

HABERSHAM COUNTY

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

PROTOCOL

2005

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Student Attendance Protocol Committee Purpose and Organization

The Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 20-2-690.2 establishes a Student Attendance Protocol Committee for each county in Georgia. The purpose of this Protocol Committee is to ensure coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies, and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues; to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school; and to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this state.

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee shall be organized, as provided in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 20-2-690.2. The Chief Judge of the Superior Court of each county shall establish a Student Attendance Protocol Committee for the county. Each of the following agencies, officials, or programs shall designate a representative(s) to serve on the committee:

- The Chief Judge of the Superior Court
- The Juvenile Court Judge or Judges of the county
- The District Attorney of the county
- The Solicitor-General of State Court, if the county has a State Court
- The Department of Juvenile Justice
- The Superintendent, a Certified School Employee, a Certified School Social Worker, and a local School Board Member
- The Sheriff of the county
- The Chief of Police
- The Department of Family and Children Services
- The County Board of Health
- The County Mental Health Organization
- Family Connection
- The Court-Appointed Community Based Risk Reduction Program
- Additional members as necessary and proper to accomplish the purposes of the Committee

Each committee shall, by June 1, 2005, adopt a written Student Attendance Protocol for its county school system, which shall be filed with the Department of Education. The protocol shall outline in detail the procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of Code Section 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance. The protocol shall outline in detail methods for determining the causes of failing to comply with compulsory attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with children and their parents or guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for policies relating to tardiness. The Department of Education shall provide model school attendance protocols if requested by the committee.

A copy of the protocol shall be furnished to each agency, official, or program within the county that has any responsibility in assisting children and parents or guardians in complying with Code Section 20-2-690.1.

The committee shall write the summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance under Code section 20-2-690.1 for children and their parents, guardians, or other persons who have control or charge of children for distribution by school in accordance with Code Section 20-2-690.1. The summary of possible consequences for children shall include possible dispositions for unruly children and possible denial or suspension of driver's license for a child in accordance with Code Section 40-5-22.

The committee shall continue in existence after writing the Student Attendance Protocol. The Chief Judge of the Superior Court of each county shall ensure that the committee meets at least quarterly during the first year, and twice annually thereafter, to evaluate compliance with the protocol, effectiveness of the protocol, and appropriate modifications. Each local Board of Education shall report student attendance rates to the committee and the State Board of Education at the end of each school year, according to a schedule established by the Board of Education.

Board of Education

Habersham County Board of Education will monitor student attendance daily. Codes for attendance used in the student information system (PowerSchool) will be used to indicate excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness, and early dismissals. The Board of Education will adopt policies and procedures outlining how attendance will be monitored and addressed. Each school will create a building level procedure in accordance with this policy. Individual schools will develop attendance incentives to encourage good attendance.

Parents and guardians will be given notice of the attendance procedures, a list of excused absences, and possible consequences and penalties of excessive absences upon enrollment and registration each school year pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1. All students age ten or above as of September 1 of the school year will also receive this notice. The schools will make reasonable efforts to ensure that notice was received and understood by requesting signatures from parents/guardians and students (age 10 or older) acknowledging receipt. After two attempts to obtain signatures, a copy will be sent via certified return receipt mail.

Attendance Terms and Information

Absence:

A student is considered absent any time he or she is missing from any assigned class or school activity, with or without parent permission.

Excused Absence:

An excused absence is an absence that is the result of one of the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others. (Medical, counseling, dental, and other agency appointments that cannot be scheduled before/after school hours)
2. A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A period not to exceed one day is allowed for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. Educational trips if approved by the school administrator after the parent/guardian submits the required form.

(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 - S.B.O.E. 160-5-1-.10.)

Written documentation of absences should be turned in to the school within 3 days of an absence. Examples of written documentation include a parent note explaining a child's absence, a doctor's excuse, a hospital intake form of an immediate family member, an obituary of an immediate family member, a copy of a court order or subpoena, government documentation the student served as a page

or had a pre-induction physical examination for the armed forces. If a student has several parent notes explaining that a child has been ill, the school may ask for verification from a doctor or medical advisor.

