



Hays CISD Attendance Expectations:

1. Any student served by the school district is considered enrolled in the district.
2. A student must be in attendance for at least two hours to be considered present for one-half day and for at least four hours to be considered present for one full day.
3. These time limits refer to instructional time, not including lunch, homeroom, passing periods, or other non-instructional time.
4. Every student enrolled in the Hays CISD school district is expected to attend school ***every day school is in session.***
5. Students are expected to arrive at school ***on time*** and are expected to ***go to every class.***
6. Students are expected to ***be in attendance during the full day of instruction, from the time school begins until the school day ends.***
7. Please check with the individual campuses for school start times.

Student attendance is regulated by Texas law, the Texas Education Code and HCISD Board policies, including:

1. [Texas Education Code Chapter 25 - Admission, Transfer and Attendance](#)
2. [Attendance: Compulsory Attendance](#)
3. [Attendance: Attendance Accounting](#)
4. [Attendance: Attendance for Credit](#)
5. [Attendance: Attendance Enforcement](#)
6. [Hays CISD Student Handbook](#)





Every Minute Counts

Students miss over 375 instructional minutes each day they are absent from school. Hays CISD is committed to partnering with parents to ensure the success of our students. Campus and district administrators are proactive in providing support and resources for families, so that attendance is a priority. Please do not hesitate to contact your school if there are barriers that keep your student from coming to school or you need assistance with improving your student's attendance.

Texas law requires students ages 6-19 to attend school each day when instruction is provided. This also applies to students who are younger than six and have previously been enrolled in first grade, and to students younger than six who are voluntarily enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten.

A student must be in attendance for 90% of the days a class is offered. If the student is not in attendance 90% of a class is offered, they may not be given credit or a final grade unless the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal or the school attendance review committee to meet the instructional requirements of the class.

Missing School Means Missing Out

Texas law requires students to ***be in attendance at least 90% of the time*** in order to receive credit for the semester.

90% means a student cannot miss more than eight days in a semester for a class that meets every day. Students in A/B classes cannot miss more than four days.

Attendance can be a better predictor of whether students will graduate from high school than test scores.

Students who are chronically absent in elementary school will not likely read at grade level by third grade and/or struggle the rest of their academic school years in middle and high school.

Parents/guardians can check their student's attendance through the **Parent Self-Serve Portal** using the computer. If you forgot your password, click on "forgot password" and you will receive an email to reset your password.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

Excused Absence Examples

- Required court appearances
- Documented healthcare appointments for the student
- Mental health or therapy appointments
- Activities related to obtaining US citizenship for the student
- College visits (Juniors and Seniors only, two per year)
- Death of an immediate family member
- UIL Activities





- Personal illness of the student (school accepts 4 parent notes before a doctor's note is required)

*****Appropriate documentation must be provided**

Unexcused Absence Examples

- Family vacations, trips, cruises
- Leaving campus during class or lunch period without authorized permission
- Oversleeping
- Babysitting for family members
- Translating for family members
- Missing the bus
- Car trouble
- Absence without written notification from parent/guardian
- Wedding/graduation ceremonies

Attendance Contracts

- Attendance contracts will be required of students who have excessive (10% or more) absences *from the previous school year*.
- Students who are on attendance contracts will be closely monitored for absences.
- When the student has accrued ten absences, either excused or unexcused, the principal *may require doctor's notes for any additional absence*.

Checkouts during the school day

- A parent or guardian who checks out his/her student during the school day needs to be aware that the absence may not be excused.
- Unexcused parts of days due to checkouts will be used to file truancy charges against the student and/or parent/guardian.
- Students who are checked out during the school day will be required to make up the missed class work.
- High School students who are checked out during the school day will be required to make up the hours missed.
- Parents of high school students who drive their own car to school must notify the attendance office in writing (fax, email or hand-written note) that the student is leaving school.
 - This absence may not be excused, depending on the circumstance.

