:

1. When a student is serving as a page in the Georgia General Assembly, that student shall be credited as present by the school in which he/she is enrolled for days missed from school for this purpose.
2. A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school. However, parents/guardians must submit written notice to the school.

The Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law can be found at **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1**. CCS adheres to the following procedures.

- Parents are requested to submit an email or written note to the school stating the reason for the absence within 3 school days. Parent emails will only be accepted from the parent email address(es) identified in Infinite Campus. This will be considered a parent note. If a note is received after 3 school days from the absence, it will be an unexcused absence.
- The emailed excuse should be sent to: 9th-12th: cmsattendance@calhounschoools.org
- Up to 10 absences a year can be excused with a parent note. Only medical notes will be accepted thereafter.
- Students sent home by the school nurse will be excused for that day.
- When absent, it is each student's responsibility and obligation to obtain the assignments and complete the work as directed by the teacher.

- A school staff member may contact any student absent for more than 3 consecutive days or 5 total days whose parent/guardian has not provided information about the reason for the absence.
- After 5 unexcused absences, a student is considered to be truant from school. Georgia law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 requires a letter be sent to parents that gives the possible consequences for students and parents for any further unexcused absences.
- CCS procedures for unexcused absences are as follows:
 - 5 unexcused absences - parent notified by letter as required by law.
 - 7 or more unexcused absences - referral to school social worker. School Social Worker may hold an attendance meeting and/or make a home visit.
 - 10 or more unexcused absences -SSW may refer to the Truancy Treatment Team (TTT).
 - Additional unexcused absences following TTT - a referral may be made to Juvenile Court for Educational Deprivation or Truancy.
 - Students who have been referred to TTT in previous years may be referred directly to Juvenile Court.

In the event of a pandemic or other community health concern, attendance guidelines will be modified to accommodate recommendations from the Health Department and/or Center for Disease Control. Any changes to the attendance guidelines will be communicated via social media, website, and/or remind notices.

Middle/High School

Early Checkouts:

- Are considered tardies and treated as tardies.
- A note must be sent from home and turned in to the office before 1st block with the name and phone number of the parent. Parent number in Infinite Campus may be called to verify
- Emails will be accepted from the parent email on file only for early checkouts related to an emergency. Parent number in Infinite Campus may be called to verify. A parent/guardian must be contacted to verify the checkout request. A doctor's note or parent note explaining the emergency must be submitted the next day the student returns or it will be considered unexcused.
- Checkouts after 2:30 PM will be highly discouraged.

Tardies and Early Dismissals: Students are expected to be punctual to school and to class. Students are considered tardy to school in the morning when they are not seated in homeroom at 8:45 AM. When late for school, a student must report to the attendance office before going to class in order to obtain an admission slip. Any student who is tardy or leaves school early more than 10 times (regardless of excuse) during a school year will not be eligible to receive a perfect attendance certificate. Ten or more unexcused tardies will be considered a discipline issue. After a student has been tardy/ checked-out early from school fifteen days, the parent/guardian may be notified by mail or contacted by the school social worker. Once a student has reached 20 unexcused tardies/early check outs, a referral may be made to the Truancy Treatment Team (TTT) or juvenile court taking into consideration the student's attendance history.

Being Counted Present: In order to be included in the daily count, students must be present at school for a portion of the school day equal to or greater than one-half of the school day as measured from the morning tardy time (8:45 AM) to the first dismissal time (3:15 PM). This means that a student must get to school before 12:00 PM or leave after 12:00 PM in order to be counted as present for that day. A student who spends the majority of the day in the nurse's office or in a non-participatory setting will not be counted present.

Leaving Campus: Regardless of how a student arrived to school, upon arrival, a student may not leave campus for any reason without the permission of an administrator. All students leaving school must be properly signed out in the Attendance Office. Leaving campus without proper check out will result in disciplinary action.

ATTENDANCE AND SCHOOL CLIMATE PROTOCOL COMMITTEE

A message from Calhoun Gordon County Attendance Protocol and School Climate Committee:

Now more than ever, it is important for your child to be at school. Children who are frequently absent without an excuse not only miss important instruction, they and their parents are subject to serious consequences. Since unexcused absences are the issue, it is important to understand what an excused absence is. Acceptable excuses for being absent from school may be found in Georgia Code O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1; Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-5-1-.1; or local School Board Policy.

A written note explaining the reason for the absence must be given to the school within a specified time period upon the student's return to school or the excuse is considered invalid. Medical excuses may be required by the school consistent with the school's policy.

Arriving at school late or checking out early from school is considered tardy. Please review the school's policy on how unexcused tardies accumulate into unexcused absences.

After five unexcused days in a school year, any unexcused absence is considered a violation of the compulsory school attendance law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1.

Penalties for parents of children with unlawful absences if prosecuted in Superior Court can include:

- Being fined no less than \$25 and no more than \$100 per unexcused absence after the fifth day; Serving community service hours;
- Serving jail time for the parent, guardian, or person having control of the school-aged child not to exceed 30 days per unexcused absence beyond the fifth day; or
- Any combination of those consequences.

Penalties for parents of children with unlawful absences if prosecuted in Juvenile Court can include:

- Protective Order with possible consequences to include fines, jail time; a combination of both; and/or a referral to the Department of Family and Children's Services.

Students 12 and older may also be placed on juvenile probation. Most importantly, students may fall behind in school work and/or fail his/her class.

The Attendance Protocol and School Climate Committee hopes that raising public awareness of the importance of school attendance will result in fewer unexcused absences and higher student achievement. Please contact the school if you need assistance with attendance related issues. Signed acknowledgement of receipt of this notification is required of parents and students. Please return the attached signature form to the school office.

Adopted June 1, 2021 by the Members of the Calhoun/Gordon County Attendance Protocol Committee