

JAMES S. RICKARDS HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT AND STUDENT ATTENDANCE GUIDE



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Attendance Records

Expectations of Rickards Teachers

1. Record Attendance in Genesis Daily by 3pm (Official Record)
2. Use only the identified codes (A, L, R, or T)
3. Contact parents before attendance problems arise
4. Print a roster or request that a roster be printed when you are absent for the substitute
5. Update attendance immediately when returning from an absence
6. Do not allow students to sign-in for attendance (low accuracy/validity)
7. Communicate with a student's next-period-teacher **before** keeping him/her after the bell rings to dismiss students
8. Check your attendance records and update as necessary before the end of each nine-weeks.

Attendance

Scholars in grades 9-12 are expected to be in school for 180 days. Absences from school/class must be documented by the attendance office in order to be classified as an excused absence.

At James S. Rickards High School, we encourage parents/guardians to send the student to school the day following an absence with documentation that gives the reason for the absence. If it is a note, it should be signed by a parent, and include accurate contact information so that the school may verify the absence. Parental documentation of the absence may also be faxed to the school.

Commonly Used Attendance Codes

A	Unexcused Absence
B	Skipping; Unexcused Absence
C	Clinic; Excused Absence
D	Detention; Administratively excused absence
E	Excused Absence
F	Field Trip; Administratively excused absence
G	Religious Holiday; Excused Absence
H	Hospital Homebound Services
I	Illness; Excused Absence (parental note for illness received)
L	Late (More than 10 min. tardy to class); Unexcused Absence
M	Medical Excuse; Excused Absence (Doctor's note received)
O	Out of Class; Administratively Excused Absence
R	Unexcused Tardy (Every 4 th "R" is recoded as Late "L")
S	Suspension; Administratively Excused Absence
T	Excused Tardy
Z	Successful Attendance Appeal; Administratively Excused Absence

Teachers record student attendance using only the highlighted codes. All other codes are recorded by the Attendance Clerk or the Attendance Administrator.

Examples of excused absences:

- **Illness or Medical Care (A parent must sign out the student);**
- **Death in the family;**
- **Legal requirements;**
- **Religious holidays;**
- **School sponsored field trips, school approved activities, or prearranged absences/tardies approved by the school administration; or**
- **Financial or other insurmountable conditions**

College Visits

College recruitment trips should be scheduled when school is not in session. Administrative permission may be granted for a planned program schedule for a specific day or if the student has a pre-planned appointment, with a specific college administrator, verified in writing. **A pre-arranged absence form will need to be submitted to the attendance office with attached documentation.**

Religious Holidays

Each student who is requesting permission to be absent from school due to religious holidays must complete the religious holiday observance exemption form ***in advance*** of the holiday. These forms are located in the Student Affairs Office. A list of religious holidays recognized by Leon County School is available on the James S. Rickards web site.

Driver's License

Students between the ages of 14 and 18 who accumulate 15 unexcused absences within 90 calendar days may become ineligible for driving privileges. For more information, contact the attendance administrator or your local Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Office.

Withdrawal

Any student 16 years or older who accumulates 10 or more unexcused absences in one semester may receive a notice to declare termination of school enrollment. The parent and student are requested to sign the declaration.

If the student or parent does not provide appropriate documentation the day the student returns to school, the documentation can be provided at an Attendance Conference at the end of the 9-week grading period.

Examples of Unexcused absences:

- **Returning to school without producing documentation of the absence within 3-days**
- **Skipping – Absent from class without an excuse**
- **Late – Reporting to class more than 10 minutes after the scheduled start time**
- **Not signing out in the attendance office before leaving for appointments, illness, etc.**
- **Leaving class without permission**

Every attempt will be made by the school to notify parents/guardians on a daily basis after each unexcused absence to request an explanation for the absence. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide written documentation for excused absences. On the third absence, the school will send a letter to the last known address of the parent/guardian to inform him/her of the absences. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school of any change of telephone number and/or address. The attendance office should be contacted either prior to or immediately following any absence.

