

2020-2021
Elementary School Handbook
Grades K-8



HARRISON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

11072 Highway 49 • Gulfport, MS 39503 • 228-539-6500

- B. The aggrieved student or superintendent may request a conference prior to the time a decision is rendered.
- C. The superintendent shall render a decision to the aggrieved student within twenty (20) days after receipt of the appeal.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE CHILD

The Mississippi Code defines a "compulsory school age child" as a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program.

Section 12 of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act includes the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law. Children age 5 on or before September 1 of the calendar year that have enrolled in public Kindergarten are subject to the provisions of the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law. Please see the attendance section in this handbook for attendance requirements.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated based on their homeless status. A student verified as homeless will be enrolled immediately in the school area in which they are actually living. If the student should remain in the school of origin, transportation will be provided to and from the school. If the student is unaccompanied, the district liaison will assist the transportation director in making the determination, if it is not in the best interest of a child to remain at the school origin, the district will coordinate with the other LEA to determine the best interest for the child. Parents will receive written explanation of the decision and notification of their right to dispute and appeal if they disagree.

FOSTER CARE

The district will ensure that children in foster care remain in their schools of origin unless it is determined to be in the student's best interest to change schools. Should a school transfer become necessary, the district will coordinate with the receiving school to ensure enrollment without delay.

ASSIGNMENT TO SCHOOLS

The school board shall determine the attendance area, and each pupil whose parents or guardians reside in the area served by the Harrison County School District must attend the school to which he/she is assigned. The Harrison County School District accepts only students, who physically reside full-time, weekdays/nights and weekends, within the limits of the school district with the following exception: the child of an out-of-district school employee is eligible to attend school in the district, based on the mutual consent of the school boards.

Each student must have on file at his/her assigned school a verification of residency form as required by state law. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a student seeking to enroll must provide the school district with at least two documents as verification of their address, except that a document with a post office box as an address will not be accepted. If the residence of a student changes, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be required to provide the school with at least two documents of verification of the new address.

A student who is expelled or suspended by another school district and who subsequently applies for admission to the Harrison County Schools may not be eligible to enroll in any Harrison County School until he/she is eligible for readmission to and has actually attended classes in his/her previous school following suspension or expulsion (Harrison County School District Policy Book, code JBC).

INTRA-DISTRICT TRANSFERS

Requests for a student to attend a district school, other than the school the student is zoned to attend, must be submitted by the parent or legal guardian. The request must be in writing.

on a form supplied by the district, to the principal or designee of the receiving school. Requests will be considered on a space-available basis. Students must pre-register and complete final registration for the school in their assigned attendance area pending approval of a transfer request. Should the request be approved, the parents/guardians will be responsible for the student's transportation to and from school. If discipline, tardiness, or attendance becomes an issue, the student may be transferred back to the school he/she is zoned to attend. If building capacity is reached with attendance area residents, transfer students will be asked to return to their school of origin.

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR GRADES K-8

The Harrison County School District encourages daily attendance of students. The Board of Education of the Harrison County School District classifies all absences in grades K-8 as unexcused except for the following reasons:

1. Illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
2. Isolation ordered by county health officials or the State Board of Health.
3. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family (defined as parents, grandparents, brother, sister, including stepbrother and stepsister, child, or spouse).
4. Required appearance in court or an administrative tribunal.
5. Observance of religious events.
6. Medical or dental appointments that are approved by the administration prior to the absence, except in case of emergency.
7. For K - 7th graders, valid educational opportunities approved by the administration prior to the absence. ("Prior to" approval forms will be available in the principal's office of each school. The student or the parent may pick up these forms.)

An absence is excused when the absence results from the compulsory-school-age child's attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee.

Upon the child's return to school after an absence, he/she will be required to present a written excuse signed by the parent or guardian. The number of days that can be excused with a parent's note is limited to ten (10) days. The teacher must receive this excuse within two school days after the absence, or it will automatically be considered unexcused or at the discretion of the principal after 2 days. Telephone calls regarding absences are not acceptable. Additional verification may be required if it is deemed appropriate.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate making up all work with his/her teacher. A student will receive a zero (0) on work not made up. Zeros shall not be given to students who have been suspended or are awaiting Alternative School Placement/Behavior Modification.

The following procedures will be used to notify the attendance officer of the Harrison County Family Court of a violation of the compulsory school attendance law:

1. Fifth (5th) unexcused absence (excluding suspensions)
Attendance officer will be notified.
2. Tenth (10th) unexcused absence (excluding suspensions)
Attendance officer will be notified.
3. Twelfth (12th) unexcused absence (excluding suspensions)
Attendance officer will be notified.
4. Harrison County School Attendance Officers will have access to all student attendance records.

Students who arrive late or who are checked out early a total of six (6) times during the year will not be eligible to receive a perfect attendance award at the end of the school year.

House Bill 1530 provides that a compulsory-school age child who is absent more than 37% of his/her instructional day must be considered absent the entire day. HB 1530 requires that students must be present 63% of the individual student's instructional day as set by local