

“Model” (example) Student Attendance Protocol

Definitions for Student Attendance Protocol

Tardy (the following definitions for “tardy” are *only examples*)

Elementary School – A student is tardy to school when he/she arrives after the _____ a.m. bell.

- On the fourth & subsequent tardy in any quarter, lunch-recess detentions will be assigned.

Middle & High School - A student is "tardy to school" when he/she arrives at school after the _____ a.m. bell.

- When a student arrives to school after one half or more of first period has elapsed, he/she will be considered absent from first period, as well.

Tardy to Class - A student is "tardy to class" when he/she arrives to class after the tardy bell.

Excused tardy - includes events that are physically out of your control such as: an accident, road closed due to an accident, power outage, etc.

Unexcused tardy - includes over-sleeping, traffic too heavy, errand for parents, delayed at train crossing, etc.

1. On the fifth and subsequent tardy in a quarter, detentions (or other consequences) will be assigned.

2. On the eight and subsequent tardy in any quarter, the student will be required to attend Saturday School.

Truant – any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences.

Exception for suspension

School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Excused Absences

Local boards of education shall adopt policies and procedures excusing students from school under the following circumstances, as a minimum.

In the case that a student's personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others, local boards may require students to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence. With proper verification a student may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction (S.B.O.E. Rule 160-4-2-.31);

In the event of a serious illness in a student's immediate family, local boards may require students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.

- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
- Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
- A foster care student who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-692.2.
- A student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program shall be counted as present and given full credit for the school day during which he or she served in the STEP program. No student shall be permitted to be absent from school or participate in the STEP program for more than two school days per school year.
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone

or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.

- A student whose parent or legal guardian is currently serving or previously served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, in the Reserves of the armed forces of the United States on extended active duty, or in the National Guard on extended active duty may be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, not to exceed two school years, for the day or days missed from school to attend military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation prior to absence from:
 - (i) A provider of care at or sponsored by a medical facility of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; or
 - (ii) An event sponsored by a corporation exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code.

- Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the local school board of education to have merit based on circumstances.

Grades and Absences

Final student course grades shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met:

1. Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons.

2. Make up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily.
Local boards of education are not required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences.

The _____ Local Board of Education adopts the following policies and procedures to reduce unexcused absences.

Parental Notification

The _____ school system will notify the parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the student when such student has five unexcused absences. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense.

Notification by Certified Mail

After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian or other person who has charge of the student, the _____ school system will send written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested; and,

The _____ School system requires that all its public schools provide the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.

Statement of Receipt

By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student's enrollment in the _____ school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.

- In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local system's policy.

Truancy

The _____ Board of Education adopts, as a part of the student codes of conduct developed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735, a definition of truancy that contains the minimum standards related to student attendance and a summary of possible consequences and penalties for truancy established in state board rule (160-5- 1-.10).

The summary of possible consequences for students

The _____ School System will include possible dispositions for unruly children, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-11-67 including the possible denial of a driver's license for a child.

[Insert System Code of Conduct/Progressive Discipline Policy as it relates to Attendance]

SAMPLE LOCAL POLICY:

Excessive Absences

1. The following provisions apply to absences during a school year.
2. Days students are absent due to out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused absences for the purposes of determining truancy (S.B.O.E. 160-5-1-.10).
3. After _____ Absences:
 - a. Excused Absences: The teacher will contact the parent or guardian by telephone or parental conference regarding attendance when possible. If contact is unsuccessful, then a letter or postcard will be sent.
 - b. Unexcused Absences: After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused absence without response, the school shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by certified mail, return receipt requested. The letter is to include a copy of the Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1)
4. After _____ Absences:
 - a. Excused: A letter will be sent from a school administrator to the parent or guardian regarding attendance. This letter should not be sent for a child with documented illness unless the school's administration and/or the school social worker determines it necessary. In addition, an administrator shall confer with a School Social Worker to determine whether a referral is warranted, at this time.
 - b. Unexcused: A letter will be sent from a school administrator to the parent or guardian regarding attendance.
5. After _____ Absences:
 - a. Excused: A school administrator shall confer with a School Social Worker to determine whether a referral is warranted, at this time.
 - b. Unexcused: A referral shall be made to the School Social Worker using the social work form.
 - c. If a referral is made to the School Social Worker, an administrator must sign the form and all relevant correspondence and documentation must be attached. The Social Worker will work with the student and family in order to address the attendance problem. The Social Worker shall involve agencies and services such as mental health, social service agencies, clinic assistant or school nurse, student and parent groups, truancy panel, and Department of Family and Children Services. If the Social Worker interventions are unsuccessful, a complaint shall be filed in the appropriate court of law.

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Student Withdrawals (limitations)

The _____ School System is authorized to withdraw a student who:

Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences;

Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and

Is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Parental Notification of Student Withdrawal

The Superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance.

The _____ School System is authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance only if the local superintendent or the superintendent's designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.

Example of a Local Attendance Checklist **(Steps to be taken prior to Court referral)**

1. Before any court referral is considered, casework should have been initiated with students and their families, including a **minimum** of _____ home visits or other forms of direct contact (phone call) with the family (where a home visit is not possible or appropriate).
2. For families where there has been little or no direct contact, court referrals should be considered where the family has consistently failed to comply with appointments or refused to work with _____ (i.e., Social Services/School Personnel).
3. Court referral should also be considered
 - in cases where students are not attending school at all and no resolution can be reached;
 - in cases where poor attendance is ongoing over a period of time and no sustained improvement is seen, and
 - in certain cases where tardiness is a chronic problem.

4. The case should then be discussed with _____ and if it is agreed that court referral is suitable, the _____ should complete the court progression sheet, which is countersigned by _____ and passed to _____ who will issue a “Court Warning” letter. It is the responsibility of the _____ to ensure that copies of the letter are filed and sent to school and _____ (other agencies and/or people).
5. If, following a period of approximately 2 - 4 weeks, during which time casework is ongoing, there is no improvement, the _____ should re-submit the Court referral.
6. The _____ should provide a brief written report detailing the circumstances and work undertaken. This report should be given to the Court.
7. For Court prosecutions, the _____ will need to complete a witness statement.
8. The _____ is expected to attend hearings at the designated Court.
9. Finally, throughout the course of any legal action being taken, school system casework should continue because it is critical, particularly in cases where students are completely out of school, that truancy does not go unattended.