



Dear Families,

Our district's administrative team created this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to help with the understanding of the change in the laws for attendance. As a district, we are committed to supporting our students and families while working together for the best interests of our students, staff, and schools. Please review this document and reach out with any questions. We look forward to partnering with you.

Greene County CSD

[Senate File 2435](#) was signed into law on May 9, 2024 with an effective date of July 1, 2024. Division VII of SF2435 details public school attendance requirements. [This link](#) provides a summary of district responsibilities

- 501.9A: Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy Regulation

FAQ:

1. Why do we have these new attendance laws?

SF 2435 was passed as law on May 9, 2024 with an effective date of July 1, 2024. In follow up to the passing of code, the Iowa Department of Education provided guidance to school districts in Iowa in August. We wrote our policies to be in compliance with these expectations.

2. What ages fall under this policy?

Children who are at least six (6) years old and under age sixteen (16) by Sept. 15 are of compulsory attendance age. The provisions of the law apply to this group in terms of communication with the County Attorney, design of plans, etc. However, the District is required to report the attendance to the state for all students enrolled regardless of age.

3. What is the definition of an excused absence and an exempt absence?

An excused absence means the school has determined the absence reason is legitimate and will not impose any school-based disciplinary action. An exempt absence means the absence is exempted from the Iowa Code and will not be counted toward the chronic absenteeism law. Please note an absence can be considered excused, but not exempt from State Code.

4. What is defined as a term at Greene County CSD?

GCCSD defines a term as a semester (1/2 of the school year).

The 2024-25 Greene County CSD semesters are as follows: *Exact dates are subject to change with school/weather cancellations.

- Semester 1: Aug. 23 - Jan. 9
- Semester 2: Jan. 13 - May 22

5. My student wants to attend state basketball to cheer on their friends. Is that an excused absence?

Per Iowa Code and Iowa Department of Education guidance, attending activities events as a spectator is not exempt. Our District will track these absences as required by the state and they will count toward chronic absenteeism. However, the absence will be excused by the school if reported by a parent/guardian, and we will not impose any additional school-based consequences.

6. Are family funerals an excused absence?

A recent change to the state guidance notes that exempt religious services may include: holiday services, weddings, *funerals* and other celebrations of life, and other rite of passage religious services.

7. We have a family vacation planned. How does that impact my student's attendance record?

Per Iowa Code and Iowa Department of Education guidance, family vacations are not exempt. Our District will track these absences as required by the state and they will count toward chronic absenteeism. However, the absence will be excused by the school, and we will not impose any additional school-based consequences. Please notify your student's teachers in advance of your vacation, so they can make a plan for your student to complete their school work.

8. Will keeping my child home due to a religious holiday be considered as exempt?

Students who are absent from school for religious service, holiday, or instruction will be considered absent, but will be considered excused and exempt from chronic absenteeism laws.

9. My student isn't feeling well, but it doesn't warrant a doctor's visit. Do I need to make an appointment to get a note?

A note from a health care provider is not required for every health-related absence, however, documentation from a provider will indicate if the absence is medically exempt per state code.

10. What does it mean for my student's attendance record if the nurse sends them home sick?

When a nurse sends a student home for health-related reasons, the absence will be considered medically exempt. A medically exempt absence will still be recorded as an absence but will be considered excused and exempt from chronic absenteeism laws.

11. My student has a planned surgery (i.e., tonsillectomy). Will that count against their attendance record?

With a doctor's note, this would be considered a medically exempt absence. A medically exempt absence will still be recorded as an absence but will be excused and exempt from chronic absenteeism laws.

12. If I have to pick my student up early for an appointment, are they considered absent for the full day?

At the secondary level, a student who leaves early for an appointment will be considered absent for the period(s) they miss.

13. My student has recurring appointments (i.e., physical therapy, counseling, specialist). Does each appointment require a doctor's note, or can I bring in one note for the year?

It may be possible for recurring doctor appointments to be outlined with one note. Please speak with a building administrator regarding your specific situation.

14. Who do I give a doctor's note or other documentation to, and when?

Doctor's notes can be given to the building secretary, nurse, or an administrator either prior to the absence or upon return.

15. What is the District doing to help families comply with these policies?

If families need support from school personnel to help them with strategies to comply with these policies, please contact your school's administrator or counselor.

16. Where can I see my student's attendance record?

You can see your student's attendance record by logging into the Infinite Campus Parent portal [here](#). You can also access Campus Parent through an app available on smartphones or devices. For questions about your login information contact Emily Gannon gannone@greenecountycsd.net

17. What if my child has a health condition noted in their 504 or IEP?

If a student has a health condition that requires a 504 or Health Plan, or has medical conditions clearly noted in an IEP that may result in absences from school, you do not need to request doctor's notes for absences related to that health condition. We can accept the medical information that is submitted as part of the 504/IEP/Health Plan as documentation of associated illnesses.

Scenarios Provided by the Iowa Department of Education

A student is present per SF2435:

- Participating in state athletic competition, show choir, college visit, art show, attending community college course, CTE placement, school-directed/supervised activity (e.g., FFA Conference, art show, class trip), medically homebound but completing work

A student is absent and not exempt per SF2435:

- Family vacation, "out of town," helping family (e.g., planting, harvest, working shift at family business), arrived to school then skipped classes, student is not at school and there is no parent contact or the parent does not give a reason, watching classmates in competition, car trouble, vehicle accident

A student is absent, but potentially exempt per SF2435 based on information/documentation provided:

- Planned medical treatment, medical appointment, home ill, family member medical emergency

A student is absent but exempt per SF2435:

- Religious service, holiday, or education, or funerals/rite of passage services, court-directed activity, jury duty, IEP that restricts attendance, Section 504 plan that restricts attendance