An excused absence is required before middle and high school students can make up work. All work should be completed satisfactorily by the due dates specified by the classroom teacher. Asking for make up work is the responsibility of the students/parents.

Unexcused Absence:

Absence without a valid written excuse is considered unexcused.

For middle and high school students: Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to make up assignments for credit. Any absence in which a note has not been presented to the school by the third day after the absence will be counted as unexcused and assignments will not be made up. Students are encouraged to make up work whether or not they receive credit, in order to continue sequential learning.

Truant:

Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences is considered truant (S.B.O.E. 160-5-1-.10).

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.

Tardy:

A student is tardy when he or she is not present in the assigned class or school activity at the designated time.

Excused Tardy:

A tardy is excused when a student arrives late to school with a valid excuse (see below under “Tardies and Early Dismissals”). Other tardies may be excused at the Principal’s discretion.

Unexcused Tardy:

A tardy is unexcused when a student arrives late to school without a valid excuse. (Examples include over-sleeping, traffic congestion, errand for parents)

Early Dismissals:

When a student is checked out early before the end of the school day.

Detention:

Work/study session outside of regular school hours.

Saturday School: School is provided on Saturday for students to make up time missed during the regular school schedule due to unexcused tardies, early dismissals, and unexcused absences.

In-school Suspension:

Removal of a student from their regular classes and assignment of the student to an alternative program isolated from peers.

Out-of-school Suspension:

During the period of suspension, the student is excluded from all school sponsored classes and/or activities.

Students having out-of-school suspension will receive 0's for work missed as required by the Habersham County Board Policy JDD.

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.

Expulsion:

Permanent removal from school.

Exception:

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages for the Georgia General Assembly.

Elementary Attendance Procedures

Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parents/guardians. While the following procedures indicate the required contacts on behalf of the school, the Principal or his/her designee may, at his/her discretion, contact parents/guardians by phone, mail, or in person, at any time school attendance is a concern.

- At the beginning of the year and upon enrollment, the school will review the attendance procedures, list of excused absences and possible consequences and penalties of excessive absences with the students. This attendance information will be sent home to parents/guardians. Students 10 years old (as of September 1st) and older, and parents/guardians will sign the enrollment form indicating that they have received the attendance information. After two attempts to obtain signatures, a copy will be sent via certified return receipt mail.
- When a student has 5 absences (excused or unexcused), the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian.
- When a student has 5 unexcused absences, the school will contact the parent/guardian by phone and letter to notify them of the law, attendance procedures, and possible consequences and penalties of absences. As the law instructs, after 2 reasonable attempts have been made to contact a parent/guardian with no response, a letter will be sent via certified, return receipt mail. Parents are to be notified at each occurrence of 5 unexcused absences (5 unexcused absences, 10 unexcused absences, 15, etc). Documentation of attempts and contacts will be kept by the school.
- When a student has 10 absences (excused or unexcused) the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian.
- When a student has 10 unexcused absences, a referral will be made to the School Social Worker who will schedule an Attendance Support Team meeting with the parent/guardian and student. The school will forward as part of the referral, documentation of notification of attendance information with parent/guardian and student signatures, as well as notification to parent/guardian of the student having 5 and 10 unexcused absences.
- Further unexcused absences will result in a complaint being filed with the appropriate court.

Middle School (6th, 7th, and 8th Grades) Attendance Procedures

Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parents/guardians. While the following procedures indicate the required contacts on behalf of the school, the Principal or his/her designee may, at his/her discretion, contact parents/guardians by phone, mail, or in person, at any time school attendance is a concern.

- At the beginning of the year and upon enrollment, the school will review the attendance procedures, list of excused absences and possible consequences and penalties of excessive absences with the students. This attendance information will be sent home to parents/guardians. Students 10 years old (as of September 1st) and older, and parents/guardians will sign the enrollment form indicating that they have received the attendance information. After two attempts to obtain signatures, a copy will be sent via certified, return receipt mail.

