

Chattooga County Schools Attendance Protocol Handbook 2021-2022





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SECTION I

General Attendance Information



Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Introduction

The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is Georgia's statewide accountability system, implemented in 2012 to replace the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measurement, after the U.S. Department of Education granted Georgia's waiver from NCLB on Feb. 9, 2012. The CCRPI measures schools and school districts on an easy-to-understand 100-point scale, helping parents and the public better understand how schools are performing in a more comprehensive manner than the pass/fail system previously in place under AYP.

Each year Chattooga County Schools receive a report card from the Department of Education. This report card is referred to as the College and Career Readiness Performance Index or CCRPI. This report card tracks the number of student absences. The schools are penalized for the number of days (excused and unexcused) over five that a student is not present. This means, if your child misses more than five days in one school year, the rating/points on the CCRPI Report decreases for your child's school. **Parents, please ensure that your child comes to school and does not miss more than five days per year.**

Please visit the Georgia Department of Education at
<http://www.gadoe.org/CCRPI/Pages/default.aspx> to view additional CCRPI resources and prior
year report cards.

Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Belief Statements

The Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Committee recognizes the following belief statements relative to student absenteeism and truancy:

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- 1) Students do not learn when they are absent from school. They miss critical instruction for understanding key concepts and fall behind quickly in completing assignments. Good school attendance often correlates positively to good academic achievement.
- 2) Students who are truant from school often drop out of school later. Dropping out limits students' future alternatives, both in getting a higher education and getting a job.
- 3) Coming to school every day, being on time, and completing daily school assignments are all job-related skills. Students who learn to be regular in their school attendance and complete their schoolwork on time are more prepared to be regular in their work attendance and more able to complete their work duties as adults.

INCLUSION OF STAKEHOLDERS

- 4) Schools/School Districts must work with students, parents, and other school stakeholders to establish high expectations of students relative to school attendance and work on resolutions to the issues surrounding truancy.
- 5) Schools/School Districts must work with school stakeholders to establish viable truancy interventions such as incentive and mentoring programs.
- 6) Parents must be involved in the process of improving student truancy since "parents, guardians or other persons who have charge of the child" are ultimately responsible for that child's attendance in school.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP

- 7) Parents must reinforce the importance of good school attendance and make every effort to send their child to school on a regular basis.
- 8) The State Board of Education must develop policy that defines truancy in accordance with the State's compulsory attendance laws.
- 9) The School District must develop local policy that defines truancy in accordance with the State's compulsory attendance laws and subsequent State BOE policy and rules.
- 10) The School District must work with each of their local schools in identifying causes and solutions for truancy.
- 11) The School District must expect local schools to operate under the same, consistent student attendance expectations and procedures.
- 12) The School District must implement procedures by which students may be adjudicated for truancy and/or parents may be investigated for educational neglect related to their child's school truancy.
- 13) School Principals and leadership committees within the local school play a pivotal, primary role in improving student attendance by frequently communicating the expectations to students, parents, and staff.
- 14) Local schools must employ research-based "best practices" aimed at improving student attendance, and ultimately, raising the level of student achievement.
- 15) Local schools must keep accurate data to reflect students; excused and unexcused absences, as well as tardies and early checkouts.
- 16) The Chattooga County Attendance Review Team, consisting of but not limited to a School Administrator and/or School Social Worker/Truancy Officer, will only review/intervene in truancy cases that have involved documented unexcused absences, tardies and early checkouts.
- 17) The School District will only submit truancy cases to the Juvenile/Magistrate Court following previously unsuccessful interventions.

Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Underlying Causes/Reasons for School Absenteeism and Truancy

The Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Committee for Chattooga County recognizes the following causes/reasons for student absenteeism and truancy:

STUDENT-RELATED CAUSES

- Student Drug/Alcohol Abuse
- Ignorance of Attendance Policy/Compulsory Attendance Law
- Physical Ill-Health
- Emotional Ill-Health
- Lack of Personal Incentive
- General Apathy
- Influence of Truant Peers/Friends
- Lack of Proficiency
- Working at Low Achievement Levels
- Poor Influence of Siblings
- Transition Struggles

SCHOOL-RELATED CAUSES

- Inconsistent Policies Relative to Absences
- Meaningless Penalties/Consequences for Absenteeism
- Limited Cultural Tolerance for Minorities
- Poor Teacher Attitudes Toward Students
- Limited Personal Support by School Personnel
- Low Expectations Toward Student Achievement
- Perception of Unsafe Environments
- Size of School/Lacking Points of Connections

