

## **COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AGES**

### **I. COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGES**

Except as provided by law, every child in the state is required by state law to attend public or private school from the child's seventh (7th) birthday until his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday, unless the child graduates prior to his/her eighteenth (18th) birthday. Any child below the age of seven (7) who legally enrolls in school shall also be required to attend school. If a child in these age brackets was a resident of this parish when school opened and enters school late without having attended another public or private school or approved home study program during the current school session within or without the parish, a statement should be secured from the parents or guardian giving the reasons why the child has not been in school. If these reasons are not satisfactory, the matter should be referred to the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance, who may find it necessary to refer it to the proper court.

### **II. EXCEPTIONS TO COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE**

- A. The only exception to the attendance regulation shall be the enumerated extenuating circumstances that are verified by the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. Students shall be temporarily excused from the attendance regulation for the following reasons:
1. Extended personal physical or emotional illness in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a physician or nurse practitioner licensed in the state;
  2. Extended hospital stay in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a physician or dentist;
  3. Extended recuperation from an accident in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner licensed in the state;
  4. Extended contagious disease within a family in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a physician or dentist licensed in the state; or
  5. Observance of special and recognized holidays of the student's own faith;
  6. Visitation with a parent who is a member of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard of a state and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. Excused absences in this situation shall not exceed five school days per school year;

7. Any minor employed to perform or render artistic or creative services under a contract pursuant to statutory provisions.
- B. For any other extenuating circumstances, the student's parents or legal guardian must make a formal appeal in accordance with the due process procedures established by the Child Welfare and Attendance Office.
- C. Children granted excused absences for the above reasons shall be allowed to make up any school work which was missed or failed to be completed during the prescribed time. In such instances, the student's grade will not be given until the makeup work has been completed.

### **III. WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL PRIOR TO THE EIGHTEENTH (18) BIRTHDAY**

- A. The parent, tutor, or other person responsible for the school attendance of a child between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) who is enrolled in school may request that the student be allowed to attend an alternative education program or a vocational-technical education program.
- B. Compulsory attendance does not apply to any child who is under the age of seventeen (17) and is attending or seeking admission to a National Guard Youth Challenge Program in Louisiana.
- C. The compulsory attendance law does not prohibit a student who is at least 16 years of age and who meets the criteria established by BESE from attending an adult education program approved by BESE. A parent, tutor, or other person responsible for the school attendance of a child who is at least 16 years of age but under age 18 and who is enrolled in and is fulfilling the attendance requirements of an adult education program that is approved by BESE shall be considered to be in compliance with the compulsory attendance law.

### **IV. FAILURE TO COMPLY**

Failure to abide by the compulsory school attendance laws of the state may result in a referral to Families in Need of Services (FINS) which is a state mandated program or to the District Court with jurisdiction.

LEGAL REF.: LA.R.S. 17:221, 17:226, 17:226.1, 17:233

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Lafayette Parish Public Schools, Louisiana