- When a student has 5 absences (excused or unexcused), the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian.
- When a student has 5 unexcused absences, the school will contact the parent/guardian by phone and letter to notify them of the law, attendance procedures, and possible consequences and penalties of absences. As the law instructs, after 2 reasonable attempts have been made to contact a parent/guardian with no response, a letter will be sent via certified, return receipt mail. Parents are to be notified at each occurrence of 5 unexcused absences (5 unexcused absences, 10 unexcused absences, 15, etc.). Documentation of attempts and contacts will be kept by the school.
- When a student is age 14 or older and has 7 unexcused absences, the school will send a letter, as required by law, notifying the student that they have 3 unexcused absences remaining prior to violating the attendance requirements required to obtain a driver's permit or license.
- When a student has 10 absences (excused or unexcused) the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian.
- When a student has 10 unexcused absences, a referral will be made to the School Social Worker who will schedule an Attendance Support Team meeting with the parent/guardian and student. The school will forward as part of the referral, documentation of notification of attendance information with parent/guardian and student signatures, as well as notification to parent/guardian of the student having 5 and 10 unexcused absences.
- Further unexcused absences will result in a complaint being filed with the appropriate court.

Ninth Grade Academy Attendance Procedures

Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parents/guardians. While the following procedures indicate the required contacts on behalf of the school, the Principal or his/her designee may, at his/her discretion, contact parents/guardians by phone, mail, or in person, at any time school attendance is a concern.

- At the beginning of the year and upon enrollment, the school will review the attendance procedures, list of excused absences, driver's license information and possible consequences and penalties of excessive absences with students. This attendance information will be sent home to parents/guardians. Students and parents/guardians will sign the enrollment form indicating that they have received the attendance information. After two attempts to obtain signatures, a copy will be sent via certified, return receipt mail.
- When a student has 5 absences (excused or unexcused), the school will send a letter to the parent/guardian.

- When a student has 5 unexcused absences and is under age 16, the school will contact the parent/guardian by phone and letter to notify them of the law, attendance procedures, and possible consequences and penalties of absences. As the law instructs, after 2 reasonable attempts have been made to contact a parent/guardian with no response, a letter will be sent via certified, return receipt requested mail. Parents are to be notified at each occurrence of 5 unexcused absences (5 unexcused absences, 10 unexcused absences, 15, etc.). Documentation of attempts and contacts will be kept by the school.
- When a student is age 14 or older and has 7 unexcused absences, the school will send a letter, as required by law, notifying the student that they have 3 unexcused absences remaining prior to violating the attendance requirements required to obtain a driver's permit or license.
- When a student has 10 unexcused absences and is under age 16, a referral will be made to the School Social Worker who will schedule an Attendance Support Team meeting with the parent/guardian and student. The school will forward as part of the referral, documentation of notification of attendance information with parent/guardian and student signatures, as well as notification to parent/guardian of the student having 5 and 10 unexcused absences.
- If the student is under age 16 and has further unexcused absences, a complaint will be filed with the appropriate court.

High School Attendance Procedures

Punctual and regular attendance is important and expected. Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parents/guardians. While the following procedures indicate the required contacts on behalf of the school, the Principal or his/her designee may, at his/her discretion, contact parents/guardians by phone, mail, or in person, at any time school attendance is a concern.

- At the beginning of the year and upon enrollment, the school will review the attendance procedures, list of excused absences, driver's license information and possible consequences and penalties of excessive absences with students. This attendance information will be sent home to parents/guardians. Students and parents/guardians will sign the enrollment form indicating that they have received the attendance information. After two attempts to obtain signatures, a copy will be sent via certified, returned receipt mail.
- When a student has 5 absences (excused or unexcused) in a class during a semester, the school attendance officer will send a letter to the parent/guardian.
- When a student has 5 unexcused absences and is under age 16, the school will contact the parent/guardian by phone and letter to notify them of the law, attendance procedures, and possible consequences and penalties of absences. As the law instructs, after 2 reasonable attempts have been made to contact a parent/guardian with no response, a letter will be sent via certified, return receipt requested mail. Parents are to be notified at each occurrence of 5 unexcused absences (5 unexcused absences, 10 unexcused absences, 15, etc.). Documentation of attempts and contacts will be kept by the school.