Early checkouts at the end of the day

- Early checkouts after 1:30 PM for Pre-Kindergarten students will be excused only if verified documentation is presented to the attendance office. *Checkouts without a valid reason will not be excused.*

- Early checkouts after 2:00 PM for K-5 students will be excused only if verified documentation is presented to the attendance office. ***Checkouts without a valid reason will not be excused.***
- Early checkouts after 3:00 PM for 6-12 students will be excused only if verified documentation is presented to the attendance office. ***Checkouts without a valid reason will not be excused.***
 - Examples of verified documentation that are considered valid reasons are dentist appointments, doctor's appointments, counseling or therapy appointments, etc.
 - Examples of reasons that will not be excused are leaving to beat the traffic, leaving to go to a football game, student doesn't want to be at school, student doesn't like the class, etc.
 - A parent or guardian who checks out his/her student early, before the official dismissal time for the campus, needs to be aware that the absence may not be excused and that the absence may be used to file truancy charges against the student and/or parent.

Vacations

- Family vacations need to be taken during scheduled breaks, as listed on the official Hays CISD school calendar.
- Texas Statute does not allow a student to be absent from school for vacation during instructional days.

Attendance Appeals Process for loss of credit (HCISD board policy FEC local)

- When a student's attendance drops below 90 percent but remains at least at 75 percent of the days the class is offered, the student may earn credit for the class by completing a plan approved by the principal.
- This plan must provide for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class as determined by the principal.
- If the student fails to successfully complete the plan, or when a student's attendance drops below 75 percent of the days the class is offered, the student, parent, or representative may request an award of credit by submitting a written petition to the Campus Attendance Committee.
- Petitions for credit may be filed at any time the student receives notice but, in any event, no later than 30 days after the last day of classes.
- The attendance committee shall review the student's entire attendance record and the reasons for absences and shall determine whether to award credit.
- The committee may also, whether a petition is filed or not, review the records of all students whose attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered.
- Students who have lost credit because of excessive absences may regain credit by fulfilling the requirements established by the attendance committee.
- A parent or student may appeal the decision of the attendance committee in accordance with HCISD board policy FNG (Local) beginning at Level Three



Attendance Tips for Parents

The academic success of every student enrolled in Hays CISD is important. Daily school attendance and arrival on time are critical to this success. By attending school each day, students receive the benefit of teacher-led instruction, peer discussion, building each day's learning on the previous day's instruction, participating in a variety of school activities and the opportunity to grow as individuals.

Make attendance the priority: An absence is an absence, no matter if it is excused or unexcused. Students on a block schedule are only permitted four absences per semester.

Communicate with us: Parents should call the day of the student's absence and follow-up with a parent's note the following day. For students on a block schedule, if a student has excessive absences (four or more) per semester, a doctor's note will be required. All absences not cleared within 24 hours of the student's absence will require a doctor's note within the same six weeks.

Monitor Parent Self-Serve Portal: Parents and students are encouraged to check your child's daily attendance and grades through Parent Self-Serve Portal.

Avoid scheduling conflicts: Schedule medical/dental appointments during non-school hours and plan your trips/vacations according to the district school calendar.

Update your contact information: We will do our best to communicate with you, so it's important that you provide your current address and phone numbers to the school via Parent Self Serve.

Get organized: Getting to school can get easier by helping your child develop morning and evening routines, such as laying out clothes, packing a backpack the night before and arranging transportation to/from school.

Truancy Guidance

What does it mean that my student is truant?

School attendance is not a choice, *it is the law*. If a student is absent without an excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the district will file truancy court proceedings on parents/guardians and/or the student for violation of the Texas Compulsory Attendance Law. If students/parents/guardians don't obey the truancy court's orders, they could be found in contempt of court and have to pay a fine.

Fines range from \$100 to \$500 per day that student remains truant.

Other results of truancy are:

- Loss of Verification of Enrollment - *VOE* form required for a driver's education permit
- The truancy court may also order a suspension or delay of the student's driver's license or permit
- Parents/students may have to participate in counseling, special classes or community services.



What can I do to prevent Truancy?

- Always advise your school when a student plans to miss a school day.
- Monitor your student's daily attendance
- Request conferences with the school personnel
- Update your home address and emergency contact information.
- If you have any concerns regarding the accuracy of your student's attendance, contact the school's attendance office.
- Ensure that your student arrives at school on time, attends each class period and avoids early releases/pick-ups from school unless there is an extreme emergency.
- If your child is changing schools, always formally withdraw them within 24 hours. If you leave your student enrolled, and you move, the accumulated days will harm the students' attendance.

