

Effingham County Board of Education
Student Attendance Protocol
June 9, 2005

This protocol was developed by the Effingham County Board of Education as a means for promoting and enforcing student school attendance. It is derived from the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law and from Effingham County Board of Education Policy and Procedures as described in the Effingham County Student Handbook. It is the intent of this Protocol to be consistent with the goals set forth by the Chief Judge of the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit.

The goals of this protocol are:

1. To ensure cooperation and coordination among officials, agencies, and programs involved in compulsory school attendance in Effingham County;
2. To reduce the number of student absences from school.

Definitions for Student Attendance Protocol

Late Arrival –Arriving at **school** after the morning tardy bell rings - the Compulsory Attendance Law specifies that students be present at school “for the full session or sessions of the school which the child is eligible to attend.” Thus, a student who misses any portion of the school day, or a parent who either sends a child to school late or checks the student out early without a lawful excuse, violates the law.

Tardy –Arriving in the **classroom** after the tardy bell rings

Early Departure - Departing from school before the bells rings to signal the end of the school day

Excused Absence, Late Arrival, or Early Departure – Excuses shall be considered legal and excused for the following reasons (As described by the Compulsory School Attendance Law):

Personal illness and whose attendance may be detrimental to the health of themselves or others

Illness or death in the immediate family

Special and recognized religious holidays observed by their faith

Mandated by the order of a government agency (such as jury duty or physical exam for armed services)

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Unexcused Absence - Any absence that is not covered by the above legal reasons.

Written Excuse – A legally acceptable explanation, submitted in writing, describing why the student was absent, arrived late or departed early from school. Legal excuses shall be turned in to the school on the student’s first day back at school following the absence, late arrival or early departure.

Truant –Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has an accumulation of five (5) or more unexcused absences.

Make-up Work – Assignments missed while absent from the classroom. Teachers shall not be required to provide make-up work for unexcused absences, late arrivals, or early dismissals unless the school principal determines that circumstances warrant the granting of such make-up work. Students will be able to make up work missed for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to get the assignment from the teacher, complete the assignment and return it in the time frame established by teacher.

O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 (b)- Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine not to exceed \$100.00 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, or both, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day’s absence from school in violation of the part shall constitute a separate offense.

Effingham County Board of Education
Procedures to Reduce Absences and Late Arrivals at School

Students enrolled in the Effingham County School System are expected to meet attendance standards set forth by the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1). Individual schools are responsible for student attendance and maintaining accurate student attendance records. School staffs will work with the County Attendance Officers to insure all students are in compliance with State Law and Effingham County Board of Education Policy and Procedures.

Late Arrival/Early Departures Procedures

For unexcused late arrivals to school and unexcused early departures from school, the following procedures will apply:

- ❖ Students who have a total of five (5) yearly cumulative unexcused late arrivals and/or early departures from school will be considered in violation of the compulsory school attendance law and notice will be sent home regarding violation of the law, including possible legal action.
- ❖ Legal/excused absences are defined in the definitions and are the same as defined in the compulsory attendance law.
- ❖ Perfect attendance will not be awarded if a student accumulates more than eight excused or unexcused late arrivals/early departures in a school year.
- ❖ Students who accumulate more than two (2) unexcused late arrivals/early departures from school during a nine-week grading period shall receive the following consequences:

Elementary Schools:

- (a) **Grades** - After two (2) unexcused late arrivals or early departures per nine-week grading period, the student shall receive a zero for class participation in the first or last academic subject of the day for each and every violation.
- (b) **Make-Up Work** - Teachers shall not be required to provide make-up work for unexcused late arrivals/early departures unless the school principal determines that circumstances warrant the granting of such make-up work. If the student needs to complete make-up work due to unexcused late arrivals and/or unexcused early departures, the student shall make up the work during P.E., music, or recess on the same or following day.

Middle Schools:

- (a) **Discipline** – Students who accumulate more than two (2) unexcused late arrivals, tardies and/or early departures from school during a nine-week grading period will be disciplined according to progressive discipline measures which may include detention, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension. Days suspended will increase accordingly after (8) unexcused tardies, late arrivals and/or early departures during a nine-week grading period.
- (b) **Make-Up Work** – Teachers shall not be required to provide make-up work for unexcused late arrivals/early departures unless the school principal determines that circumstances warrant the granting of such make-up work.
- (c) **Grades** – Students whose unexcused late arrival/early departure results in missing more than 10 minutes of a class period shall result in a zero for the day for the class(es) that are affected and work missed may not be made up.