- When a student is age 14 or older and has 7 unexcused absences, the school will send a letter, as required by law, notifying the student that they have 3 unexcused absences remaining prior to violating the attendance requirements required to obtain a driver's permit or license.
- When a student has 8 absences (excused or unexcused) in a class during a semester, the school attendance officer will send a letter to the parent/guardian. Students with more than 8 absences in a class during a semester will fail to earn credit for the course unless they are granted approval in an appeal. In order to meet the mandatory required hours for each course, a student may be asked to fulfill missed work and time after a semester is completed.
- When a student has 10 unexcused absences and is under age 16, a referral will be made to the School Social Worker who will schedule an Attendance Support Team meeting with the parent/guardian and student. The school will forward as part of the referral, documentation of notification of attendance information with parent/guardian and student signatures, as well as notification to parent/guardian of the student having 5 and 10 unexcused absences.
- If the student is under age 16 and has further unexcused absences, a complaint will be filed with the appropriate court.

High School Appeals

The maximum number of days a student may miss a class in one semester and meet the minimum requirement for earning Carnegie unit credit is eight (8) days, unless a waiver is granted by the Habersham Central Attendance Board of Appeals (ABA).

Initiating the appeal process is the responsibility of the student.

The appeal must be filed no sooner than 10 school days before the end of the semester and no later than the last day of the semester. Any appeal for graduating seniors must be filed on a timeline, which will allow the situation to be resolved prior to graduation.

Forms required for filing an appeal may be obtained in the main office. Completed forms should be turned in to the main office.

In order to meet the mandatory required hours for each course, a student may be asked to fulfill missed work and time after the semester is completed.

The decision of the ABA will be available on the day of the appeal.

Review Board (Attendance Board of Appeals)

The Attendance Board of Appeals will be made up of the following members:

- ❖ An Administrator (appointed by the principal)

- ❖ One Guidance Counselor (preferably grade level)
- ❖ Two Teachers (appointed by the principal)
- ❖ Consequences and Penalties of Excessive Absences

Consequences and Penalties of Excessive Absences

Parents/Guardians

- Referral to the Attendance Support Team meeting for parents/guardians of children under age 16.
- Charges may be filed against the parents/guardians if their child is under age 16 and has excessive absences.
- Judges may invoke the following consequences for each separate offense:
 - \$25-\$100 fine per unexcused absence
 - Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days
 - Community Service
 - Probation
 - Any combination of the above
- Each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense.
- If juvenile charges are filed against the student under age 16, the parents/guardians may be placed under protective order and must abide by the rules set forth by the Juvenile Court Judge.

Students

- Referral to the Attendance Support Team meeting for students under age 16.
- Students may earn poor grades and test scores resulting in being retained.
- For high school students, possible loss of course credit for students having more than 8 absences in a class during a semester.
- Charges may be filed in Juvenile Court if a student is under age 16 and has excessive absences.
- The Juvenile Court Judge may invoke the following consequences:
 - Informal Adjustment/Probation for up to 24 months
 - Detention/Placement outside the home
 - Community Service
 - Referral to a program for students and/or parents, such as Family Solutions
- Each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense.
- Denial or suspension of driver's instruction permit or license for one year or until the student's 18th birthday.

Attendance Support Team

The Attendance Support Team (AST) is coordinated and facilitated by the School Social Worker and is made up of representatives from: Mental Health, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Family and Children Services, Family Connection, Board of Education Police Department, School Administrators, Counselors, and School Nurses.

The School Social Worker will receive referrals from the school when a student has 10 unexcused absences. The School Social Worker will send the parent/guardian a written notice to attend the Attendance Support Team meeting. This required meeting will typically be held at the Habersham County Courthouse.

At the meeting, parents/guardians will be required to sign a Release of Information. The AST will review the student’s attendance, grades, and discipline record with the parent/guardian and/or student depending on the student’s age and circumstances surrounding the attendance issue. The AST will give suggestions and inform the family of referral resources when needed and appropriate.