What to do if you receive a truancy warning letter regarding your child's attendance?

When you receive a warning letter, *please contact your students' truancy officer to set up a meeting at your earliest convenience.* If you receive a warning letter, take steps to avoid future unexcused absences.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if my child is absent?

Students who have been absent must present a written excuse from the parent or guardian within three days. The three-day period begins on the day the student returns to school. All absences require a doctor's note and/or a parent's written note. A parent note will only excuse four consecutive days. In addition, a parent may only submit 10 notes in a school year for absences.

What should I do if I believe my child's attendance is not accurate?

Discuss the concern with your child and verify this information with your child's teacher. If these steps do not resolve your concern, contact the attendance clerk at your child's school.

I can't afford to take my child to the doctor every time they are sick. What should I do?

If your child is not feeling well, you can take them to school at the normal arrival time and let the nurse look at your child. If the nurse believes your child needs to stay home, it would be an excused absence for that day.

What is the 90% rule?

According to Texas state law and Board policy, a student is required to be in attendance at least 90% of the days school or classes are offered. If a student misses *more than 10% or approximately 18 days* of school, they must make up class time or they will not earn credit for class or a final grade. If the class is a semester long, the number is reduced to, on average, 8 days of missed school.



When is a child considered truant?

A student engages in truant conduct if the student is required to attend school under TEC 25.085, and fails to do so. If a student fails to attend school without an excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year and those absences have been verified by the campus as unexcused, the student and/or their parents/guardians may be referred to truancy court.

Why did I receive a letter about attendance and truancy?

If you receive a letter from your student's school, it is because attendance records show that the student has absences without an excuse on three (or more) days or parts of days in a four-week period. This is also when the campus will implement truancy prevention measures for the student. The warning letter and truancy prevention measures are required by law to assist students and parents and to prevent schools from filing with the court for compulsory attendance.

May an absence be deemed excused but still be used to file truancy charges?

Texas Education Code Section 25.091 provides that a complaint or referral for failure to attend school is to be filed after a student has a certain number of absences "without excuse." Section 25.087 requires that certain absences be excused and provide that a student's absence may be excused for "any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent."

What is the education law that states how many days of school students are expected to attend and how many days they can miss before they are held back?

Texas school districts are required to provide at least 180 days of instruction (Section 25.081, TEC). However, some districts have a waiver from the Commissioner of Education allowing them to substitute a few of those days for teacher professional development days. To receive credit for class, a student is required to attend school for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered Section 25.092, TEC. Students with excessive absences may restore credit as provided by local policy.

Is Kindergarten required in Texas?

A child is not required to attend school unless he or she is at least six (6) years old on September 1st of the school year. Enrollment in Kindergarten is not required. However, if a child is enrolled in Kindergarten, regular attendance is required. If the child has too many unexcused absences while enrolled, compulsory attendance charges may be filed. A parent who enrolls a child in Kindergarten may choose to withdraw the child at any time during the school year.





What laws, policies, or guidelines must a school district follow in determining which school in its district a child should attend?

Section 25.031, Texas Education Code, empowers the school board to “assign and transfer any student from one school facility or classroom to another within its jurisdiction.” The locally elected board makes that call with a few exceptions in districts that continue to be covered by a federal desegregation order. A parent can petition for a transfer under Section 25.033, but the final decision rests with the board.

What options does a school district have in dealing with parents who do not have their children immunized?

Admission to a school is not allowed until records are produced showing that (1) the child has been immunized in accordance with state immunization rules; (2) the child has an exemption from immunization in accordance with state immunization rules; or (3) the child is entitled to provisional enrollment. Provisional enrollment applies to (1) students transferring from one Texas public or private school to another; (2) students who are homeless according to the federal McKinney-Vento Act; or (3) students who have begun requiring immunizations and are receiving them as quickly as medically feasible. For more information about immunization requirements, you may visit <http://immunizetexas.com/> or contact the Immunization Division Customer Service team at (512) 458-7284 or (800) 252-9152.

What are the policies for a student being absent for several days for educational purposes, but not a school function?

