

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The Irwin County Board of Education recognizes the importance of school attendance in attaining an education and expects students to be at school each day. Attendance is recorded in a student's permanent school record and the total days absent from school are recorded on all student transcripts.

### **State of Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law**

1. 20-2-690.1 Mandatory education for children between ages six and 16.
2. Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within this state have control or charge of any child or children between their seventh and sixteenth birthdays shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, or a home study program; and such child shall be responsible for enrolling and attending a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program...
3. ...under such penalty for noncompliance with this subsection as is provided in Chapter 11 of Title 15, unless the child's failure to enroll and attend is caused by the child's parent, guardian, or other person, in which case the parent, guardian, or other person alone shall be responsible; provided, however, that tests and physical exams for military service and the National Guard and such other approved absences shall be excused absences.
4. Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not to exceed \$100.00 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or both, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part shall constitute a separate offense.
5. Local school superintendents in the case of private schools or home study programs and visiting teachers and attendance officers in the case of public schools shall have authority and it shall be their duty to file proceedings in court to enforce this subpart. (Ga. L. 1945, p. 343, & 1, 10; Ga. L. 1969, p. 682, & 1; Ga. L. 1971, p. 264, & 1; Code 1981, & 20-2-690; Ga. L. 1983, p. 3, & 16; Code 1981, & 20-2-690.1, enacted by Ga. L. 1984, p. 1266, & 1.)

### **Attendance and Truancy Guidelines**

Irwin County schools are taking the following actions to encourage school attendance and to discourage truancy:

1. A written excuse from a physician, parent or guardian, stating days missed and reason for absence shall be provided to the school by the **third** day after the student returns to school after an absence.
2. Compulsory Attendance Ages: "between 6th and 16th birthdays." Official Code of Georgia Annotated O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 requires any person in this State who has control or charge of a child between the ages of six and sixteen to enroll and send that child to school including public, private and home schooling. However, if a child is under 6 and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he/she is then subject to the compulsory attendance laws (20-2-150(C)).
3. Under and by virtue of the school laws of this state, you are required to cause the continuous attendance of said child/children in a school. Failure to do so make you liable to the penalties provided therein. Violation of the law is a misdemeanor, and violation makes you subject to a fine of \$100.00 or 30 days in jail, or both at the discretion of the Court. Each day of absence from school in violation of this law shall constitute a separate offense.
4. Regular school attendance is mandated by the state and necessary for students to make adequate progress each year. As we are committed to each child's mastery of all essential skills, we will continue to closely monitor absences, tardies, and early checkouts.

We are asking our local law enforcement officials to take an active role in questioning school-age students whom they see on the streets or in other public places during the day who are not accompanied by a parent/guardian. These officials are being asked to return truant students to their appropriate school where school administrators will provide appropriate discipline.

### **Driver's License and Learner's Permit – Certificate of Attendance**

A Certificate of Enrollment, required for a State of Georgia learner's permit and driver's license, is issued by the Attendance Officer. To qualify for a Certificate of Enrollment, the student must be currently enrolled in Irwin County Schools and must not be under expulsion from school .

### **ICHS Attendance Policy**

#### **1. Excused Absence/Unexcused Absence**

In accordance with Georgia State Law, a student absence is **excused** when:

- a. The student is personally ill.
- b. A death or serious illness occurs in the immediate family.
- c. Attendance conflicts with a religious holiday celebrated in the family.

- d. Mandated by order of governmental agencies (ex. by court order).
- e. A student whose parent/guardian is in military service, and such parent/guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment in a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five school days per year for the day(s) missed from school to visit with his/her parent/guardian prior to deployment or during leave.
- f. Absences for “personal reasons” are considered **unexcused**.
- g. The attendance secretary will accept only original doctor’s excuses. No faxes or copies of doctor’s notes will be accepted.

2. **Non-Instructional Extracurricular Events**

Georgia standards allow students to be excused from a class for school-sponsored, non-instructional events ten (10) days per year. These events must be part of the Irwin County High School extracurricular program of a sports team, club, or other officially recognized group such as band or chorus. Any student representing Irwin County High School in an administratively approved activity is counted as present in school.