The law and possible consequences of further absences will be discussed. A contract will be signed with the parent/guardian, student (if present), and the AST representative. Further unexcused absences will result in a legal complaint being filed.

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM CONTRACT

Student Name _____ Grade _____ DOB _____ Date _____
School _____ Parent/Guardian _____

Please check all that apply:

THE STUDENT SHALL:

1. Attend school and all assigned class periods everyday.
2. Arrive at school and every class period on time.

- 3. ___ Obey all school rules, dress codes, and behave appropriately.
- 4. ___ Complete and return all homework as directed.
- 5. ___ Comply with daily sign-in sheet procedures as directed.
- 6. ___ Participate in the following counseling and educational programs:

- 7. ___ Other: _____

THE PARENT/GUARDIAN SHALL:

- 1. ___ Get child to school everyday on time.
- 2. ___ Escort and check child in at school daily at _____.
- 3. ___ Do not remove child from school early without providing the school with a valid excuse.
- 4. ___ For all illness absences:
 - A) Provide school with written verification by doctor/medical advisor, OR
 - B) Send child to school to be checked/released if ill; OR
 - C) Call Kathleen Clement at 754-2118 ext. 18 to have a nurse do a home visit and check child.
- 5. ___ For all absences: Contact school and Kathleen Clement at 754-2118 ext. 18 to explain absences.
- 6. ___ Ensure all homework is completed and returned to school promptly as directed.
- 7. ___ Participate in the following parenting and counseling programs.
- 8. ___ Provide the school with written verification of counseling/parenting sessions attended.
- 9. ___ Have child examined/treated by doctor/medical advisor for: _____.
- 10. ___ Inform school nurse/principal about medication prescribed and taken by child on a regular basis.
- 11. ___ Attend all meetings scheduled by the school, District Attorney’s Office and Court.
- 12. ___ Other: _____

THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL OR AGENCY SHALL:

1. _____

Signature _____

2. _____

Signature _____

I understand that violations of this agreement may result in the student and parent being referred to the Legal System.

Student Signature	Parent/Guardian Signature	AST Representative
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Legal Referrals

Legal complaints may be filed against the parent/guardian and/or student for violating the Georgia Compulsory Education Law.

If the parent/guardian cooperates with the Attendance Support Team (AST) contract and school recommendations, then no complaint will be filed against the parent/guardian, even if the student continues to have absences.

If the parent/guardian does not cooperate with the AST contract and the student has continued unexcused absences, then one of the options from below will be selected by the Habersham County School Social Worker.

Option One: The School Social Worker on behalf of Habersham County Schools will request a meeting with the State Court Solicitor and the parent/guardian. The School Social Worker will call the Solicitor's Assistant to schedule a meeting.

Option Two: The School Social Worker on behalf of the Habersham County Schools will refer the case to the State Court Solicitor for prosecution.

If the parent/guardian is found guilty of violating the Compulsory School Attendance Law, the State Court Judge may invoke the following consequences for each separate offense:

- \$25-\$100 fine per unexcused absence
- Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days
- Community Service
- Probation
- Any combination of the above

If a student has unexcused absences following the Attendance Support Team meeting, and it is not solely the parent's fault, a complaint will be filed with the Department of Juvenile Justice against the student. The complaint will be filed by the School Social Worker on behalf of Habersham County Schools.

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Department of Juvenile Justice will process complaints as directed by the Juvenile Court. Upon disposition of the Court, the Department of Juvenile Justice will make necessary referrals ordered by the Court and will supervise any conditions outlined by the Court in compliance with DJJ policy.

Juvenile Court

After all reasonable efforts to resolve and address absenteeism/tardiness have been exhausted by the Board of Education, the case will then be forwarded to the Juvenile Court.

A juvenile complaint form (JUV-96-2) shall be completed by the School Social Worker or designee and forwarded to the Department of Juvenile Justice. The complaint form shall be completed with all of the student's current demographic information. Attached to the complaint will be the most current report of attendance and discipline records, as well as documentation of all efforts that have been made by the Board of Education to resolve the issue(s) with the student, parent(s) or guardian.