Absences for purposes of college visits are addressed in Section 25.087 (b-2), Education Code. Otherwise, whether the absence would be excused and under what conditions would be determined by local policy.

At what age may a student drop out of school?

A child who is under 18 years of age is required to attend public school. There are several exemptions from this requirement. A primary exemption is for students who are enrolled in a private or parochial school, including a home school.

Another primary exemption applies to students who are at least 17 years of age and are either enrolled in a GED (high school equivalency) program or have received either a high school diploma or GED certificate. The statutes stating the compulsory ages of attendance and the exemptions from attendance are Sections 25.085 and 25.086 of the Texas Education Code.

If a child is required to attend school and fails to do so, criminal charges may be brought against the parent under Section 25.093 or against the student under Section 25.094 if the offense is a





Class C Misdemeanor. There is some information on this topic in the attendance section of the Administrator's Letter <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/taa/legal081710-2.html>.

Is a pregnant student still allowed to attend public schools?

A student is entitled to enroll in Texas public schools based on residency in the district, regardless of pregnancy. Federal law also prohibits discrimination in an educational program on the basis of pregnancy.



Meet Our Attendance Team

Gladys Rodriguez

Attendance Intervention Specialist

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512-268-2841

Supports:

- Dropout Prevention
- Intervention and Recovery
- Leavers

Campuses:

- FES
- KES
- TES
- SES
- BMS
- DMS
- Impact
- LOA

Iris Velasquez

Attendance Intervention Specialist

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512-268-2141

Supports:

- Dropout Prevention
- Intervention and Recovery
- Leavers

Campuses:

- HES
- UES
- SMS
- WMS
- LHS

Jennifer Leija

Attendance Intervention SpecialistII

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512-268-2141

Supports:

- Dropout Prevention
- Intervention and Recovery
- Leavers



Years of Experience: Starting my 25th year in HCISD

Previous Experiences:

- Mental Health Specialist/Center Supervisor-Austin Oaks & SMTC - 6 years
- Program Manager - SCAN Emergency Youth Shelter-Laredo, TX - 3 years
- Female Population Coordinator- Youth Village, Juvenile Probation- Harris County - 3 years
- Disaster Crisis Counselor-Texas Department of MHMR- 1year
- Juvenile Case Manager Travis County - 1 year



Years of Experience: Starting my 9th year in HCISD

Previous Experiences:

- Family/Individual Counseling - Greater San Marcos Youth Council
- Case Manager – Community Action



Years of Experience: Going into 9th year as AIS, 17 years with HCISD

Previous Experiences:

- C&I Secretary-Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability
- Secretary - Executive Director of Elementary and Secondary Education and Director of Student Services
- Allied Health Careers-Student Services/Career Services





Campuses:

- TGES
- CHES
- PES
- MMS
- JHS

Jennifer Narvaiz

Attendance Intervention Specialist

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512-268-2141

Supports:

- Dropout Prevention
- Intervention and Recovery
- Leavers

Campuses:

- CES
- CRES
- SHES
- CMS
- HHS

Dr. Brian Dawson

Director of Student Services

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Supports:

- Dropout Prevention
- Intervention and Recovery
- Leavers

Campuses:

- BES
- BVES
- EGES
- NES

Laura Crutchfield

Administrative Assistant to the Director of Student Services

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512-268-2141



Years of Experience: 25 years working with at-risk youth, 14 years with HCISD

Previous Experiences:

- Family and Individual Counselor at the Greater San Marcos Youth Council
- Program Coordinator at Seguin Youth Services
- Pre-Op and surgery coordinator for a General Surgeon



Years of Experience: Starting my 28th year

Previous Experiences:

- 1st and 5th grade teacher
- Reading Specialist/Instructional Coach
- Assistant Principal - Middle School - 4 Years
- Principal - 7 Years Elementary /7 Years Secondary
- Professor - Huston-Tillotson University - 7 Years (preservice teachers)
- Principal Coach/Ex. Director. of Learning Community - 4 Years



Years of Experience: 14 years

Previous Experiences:

- Principal Secretary - Impact Center (10 years)
- Admin Assistant, Associate Commissioner of Standards and Alignment - TEA (1 year)
- Administrative Assistant, Director of Special Programs - TEA (3 years)

