

ATTENDANCE/TARDIES

Buford City Schools require students to be in attendance in accordance with requirements of the compulsory attendance law. Absences shall be considered excused only if they comply with legal requirements established by the State of Georgia and the State Board of Education.

- Georgia State Law O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-690.1 and the Georgia Department of Education State Attendance Rule 160-5-1-.10 defines “Truant” as “any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than **five days** of unexcused absences”. Parents/Guardians will be notified by phone or certified letter by the school when a student has accumulated 5 unexcused absences.
- Under Ga. Law §20-2-690.1, it is mandatory for a parent to ensure that their student(s) attend school and is punishable by fine not to exceed \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of the penalties. Each day’s absence from school in violation of this law shall constitute a separate offense. Other possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply could include but not limited to the student being placed on juvenile probation, student deprived from home, student serve time at the Youth Detention Center, and/or possible denial or suspension of a driver’s license for a student.
- The Georgia Department of Education State Attendance Rule 160-5-1-.10 and section JB of the Buford City Schools Board of Education Policy states that students will be excused from school under the following circumstances, as a minimum.
 1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student’s health or the health of others.
 2. A serious illness or death in a student’s immediate family necessitating absence from school.
 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. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
 5. Students will be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
 6. Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
 7. 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.
- In addition, appropriate medical documentation will be required following the tenth absence for the purpose of validating the absence as an excused absence.
- Students are required to be in attendance on each day that school is in session. When a student is absent from school, he or she must be marked absent in the official attendance register maintained by the classroom teacher. The school is required to contact a parent or guardian EVERY TIME that a student is absent.

- When a student is absent from school, the parent/legal guardian must send a written note to the school within two (2) school days upon the student's return from the absence, acknowledging each date of absence. This note is required, even if the parent/legal guardian calls the school to inform the principal or teacher of the absence. The review of this note by the school will determine whether the absence is a valid (excused) absence according to the criteria noted above, or whether the absence is unexcused and considered to be a truant absence.

Buford City Schools Attendance Protocol

- A. Parents/guardians and students are required to sign a compulsory attendance law letter within 30 days of enrollment. This letter includes a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance laws.
- B. School personnel will attempt to contact parents/guardians each time a child has an absence. All contacts are documented.
- C. School personnel will attempt to contact the parent/ guardian when the student has 5 unexcused absences. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent/guardian without response, a certified letter with return receipt requested will be mailed. All contacts are documented.
- D. School personnel will notify the parent/guardian of students ages 14-18 when the student has 7 unexcused absences via a letter to the student's home address. The letter outlines the consequences of unexcused absences, informs the parent/guardian that if the student reaches 10 unexcused absences, the school will make a report to the state, at which point the student will not be eligible to obtain or keep a driver's license. All contacts are documented.
- E. Teachers will refer any student with 5 absences, excused or unexcused, to the school counselor; the counselor meets with the student and contacts the parent to encourage better attendance and offers support.
- F. Counselors will refer any student with 8 absences, excused or unexcused, to the school social worker. The school social worker may send a letter to the parent/guardian, contact the parent/guardian via telephone, or may visit the home directly to encourage better attendance and offer support. If absences continue, the student may be referred to the Truancy Intervention Panel for additional support.
- G. By June 15 of each school year, the school social worker will send a second letter to the parents/guardians of those students who had 15 or more absences during the previous school year referencing the importance of good attendance and offering support.

Excused Absences:

Written justification (signed by a parent or guardian) must be submitted for any absences. A parent phone call will not qualify as an excused note. In compliance with Georgia Law, all pupil absences shall be classified as unexcused or illegal except for those reasons specified by state regulation. Students will provide notes for excused absences to designated personnel before first period. **Only physician's notes will be accepted as excused absences once the student has reached the five (5) day limit.**

Verification must be provided within two (2) days of returning from the absence in order to receive credit for excused makeup work and exam exemptions. ALL NOTES SHALL BE

SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION Excused Absences Include: Personal illness, death or illness in the immediate family, religious holidays, instance where attendance by the student would be hazardous, one to register to vote, prearranged absent approved by the administration in advance, serving as a page in the general assembly, medical appointments. All 11th and 12th grade students will be allowed 2 college days for visitation. These will be excused absences. Absences must be verified by using the written form provided by the BHS guidance office.

Unexcused Absences:

Definition: The definition of an unexcused absence is “absence from school with or without parent’s consent for reasons other than those considered excusable.”

Makeup Work:

- A. The highest grade that can be given for a student with an unexcused absence is a 70.
- B. Students are responsible for making up all work missed due to absences.
- C. Students absent only one day are expected to turn in or take any pre-assigned work or test the day that they return.
- D. Students will have two days per consecutive day absent to complete makeup work. For multiple absences, the makeup deadline may be extended.
- E. Assignments or tests that are not made up by the specified time, receive a grade of zero (0).
- F. Work must be made up before or after school, not during a regular class period.
- G. Students who are suspended out of school are responsible for making up all work during absences. Students that are serving an out of school suspension will follow the same guidelines as a student who has an excused absence.

Attendance on Day of Extracurricular Activity:

For participation in an extracurricular activity, a student must be present at school four periods of the school day or at the discretion of an administrator.

Check-In Procedures:

Any student who comes to school after the school day has begun must go to the front office for an admit slip before being admitted to class.

Checkout Procedures:

- A. Prearranged checkouts require that a note from parents be brought to the main office before the start of the school day (stating student’s name, time of checkout, the reason, and a telephone number where a parent can be reached).
- B. Checkouts not prearranged must be verified by telephone (main office) by a parent/guardian before a student leaves campus.

Emergency Checkout Procedures:

A student who becomes ill will secure a hall pass from his present teacher, and the office will call his parent. Students will not be released from school without permission of some responsible person. The decision to check the student out or leave him at school must be made by the parent/guardian. The legal liability here is absolute. All students checking out of school must sign out in the office.

Tardies:

A student is tardy if he/she enters a class after the tardy bell has finished ringing. Parents/guardians will be notified of chronic problems concerning tardiness. Consequences for tardy procedures will be based on cumulative tardies (not per period). Students will begin receiving consequences beginning with their fourth tardy. Consequences will begin at Step 2 of the BHS Disciplinary Scale.

SUGGESTIONS TO PARENTS FOR PROMOTING GOOD STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Make school attendance a high priority in your home! Every day is important...from the first day of school to the last day of school!

At Home:

- Discuss the importance of daily attendance and academic achievement with your student(s).
- Get your student to school on time.
- Arrange for transportation or child care as needed.
- Ensure that your student has school supplies, uniforms (if required), etc.

Maintain good communication with the school and teacher(s):

- Provide updated and accurate emergency contact information.
- Make sure your student's medical/immunization records are up to date.
- Monitor your student's daily school attendance.
- Meet with your student's teacher on a regular basis.
- Sign and return all contracts and letters from the school in a timely manner.
- Attend parent/teacher/student conferences as needed.

Handle absences responsibly:

- Know the *Georgia School Code's* legitimate reasons for absence. Reasons are listed earlier under Georgia Department of Education State Attendance Rule 160-5-1-.10.
- Call the school within 30 minutes of start time if your student is going to be absent.
- Send a note that briefly explains the absence, when your student returns to school within two (2) days.

Understand and follow the Buford City Schools attendance policy:

- Attend truancy intervention panel if no other remediation efforts have been successful.
- Assist your student in his/her compliance with the panel's recommendation.

Play an active role in the education of your student:

- Know what is going on in your student's life at school and elsewhere.
- Alert school personnel if you become aware of problems in the school or problems that are otherwise out of your immediate control.