Upon receipt of the juvenile complaint form, the Department of Juvenile Justice shall then file the complaint with the clerk of court and schedule the case for a preliminary hearing. The Board of Education shall receive notice of the upcoming cases scheduled in the form of a court calendar. Said student, parent or guardian shall be served notification of the hearing by proper service through the clerk of court.

At the preliminary hearing, said student, parent(s) or guardian shall be advised of their right to representation prior to the proceeding. If either party chooses to seek representation, the Juvenile Court shall allow the parties to make application for appointed counsel or shall give them the opportunity to hire counsel of their choice. If representation is requested, a petition shall be filed and the case shall be scheduled for an adjudicatory hearing. All parties, including counsel will receive notification of this hearing by proper service through the clerk of court.

If representation is not requested and all parties are in agreement to proceed with the case by admission at the preliminary hearing, the Court shall make every attempt to resolve the case the day of the preliminary hearing with specifically outlined conditions for child, parent(s) or guardian to follow. The Court, after hearing and reviewing all of the evidence, documentation and testimony and taking into consideration the age of the child and circumstances surrounding the case, shall make every reasonable effort to appropriately outline very specific conditions for the student, parent(s) or guardian to follow. If issues of deprivation are disclosed, an immediate referral shall be made to the Department of Family and Children Services for investigation.

The Court may order the following dispositions in reference to the student, including, but not limited to: dismissal, holding the charge(s) in abeyance pending compliance of conditions while being monitored by the Court, informal adjustment, probation, commitment to the Department of Human Resources, commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice not to exceed sixty months, placement in an institution, placement into the Department of Family and Children Services, community service, suspension of drivers license privileges. The Court shall outline a specific time limit for which conditions are to be followed.

The Court may order the following dispositions in reference to the parent(s) or guardian, including, but not limited to: placing said parent(s) or guardian under a protective order outlining conditions for the parent(s) or guardian to follow for a period of one year or a time outlined by the Court. Extensions can be made by this Court if necessary.

If the student, parent(s) or guardian successfully follow all Court ordered conditions for the period of time specified, the Court will consider a dismissal of the case and/or termination of the supervision.

It will be the responsibility of the Board of Education to monitor attendance and cooperation of the student, parent(s) or guardian. The Board of Education will provide all agencies involved a regular report of progress. The Department of Juvenile Justice will make any referrals ordered by the Court and monitor conditions outlined by the Court, in compliance with DJJ policy of standards of contact.

Any non-compliance will be **immediately** reported by the Board of Education to the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Juvenile Court.

Upon receipt of any non-compliance, the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Juvenile Court will immediately schedule the case for review. All parties will be notified of the review by proper service of clerk of court.

If the non-compliance is confirmed by the Court as a result of the student's action(s), the Court may order any of the previously stated dispositions that would assist in establishing compliance of conditions. The Court, while considering all factors relevant to the student and case, shall continue involvement or supervision until such compliance is established. The Court shall continue utilizing progressive discipline or sanctions as needed to protect and safeguard the best interest of the student's educational future.

If the non-compliance is confirmed by the Court as a result of the parent(s) or guardian's actions, the court may punish the person(s) for being in contempt of court for willfully disobeying an order of the court. The court may impose any or all of the following sanctions: Requiring the person to make restitution in an amount not to exceed \$2500.00 for any damage caused by the child's wrongful act; impose a fine up to \$1000.00; reimbursement to the state for the cost of detention, treatment or rehabilitation of the child, require the parent or guardian to perform community service or require the

person to enter a contract or plan as a part of the disposition of any charges against the child. The Court may also use civil contempt powers to incarcerate the parent or guardian.

Any violations or non-compliance by the parent(s) or guardian occurring beyond a contempt charge shall immediately be referred to the District Attorney's office by the Juvenile Court for prosecution of the parent(s) or guardian under O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1. The office of the District Attorney shall be provided with accurate and complete documentation of every action and proceeding prior to the referral. Every agency including but not limited to: Board of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Family and Children Services, Mental Health, shall be available to the District Attorney's office for interviews, questions and/or testimony needed to adequately prepare the case for prosecution.