FAMILY-RELATED CAUSES

- Lack of Parental Guidance
- Lack of Parental Supervision
- Parental Drug/Alcohol Abuse
- Misunderstanding Compulsory Attendance Law/Policy
- Parents with Differing Views of School
- Work Schedules (3rd Shift)
- Custody Situations

ECONOMIC-RELATED CAUSES

- Students Employed and Working During School Hours
- Single-Parent Homes
- Lack of Transportation (if student misses school bus)
- Use of Student as Caregiver Due to Lack of Child Care
- Student Serving as Caregiver to Parent Due to Illness
- High Mobility Rates
- Parents with Less Supervision Due to Multiple Jobs
- Homelessness
- Lack of Insurance to See a Doctor

* While research is clear that the issues listed above are typical causes of student absenteeism and truancy, the Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Committee is aware of the numerous, effective truancy

prevention policies, programs and procedures that have been instituted by the School District and other agencies to resolve this problem—Most notably has been the work of the Chattooga County Attendance Review Team, which has worked within a limited scope of authority to assist the School District in eliminating truancy and improving student attendance.

Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Action Steps

1. School/School District Policy and procedure will continue to be reviewed for compliance with State's compulsory attendance law and inclusion of research-based "best practices."
2. The Schools/School District will continue to develop progressive discipline strategies relative to dealing with truant students.
3. The Schools/School District will continue to implement incentive programs relative to promoting and reinforcing good and/or improved attendance rates.
4. The Schools/School District will continue to implement appropriate parental notification methods relative to concerns over individual truancy and/or high rates of absenteeism.
5. The Schools/School District will continue to involve school stakeholders and members of the community in identifying the causes of and solutions for truancy.
6. The Schools/School District will continue to work cooperatively with appropriate agencies within the county that have responsibilities related to assisting children and their parents/guardians to comply with the State's compulsory attendance laws.
7. The Schools/School District will continue to work cooperatively with the courts and other appropriate agencies within the county to conduct the Chattooga County Attendance Review Team, which identifies and resolves truancy-related complaints before they rise to the level of court referrals.

The Chattooga County Attendance Protocol Committee will continue to evaluate and update the Attendance and Protocol Handbook in accordance with Chattooga County Board of Education Policy, Georgia State law, and federal guidelines.

SECTION II

Student/Parent Handbook & Discipline Code Information



CHATTOOGA COUNTY SCHOOLS

33 MIDDLE SCHOOL ROAD SUMMERVILLE, GA 30747

PHONE: 706-857-3447

FAX: 706-857-3440

Mr. Jared Hosmer, Superintendent

Compulsory School Attendance

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 requires any person in the state of Georgia who has control or in charge of a child between the ages of six and sixteen to enroll and send that child to school, including public, private and home schooling.

Positive Benefits of School Attendance

- The student becomes a part of the educational and social learning process.
- The student will have the opportunity to develop his/her own areas of interest for life skills.
- The student will be provided opportunities to make career choices.

Consequences of Failure to Comply with the Compulsory Attendance Law

- The student becomes deficient in developing life-long learning skills.
- The parent/student will be referred to the School Social Worker/Truancy Officer to assist the family in developing a plan to comply with the compulsory attendance law.
- The student is subject to failure.

Penalties for Failure to comply with the Compulsory Attendance Law

- The student and parents/guardians will be referred to the Chattooga County Department of Family and Children Services on the grounds of educational neglect.
- The student and parents/guardians will be referred to the Chattooga County Magistrate/Juvenile Court for truancy.
- The parents/guardians will be subject to fines (\$25 to \$100), imprisonment (maximum of 30 days), and/or community service if found to be in violation.

The student and parent/guardian signatures below reflect their receipt and understanding of the compulsory school attendance law and the importance of regular school attendance.

Student Signature (if applicable)
(Students 10 years old and older)

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

*****Please return form to your child's homeroom teacher.**

Education Program Guidelines/Policies/Information
(Taken Directly from the Chattooga County Student/Parent Handbook)

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or during other required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, unless with written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official. No student shall encourage, urge, or counsel other students to violate this policy.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

- Regular attendance in school is the joint responsibility of the student and his parents.
- Georgia law allows a student to be excused from school for the following reasons:
 - Personal illness;
 - Illness or death in the immediate family;
 - Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student's faith;
 - Mandates by order of a governmental agency; and conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to the safety of the student;
 - 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.

