



# GRIFFIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

We look forward to seeing our students, each and every day. We understand that this isn't always possible. While vacations are not encouraged during regular school days, we ask that you please try to schedule them with consideration for the school calendar when possible, and try to schedule appointments outside of the school day when possible.

Regular attendance is a key factor in a child's academic success. Regular attendance is when a student attends more than 95% of the academic school year; this means a student would miss no more than 10 days of school in a 180-day school year regardless of the reason; excused absences and unexcused absences combined.

The Florida Legislature finds the association with poor academic performance and nonattendance to be so important that each school district must take an active role in promoting attendance as a means of improving student performance. The state also finds that early interventions are the most effective way of producing good attendance habits that will lead to improved student learning and achievement.

If your student must miss school, be sure to submit an excuse note within 10 school days. Medical notes and court documents are always acceptable with signature verification. All excuse notes may be hand delivered to the front office, uploaded directly to FOCUS via Parent Portal, or emailed to [gmsattendance@leonschools.net](mailto:gmsattendance@leonschools.net). Please allow at least 48 hours to excuse the absence before contacting the school.

Reasons for an excused absence must fall within one of the following categories:

- **Illness** – The student is home sick for no more than 3 days. A medical note is requested if the sickness causes the student to be absent more than 3 days of school within a 10-day school attendance window.
- **Medical care** – Parent must request note from physician's office or medical facility.
- **Appointments** – Parent must provide documentation from the medical or service provider.
- **Death/Bereavement in the family** – Documentation required.
- **Religious holiday** – Parent must submit a pre-excused absence request form)
- **Financial and other special circumstances that are insurmountable conditions** – Natural disaster, or other situation substantiated by a local official, state official, or federal government agency)

- **Pre-arranged absence for an educational purpose** – Parent must submit a pre-excused absence request form for approval.

### Pre-excusing an Absence

If you know, in advance, that the student will be out for an event, with documentation, we can pre-excuse the absence(s). Stop by the front office for a form that requires signatures of the student's teachers and the designated school administrator.

### **SIGNING STUDENTS OUT**

All students need permission from parents or guardians to sign out. The individual picking up the student **must** be listed as an emergency contact in FOCUS.

- To sign out and pick up your child, please report to the front office. Make sure you have your state-issued photo ID available to provide to the front office staff.
- To have the absence excused, follow the steps above.

### **SIGNING STUDENTS OUT OVER THE PHONE**

To ensure the safety of all students, we prefer that students be signed out in person. If there is an emergency and you have to sign out a student over the phone, please be prepared to verify your identity with the front office. Once we have validated your identity, we will call the student to the front office. The student will enter their Student ID number and be checked out of school. Once they are checked out, they must leave campus immediately.

### **My student was marked absent. What do I do?**

This means your student was not physically in class. The student should contact their teacher regarding makeup work via email or upon their return to school. If you think this was a mistake, please contact the teacher first, then contact the attendance office.

### **What do the attendance codes in FOCUS mean?**

A - Absent (Unexcused until excuse note is received)

E - Excused Absence

L - Late (arrived at class 10+ minutes after the tardy bell)

P - Present

R - Tardy Unexcused

T - Tardy Excused

V - Signed out Early (Excused Absence)

Y - Signed out Early (Unexcused until excuse note is received)

### Truancy

- **STEP 1:** Students with five or more unexcused absences within a thirty-day period, will be issued an official attendance letter generated by FOCUS. The letter will be emailed to the parent(s). Make sure your email address is current in Parent Portal/FOCUS. If there is an issue with emailing the letter, the letter will be given to your child to bring home. At least one of the student's teachers will also be reaching out to discuss attendance.
- **STEP 2:** Students with 10 unexcused absences will also have a letter generated by FOCUS, and emailed to the parent. If there is an issue with emailing the letter, the letter will be given to your child to bring home. The parent should expect at least one of the student's teachers to contact them to discuss attendance

- STEP 3: Students with 15 or more unexcused absences within a ninety-day period, are considered truant. An official letter documenting this truant status will be generated in FOCUS and sent to the parent(s) via certified mail. At least one of the student's teachers will reach out to discuss the truant status. The assigned school administrator will schedule an attendance conference with the parent(s) and student toward resolving the attendance issue. The student will be offered an attendance contract
- STEP 4: If attendance shows no improvement, the assigned administrator forwards the case to the Leon County Schools Office of Intervention Services.

For assistance with questions regarding attendance, please contact the school at (850) 617-5353.