The School Social Worker or designee will attend court hearings and serve as liaison between the school system and the court system.

Tardy and Early Dismissal Procedures

Tardy Procedure:

Elementary School students must be checked in by a parent/guardian. Middle School and Ninth Grade Academy students are required to check in at the front office when arriving to school after the beginning of the official school day. High School students should report to their classroom teachers. Classroom teachers record and report any student who is late to school or class as tardy. Records of tardiness are monitored and maintained in the PowerSchool Student Information System.

Early Dismissal Procedure:

In order to leave school early,

- students should bring a note from the parent/guardian stating the reason and time for the early dismissal; or
- parent/guardian should call the school to explain the reason for the early dismissal; or
- parent/guardian can come to the school to pick up their child and explain the reason for the early dismissal.

The note must be turned in to the appropriate office for verification and approval. Elementary School and Middle School students must be signed out by a parent/guardian at the front office before leaving campus.

Excused Tardies and Early Dismissals:

A tardy or early dismissal may be considered excused for any of the following reasons: 1) when personally ill and when attendance in school will endanger their health, the health of others, or for medical, dental, or counseling appointments; 2) when in their immediate family there is a serious illness or death which will reasonably necessitate a tardy or early dismissal from school; 3) when mandated by governmental agencies, child protective services, or by court order; 4) when prevented from school attendance due to conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety. Written documentation should be provided to the school for tardies or early dismissals in the same manner as for excused absences.

Tardy and Early Dismissal Consequences

Elementary Schools - Parents/guardians will receive a letter or be contacted by the school when there are five tardies or early dismissals in a 9-week grading period. When there are 10 tardies or early dismissals in a 9-week grading period, a referral will be made to the School Social Worker who will contact the parent/guardians.

Middle Schools (6th, 7th, and 8th Grades) and Ninth Grade Academy - Students with any combination of 5 unexcused tardies and/or unexcused early dismissals in a 9-week grading period will have to make up time in Saturday school. Failure to attend Saturday School will result in the student having to attend In-School Suspension (ISS). Students with 10 tardies/early dismissals will be referred to the School Social Worker who will contact the parents/guardians.

High School – Punctuality is essential to every student’s present and future academic success. Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Three unexcused tardies per class each semester will result in one session of teacher assigned detention.
2. Four unexcused tardies per class each semester will result in two sessions of teacher assigned detention.
3. Five unexcused tardies per class each semester will result in the first referral to administration –assignment of one (1) day ISS.
4. Six or more unexcused tardies per class each semester will result in a referral to administration –assignment of two (2) days ISS.

Each course has a participation grade which comprises 10% of the Semester Grade as outlined in the GRADING & REPORT CARDS section of the agenda. Tardies will be considered when determining this portion of each Semester’s Final Grade.

Students must be in class for at least fifty (50) minutes to be counted present for that class.

Chronic Unexcused Tardies and/or Early Dismissals

The school and the School Social Worker will communicate with the parents/guardians about the student’s chronic unexcused tardies and/or early dismissals. After the parents/guardians are informed and the situation persists, a referral will be made to the Habersham County Department of Family and Children Services by the School Social Worker.

Attendance Requirements for Driver’s License/Permit (O.C.G.A. 40-5-22 Section 21B of H.B. 1190)

Students wishing to obtain their instruction permit or driver’s license are required to maintain good attendance for a period of one academic year prior to applying, must be enrolled in school, and not under suspension.

If a student is enrolled in a home education program, he/she must be enrolled in a home education program that satisfies the requirements of all state laws governing such courses.

An instruction permit or driver’s license will be suspended for 1 year or until the student’s 18th birthday for the following reasons:

- A student has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for 10 consecutive days;
- A student has more than 10 unexcused absences in a semester; or
- A student has been suspended from school for:
 - Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel;
 - Possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property;

- Possession or use of a weapon on school property;
- Any sexual offense prohibited under Chapter 6 of Title 16; or
- Causing substantial physical or visible bodily harm to or seriously disfiguring another person, including another student.