3. **Unexcused Absences**

- a. After a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences in a school year, a letter shall be mailed from the school to the parents/guardians regarding absences.
- b. After a student accumulates five (5) unexcused absences in a school year, a referral shall be made to the School Social Worker and a meeting may be required with the student and parents/guardians to review the student's attendance history.
- c. An attendance contract may be issued and signed as an intervention strategy. The attendance contract would be a binding agreement between the student, parent, and the school.
- d. After a student accumulates seven (7) unexcused absences in a semester, possible consequences may include, but are not limited to, the following: Warrant issued for Parent and/or child, DFACS Referral, Parent/Student Meeting with administration, Referral to other services as appropriate (e.g. Mental Health, Parenting classes, etc.) and/or appearance before an Attendance-Appeal committee to determine credit.
- e. Students and their parents and/or guardians must be prepared to provide a clear explanation as to the reasons surrounding the student's excessive unexcused absences. At such time, the school’s designee shall reiterate the consequences for excessive absenteeism.

4. **Excessive Absences - Parent/Guardian Notification of Non-Credit**

- a. **Students in grades 9-12 who miss more than seven (7) days (Unexcused/OSS) in any block or more than fourteen (14) days in any yearlong class will not receive credit for that class.**
- b. A call out system will be utilized at the end of each school day notifying parents of any absences that occurred during the school day.
- c. Attendance letters will be mailed to the address given on file in the school data base prior to the seventh (7th) absence. On the seventh (7th) absence in a semester, a letter of possible non-credit will be mailed to parents/guardians. These letters will be for excused and unexcused absences.
- d. Failure to receive these written notices does not absolve parental responsibilities in complying with attendance policies and rules.

## 5. Attendance Appeals Process

- a. An Attendance Appeals Committee shall be established by the building administrator. In the event of prolonged absences due to extenuating circumstances, the student, parents, or guardian may request the Attendance Appeals Committee to review their case.
- b. The Attendance Appeals Committee shall be comprised of an administrator, counselor, school social worker, teacher, or any other person the principal feels necessary who has information for the Committee to consider.
- c. The Attendance Appeals Committee shall meet as the building administrator deems it necessary and must meet upon the request of a parent or student. Minutes will be kept of all attendance hearings.
- d. Parents/guardians will be advised in writing of their right to appeal the committee's decision to the Superintendent.

## 6. Attendance Hardship Hearings

- a. The ICHS Attendance Appeals Committee will conduct Attendance Hardship Hearings each semester to determine hardship for students with more than seven (7) unexcused absences.
- b. **After seven unexcused absences**, only a physician's or health care provider's medical documentation or court documentation will be accepted. Notes from home will not be acceptable.
- c. A student with more than seven (7) unexcused absences or OSS in any block or more than fourteen (14) in any yearlong class will not receive credit for that class. Parents/students may file a request for hardship consideration and a waiver of the attendance policy by completing an *Attendance Hardship Application Form* prior to the hearings.
- d. The student and parent have the right to attend the hearing and may request to be present. The committee will consider waiving the attendance policy if a hardship is determined to be evident following a review of the student's attendance/tardy record, excuse notes on file, sign-ins and sign-outs, and any other record the committee considers pertinent in rendering a fair decision. Students with unexcused absences will not find favorable review with the committee and *any additional written excuses will not be accepted at the time of the attendance hardship hearing*.
- e. Any student denied credit for classes due to excessive absences will be notified by mail of the committee's decision. Parents and their student have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent if they believe the absences were due to extenuating circumstances and if none of the absences were the result of suspensions or verified truancy.

## 7. Admittance Slips

- a. Upon returning to school after an absence, the student **must report to the attendance secretary before school begins at 7:45 - 8:05 AM** to obtain an admittance slip to class.
- b. A written note from home with the following information should be given to the attendance secretary.
  - Student's name
  - Date of absence
  - Detailed explanation of absence
  - Parent/Guardian name and signature
  - Parent/Guardian home/business phone number for verification of the note
- c. The criteria listed in **number 1** will be the basis for giving the student an excused admittance slip. If a student visits a doctor, dentist, or clinic, it would be in the student's best interest to bring a note from the doctor.
- d. Any student who presents a forged note for check-out or admittance back into school will receive 2 days ISS and their parent/guardian will be required to personally check them out and in after an absence for the remainder of the year.
- e. A student has three (3) school days after an absence to present a written note to the office and the excuse from the office to each classroom teacher. No note will be accepted after the three days, thus rendering the absence unexcused for the semester.