High School:

Note: High school students missing more than 15 minutes from any class are considered absent for that class. Students missing less than 15 minutes from any class will be recorded as tardy, a late arrival, or an early departure.

- (a) **Discipline** – Students who accumulate more than two (2) unexcused late arrivals and/or early departures from any class during the nine-week grading period will be disciplined according to progressive discipline measures which may include detention, in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. Days suspended will increase accordingly after six (6) unexcused tardies, late arrivals or early departures during a nine-week grading period.
- (b) **Grades** – High school students missing more than 15 minutes from any class are considered absent for that class. Missing less than 15 minutes is considered to be a tardy, late arrival or early departure.
- (c) **Make-Up Work** - Teachers shall not be required to provide make-up work for unexcused tardies, late arrivals or early departures unless the school principal determines that circumstances warrant the granting of such make-up work.

Compulsory Attendance Enforcement Information and Procedures

Each student in the Effingham County School System is issued a student handbook that contains the Effingham County Board of Education Attendance Policy including the Late Arrival/Early Departure Procedures. Each student 10 years of age or older and the parent/guardian of each student must sign a statement confirming that they have read and understand the contents of the handbook. Additionally, each homeroom teacher reviews the attendance policy with the students.

Students who expect to be absent from school for ten (10) or more days for medical reasons should notify their teacher and make application for the Hospital Homebound program.

Students who are absent from school must provide a written excuse from the student's parent/guardian or physician on their first day back at school after the absence. Excuses received after the third day back at school shall not be accepted and the absence shall be considered as unexcused.

Students in grades 9-12 who have more than five (5) unexcused absences from a semester-long course will not earn credit for the course.

Students in grades 9-12 who, for any reason, have more than ten (10) absences from a semester long course shall not earn credit for the course. Students who have more than ten (10) absences from a semester long course, of which no more than five (5) are unexcused, and has a passing grade in said course may appeal the denial of credit to the school principal. Appeals shall be made no more than three days after the issuance of report cards. In such cases the school principal shall administer a comprehensive examination to the student to determine if the student has mastered the required objectives of the course. If the student masters seventy percent (70%) of the objectives, the credit for the course shall be awarded.

Students age 14 to 17 are subject to House Bill 1190 which states that a minor's driver's permit or driver's license will be suspended (or application for a permit or license will be denied) for one full year or until age 18 if the minor:

- (a) Has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for 10 consecutive school days;
- (b) Has more than 10 school days of unexcused absences in any semester or combination of two consecutive quarters; or
- (c) Has been suspended from school for:
 - (i) Threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel;
 - (ii) Possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property;

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

The schools will report non-compliant students to the Effingham County BOE Teenage Driver Coordinator who will notify the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS). Appeals must be made in writing to the DMVS within ten business days of receiving notice to return the license or permit. A parent's/guardian's permission to withdraw from school will no longer be an acceptable reason to rescind suspension of the permit or license.

Students in grades K-8 who, for any reason, have more than seven (7) unexcused absences from school shall not be promoted to next higher grade level.

Students in grades K-8 who, for any reason, have more than fourteen (14) absences from school shall not be promoted to the next higher grade level. However; a student who, for any reason, has more than (14) absences from school, of which no more than seven (7) are unexcused and who would have normally been promoted to the next higher grade, may appeal the denial of promotion to the school principal. Appeals shall be made no more than three days after the issuance of the final report card. In such case, the school principal shall administer a comprehensive examination to the student to determine if the student has mastered the required objectives of the subjects taught in that grade. If the student masters seventy percent (70%) of the objectives, then the student shall be promoted to the next higher grade.

After three (3) absences (excused or unexcused):

The teacher shall notify the parent/guardian either verbally or in writing of the absences and of the Effingham County Board of Education Attendance Policy.

After five (5) unexcused absences:

The school shall send a certified, receipt requested letter to the parent/guardian of the student. If the student is over 10 years old, the student will be required to sign the file copy of the certified letter of notification.

The school shall refer the student to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall visit the home, communicate with the parent, student and teacher and determine the appropriate course of action to help the student's attendance improve.

The attendance officer shall continue to monitor the student's attendance and communicate with the parent.

More than five (5) unexcused absences:

The attendance officer will monitor the student's attendance and, should the unexcused absences continue, the attendance officer shall notify the principal. The attendance officer shall set up a meeting with the parent and principal at school to determine why the student's attendance has not improved. The principal and the attendance officer shall decide whether or not to institute Court proceeding against the parent/student.

If it is decided to take the parent/student to court, the attendance officer shall continue to monitor the student's attendance and work with the parent/student to improve attendance while awaiting court.

The attendance officer shall attend hearings at the designated court.

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