

**TERRELL COUNTY BOARD POLICY**  
**Student Absences and Excuses**

**Descriptive Code: JBD**  
**Date: 3/12/2012**  
**Rescinds Code: JBD**  
**Date Issued: 7/14/1997**

**Definitions**

**Parent** - In this policy, other policies and publications of the Terrell County School System: the term parent refers to the authorized parental authority for the student. This includes, but is not limited to the parent, guardian, foster parent, case manager, adult or emancipated student.

**Authorized Parental Authority** - Authorized parental authority refers to the individual or agency who has been designated by the student's parent, the court or other legally authorized party to make school related decisions for the student.

**A. Attendance** -In accordance with state law, all children between the ages of 6 and 16 are to be in regular attendance in public school, private school or home school, unless their mental or physical condition justifies their being excused. Designated school staff shall verify the enrollment and attendance of students enrolled in Terrell County School System and verify that other resident children are enrolled in private schools, home schools or transferring to other systems. The attendance officer or other staff are authorized by the Board to monitor attendance, investigate failure to enroll and/or attend school, assume temporary custody of children absent from school and follow through with appropriate reporting action, in accordance with state laws, local and state board policies.

**B. Truant** -any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than 5 days of unexcused absences from class or school. OSS days do not count toward a truancy related charge. However, when a student chooses to leave school instead of accepting an ISS assignment, his/her absences will be unexcused and will count toward truancy.

**C. Student Attendance Protocol** - procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with parents and guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for procedures relating to tardiness. In responding to student attendance issues, the Terrell County School System shall comply with Terrell County's Student Attendance Protocol and all other requirements of state law and State Board of Education rules.

**D. Student Attendance Protocol Committee/Team** - a committee/team established by the chief judge of the superior court of Terrell County for the purpose of ensuring coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school, and to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this state. Terrell County Board of Education and Terrell County School System staff shall fully and actively participate in planning, implementation and evaluation activities of the protocol committee, as outlined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.2.

**E. Excused Absences** -Absences (including tardies and early checkouts) which meet the following criteria may be determined excused by the school administrator, based on documentation received, within 3 school days of student's return to school.\*

- 1) Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others.
- 2) Serious illness or death in student's immediate family, necessitating student's school absence.
- 3) Court order or order by governmental agency, including pre-induction physical exam for service in armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- 4) Observing religious holidays, which necessitate absence from school.
- 5) Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- 6) Visiting with parent (or legal guardian) who is in military service (in the armed forces of the United States or National Guard) about to be called to duty for, or is on leave from and will return to overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. (Up to 5 school days, per school year)

\*Absences (including tardies and early checkouts) will be determined excused or unexcused, by the school administrator, based on his/her receipt and approval of required documentation which is submitted, by the person authorizing/allowing the student absence.

Student will receive credit for make up work and final course grade of student will not be penalized because of absences validated as excused if all make up work is completed satisfactorily and submitted in a timely manner.

Student will be subject to grade reduction or 0 for any work not made up satisfactorily or in a timely manner.

Principal may grant approval of an excused absence for a pre-approved legitimate educational or other valid reason (necessitating absence from school) such as, but not limited to voting, registering to vote, visiting a college or vocational school. Student may be required to provide written/printed documentation or submit a completed assignment regarding the absence.

**F. Other Absence:** A student shall be counted present when serving as a page of the Georgia General Assembly.

**G. Parent Permission for Unemancipated Minor to Drop Out**

Administration will follow requirements of State Board Rule, 160-5-1-.28 code JBC Section (2)(b)2.(ii).

**H. Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences: Notification**

- 1) Schools will provide to each resident and non-resident student (for the student and parent/guardian) a written summary of attendance requirements and possible consequences and penalties for non-attendance. The student and his/her parent will be asked to sign and return a statement verifying their receipt of the information.
- 2) The schools will provide notices regarding student attendance as required by Georgia law and State Board Rule.