Students with Excessive Absences

Following the third and prior to the fifteenth unexcused absence the principal or his/her designee shall take the following steps in an attempt to bring about compliance with compulsory attendance laws and policies:

- Written notice is sent to parent/guardian informing them of required compliance
- If non-compliance continues, written notice is sent to parent/guardian informing them of a required meeting with school officials to discuss compliance.
- If non-compliance continues, written notice is sent to parent/guardian informing them of educational counseling to determine if a curricular change or an alternative placement is indicated.
- If non-compliance continues, written notice is sent to parent/guardian informing them that an educational evaluation, which may include a psychological evaluation, will be conducted.
- The principal/designee shall refer the student and family to district staff and Intervention Services and CINS/FINS provider upon accumulation of fifteen or more unexcused absences in ninety calendar days.
- The principal/designee shall refer the student and family for the Superintendent to initiate possible criminal prosecution when it has been determined that school resources have not been sufficient to bring about compliance.

TARDINESS TO CLASS

Students are expected to be on-time and prepared to begin class when the tardy bell rings.

- A student is **Tardy** if he/she arrives unexcused (without a pass from a staff member) to class up to ten minutes after the start time of class.
- A student is **Late** if he/she arrives unexcused (without a pass from a staff member) to class **more** than ten minutes after the start time of class. **This is calculated as an “unexcused absence”.**
- Excessive **Lates** and **Tardies** can cause a student to fail a course(s). On the **fourth** Tardy in a grading period, every unexcused tardy is coded on a teacher’s roll as a Late. **A Late is an unexcused absence.**

Consequences for tardies:

- 1st Verbal or written warning from teacher
- 2nd Detention during lunch or after school as assigned by teacher
- 3rd In-school suspension or Saturday school from a referral written by teacher
- 4th + The tardy is recorded as “late” for that class and In-School Suspension or Saturday school will be required. An unexcused tardy marked late will be considered an unexcused absence.

ATTENDANCE CONFERENCE

Upon the fourth absence and subsequent absences in a class for a nine-week grading period, an attendance conference may be held with the parent/guardian and student. In order to appeal an unexcused absence, the student and parent must request a hearing by completing and submitting an Attendance Conference Application available at the school. This conference is designed as a final appeal of unexcused absences for the 9-week grading period. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide written documentation of absences from a doctor or recognized agency. Legal proceedings or other relevant information may be attached to the application when it is submitted and may be accepted in lieu of an attendance conference provided all absences are included.

The attendance conference may not be necessary if written documentation for each absence is submitted to the attendance office. Other circumstances made known to attendance office may also make the conference unnecessary. This decision will be made by the principal or his/her designee and the school will notify the parents if the conference is not necessary. The school will make every effort to schedule conferences at a time convenient to parents, including evening hours when necessary.

- One administrator or designee and two teachers will hear and rule on the appeal.
- The parent will be notified of the decision in a timely manner.
- Teachers will be notified of the decision in a timely manner.
- The principal may overrule the findings of the attendance committee should special circumstances occur or excuse any student from any consequence arising from recorded absences.

ATTENDANCE IMPACT ON GRADES

A student with absences and/or lates totaling four (4) shall be assigned a grade of "F" for that 9-week grading period for that class if any absences or lates are unexcused, subject to a parent/guardian conference. Students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences per semester must earn a passing grade on the semester examination in order to be eligible to receive credit in that course.

Examples:

- If James has 3 excused absences in his 4th period class and one unexcused absence, he fails the class because he has four total absences with at least one being unexcused.
- If Cynthia has 1 excused absence and 2 unexcused absences in her 3rd period class, she does not receive an attendance failure because she has three (3) total absences.
- If Jada has 5 tardies to 5th period class and 2 unexcused absences, she will receive an attendance failure because the 4th and 5th tardies were recorded as lates by the teacher and each are considered unexcused absences.
- If Chad makes a "C" in his 2nd period class for the first 9-week grading period with 2 unexcused absences, an "D" for the second 9-week grading period with 12 unexcused absences, and makes an "F" on the semester exam; then he has made himself ineligible to receive credit in the course because of the 2nd grading period attendance failure, and the fact that he has more than 10 unexcused absences during the semester.