Students may no longer get their instruction permit or driver's license with their parent/guardian's permission to withdraw from school.

Educational Trips

Parents/guardians must complete the application for an Educational Trip and submit the request to the school principal at least one week before the trip.

A school administrator must approve the educational trip in order for the absences to be excused. The administrator will review the student's attendance record prior to approving the trip.

One educational trip per school year may be excused, not to exceed a total of 5 school days.

Trips will not be excused during the last week of a 9-week grading period because of exams.

All work missed must be made up in order for credit to be given.

In addition, the student must keep a log of activities that occurred which are related to his/her educational experiences. The student will be required to write a paper concerning these activities or will be given another age appropriate assignment by the teacher or administrator. These documents must be presented to the administrator in a similar manner as all other makeup work.

Student Withdrawals

Habersham County Schools will 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).
- Each principal or designee shall use his/her best efforts to notify the parent/guardian 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.

Schools are authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory school attendance if the principal or designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or enrolled in a private school or home study program.

Schools shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

Community Support

Department of Juvenile Justice – The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) will have a representative on the Attendance Support Team and will inform students of consequences if they receive a truancy complaint. DJJ will accept truancy complaints from the school system and will process the complaints through the juvenile justice system.

Department of Family and Children Services - The Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) will have a representative serve on the Attendance Support Team. DFCS will accept referrals on educational neglect when there are concerns in the home-school program. DFCS will also accept school system referrals on families with chronic tardies and/or early dismissals.

Mental Health – Habersham Mental Health will have a representative serve on the Attendance Support Team. Mental Health will provide individual, family and group services to students in the school system, as appropriate, to alleviate missing instructional time for off campus appointments. Mental Health services provided in the schools will eliminate barriers to receiving services at the Mental Health center. Mental Health will provide written excuses for students seen at Habersham Mental Health.

Health Department – The Health Department will serve as a consultant regarding health issues identified by the Attendance Support Team and the School System. The Health Department will work in conjunction with School Staff to promote general health and safety for students, school staff, and the community.

Law Enforcement – Law Enforcement will approach school age children they see in the community during school hours. They will inquire of the child as to the reason they are not in school. Law Enforcement will transport the child home and talk with the parent/guardian as to the reason for the child’s absence. This information will be shared with the child’s school. If a parent/guardian is not at home and the child is enrolled in a public school, Law Enforcement will transport the child to the appropriate school.

The Habersham County Board of Education (BOE) Police Department will have a representative serve on the Attendance Support Team. The BOE Police Department or law enforcement within the student’s residential jurisdiction will also assist parents when they are unable to get the student to attend school. The Habersham County BOE Police Department will assist with delivery of attendance notices to parent/guardian when requested by the School Social Worker.

Family Connection - Family Connection will have a representative serve on the Attendance Support Team. Through this participation, strengths and weaknesses will be identified to assist with the tracking of the benchmark related to students completing high school in a timely manner. Evaluation services will also be provided to monitor the outcomes of attendance in the school system.

2005 Habersham County Attendance Protocol Committee Signature Sheet

In signing this protocol, we, the undersigned, commit our agencies/departments to the procedures outlined above.

Habersham County Superior Court Date

Habersham County Juvenile Court Date

Habersham County State Court Date

Habersham County State Court Solicitor’s Office Date

Habersham County District Attorney’s Office Date

Department of Juvenile Justice Date

Habersham County Sheriff’s Office Date

Habersham County Board of Education - Superintendent Date

Habersham County Board of Education – Board Member	Date
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Habersham County Board of Education – School Social Worker	Date
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Habersham County Board of Education – Police Department	Date
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Habersham County Department of Family and Children Services	Date
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Habersham County Mental Health	Date
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Habersham County Health Department	Date
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Habersham County Family Connection	Date
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City of Baldwin Police Department	Date
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City of Clarkesville Police Department	Date
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City of Cornelia Police Department	Date
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City of Demorest Police Department	Date
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City of Mount Airy Police Department	Date
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City of Tallulah Falls Police Department	Date
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