## 8. Tardy

- a. **Tardy to school:** A student who arrives at school after the tardy bell will report to the designated area. If a student is more than 15 minutes late to his/her 1st block class, the student is counted as absent for that class. The criteria listed in number 1a and extenuating circumstances approved by the principal will determine an excused absence or tardy. Any student who receives an unexcused absence or tardy will be assigned to lunch detention. Upon the sixth (6th) unexcused tardy, parking privileges will be suspended for at least thirty (30) school days.
- b. **Tardy to class:** A student is tardy when not in his/her assigned place at the scheduled time for the class to begin. All tardies will be documented for office attendance records.
- c. Tardy violations will be handled as follows:
  - 1st offense: Warning.
  - 2nd offense: Warning.
  - 3rd offense: Detention.
  - 4th offenses: Timeout and/or loss of driving privileges
  - 5th or more: Mandatory parent meeting

- d. After a student accumulates ten (10) unexcused tardies, a letter shall be sent from the school to the parents/ guardians requiring a meeting with the School Administration. Failure to attend this meeting may result in a referral to the School Social Worker.
- e. After a student accumulates fifteen (15) unexcused tardies, a letter shall be sent from the school to the parent/ guardian requiring a meeting with the District Level Attendance Review Committee. Failure to attend this meeting may result in a referral to the School Social Worker.

9. **Checking Out During the Day.**

Parents/Guardians should make an effort to avoid taking students out of school prior to the official dismissal time. Excessive check-outs will be monitored by the attendance secretary and reported to administration.

- a. **If a student misses more than 15 minutes** of a class block, the student will be considered absent for that class.
- b. A student who needs to leave school early must be checked out in person by a parent/guardian or an authorized person listed on their student information sheet. Upon returning to school, the student must present an admittance slip for class blocks missed on the day of early dismissal.
- c. The safety and well-being of our students is our first concern. Thus, any student who wishes to check out because of illness must first see the nurse for a note permitting check-out. If the nurse is not available, then administrative approval is required. The secretary in the office will contact the parents/guardians by telephone before the student will be allowed to sign out. Upon returning to school, the student must bring a written note from home (**see 4 b**) and obtain an admittance slip for class blocks missed on the day of early dismissal.
- d. Students must have a note from their teacher to go to the office. **To leave school during the day, at any time and for any reason, a student must be signed out through the office.**

10. **Makeup Work**

- a. Only students with **excused** absences will be allowed to make up work.
- b. **On the day they return to school, it is the responsibility of the students themselves to make arrangements with their teachers for makeup work.**
- c. Makeup work must be completed within 3 days after returning to school if no other arrangements have been made between the student and the teacher.
- d. Assignments, projects, or tests announced prior to the student's absence and due on the day the student returns to school are to be fulfilled by the student unless the teacher makes an exception.
- e. Students attending an approved field trip must make arrangements to complete any assignments **before going on the trip** unless otherwise approved by the teacher involved.
- f. The student should plan to stay **before or after school** to do makeup work in the presence of the teacher unless the teacher makes an exception.
- g. Students with an **unexcused** absence in a class will receive a grade of "0" for that day's class work.
- h. Students suspended from school are not allowed to make up work and their absences are considered **unexcused**.
- i. Teachers will apply the handbook policies on attendance and makeup work in determining student grades.

11. **Hospital Homebound Program**

**O.C.G.A. 160-4-2-.31 (effective 11/24/09)** - academic instruction and other services provided to eligible students who are confined at home or in a health care facility for periods of time that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is treating the student for the presenting diagnosis.

- a. HHB Services are available to students who need to be absent from school for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive days because of a non-communicable disease or illness.
- b. HHB Services must be requested through the school office by the student and parent/guardian.
- c. A completed written medical referral form signed by a licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented must be submitted to the LEA for HHB services to be considered.
- d. Following approval of HHB services, a meeting will be required including the student, parent/guardian, administration, and all classroom teachers to develop an Educational Service Plan (ESP), discuss services and expectations. The ESP shall include a school re-entry plan.
- e. A student who is on the Hospital Homebound Program is counted present in school. Work is assigned by the classroom teachers.