Requirements/Time Limits for Student Excuses:

Excuses for student absences will be furnished to the school in writing on the day the student returns to school and will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Parent notes should contain the student's name, reason for absence, date(s) of the absence, and the parent's/guardian's signature.

For purposes of accurate record-keeping and student accountability, all absences must be rectified within three school days of the student's return to school—excuses received after that time limit will not be considered unless the Principal deems extenuating circumstances exist.

Truant:—When a student accumulates three unexcused absences, the school will notify the parent of guardian of the consequences and penalties of excessive unexcused absences. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or person having charge or control of a student of five unexcused absences without response, the school will send written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, or first class mail.

Any student 16, or older, who is absent unlawfully either 10 consecutive days or 40 total days, may be dropped from the attendance records. The principal has the discretion of entering or reentering in the present grading period any student 16, or older, who has failed to attend for unlawful reasons.

Hospital/Homebound Services:

If major sickness or injury occurs and absenteeism is lengthy, the student may receive credit by instruction through application to the hospital/homebound program. Parents/guardians of students needing these services must contact the Principal.

Attendance Credits

Students shall be counted present when they attend school for at least one half of the instructional day, attending a school- or School District-sponsored field trip, or serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

TARDIES AND/OR EARLY CHECK-OUTS AS PART OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Any unexcused tardy (arriving to school/class beyond the posted school start-time) or early check-out (leaving school/class before the posted school end-time) can negatively impact a student's attendance record and jeopardize his/her overall achievement due to lost instructional time.

Due to the impact of absences, tardies and early check-outs, our schools have developed interventions that would reduce the amount of lost instructional time due to unexcused reasons. Parents and students should know that excuses for school tardies and/or early check-outs are governed by the same State-established rules regarding school absences. These rules are listed in the previous section dealing with "Absences and Excuses."

Before a student can be checked out early, the person must be on the check-out list and show proper identification.

ATTENDANCE POLICY (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

Students with five or less total absences in a class period may exempt the final exam as long as they have a passing score in the course. Five tardies during a class period will equal 1 absence when determining final exam exemption eligibility.

Students may not exempt from EOC tests. However, these courses may give a unit exam during final exam week in which the exemption policy will apply.

For purposes of accurate record-keeping and student accountability, all absences must be rectified within three school days of the student's return to school—excuses received after that time limit will not be considered unless the Principal deems extenuating circumstances exist.

MAKE-UP WORK

It is the expectation of the Chattooga County Board of Education that all work missed due to any absence will be made-up. Some work by its very nature is impossible to make-up and may necessitate alternative assignments. The principal or designee will be the final authority in determining alternative assignments.

The responsibility for arranging to complete work missed is to be assumed by the student and parent/guardian in conjunction with the teacher. Make-up work is to be completed at the time specified by the teacher/principal. The time limit is not to exceed ten (10) school days. Exceptions will be decided by the parent/guardian, student, teacher, and principal, with the principal having the final decision.

OBTAINING/MAINTAINING A VALID GEORGIA DRIVER'S LICENSE OR LEARNER'S PERMIT

Georgia Law O.C.G.A. § 40-5-22 requires that a student attempting to secure a Georgia Driver's License or Learner's Permit must obtain a signed affidavit from their school regarding the student's (a) current enrollment status (b) Is enrolled in a home education

program that satisfies the reporting requirements of all state laws governing such program. (c) Has received a high school diploma, a general educational development (GED) diploma, a special diploma, or a certificate of high school completion; (d) Has terminated his or her secondary education and is enrolled in a postsecondary school or is pursuing a general educational development (GED) diploma. See Appendix I for further explanation of the Teen and Adult Driving Responsibility Act.

Student Infractions and Discipline Procedures

(Taken Directly from the Chattooga County Student/Parent Handbook)

Excessive Tardies

Being late to school, class, or to a school activity on a repeated basis, as well as unexcused school check-ins/check-outs.

Consequence: (Pk-12th)

Discretion of the principal, depending on circumstances.

Skipping School

Skipping school and leaving campus.

Consequence: SECONDARY 6-12

- Discretion of the Principal.
- 1st offense- In-school suspension of up to 3 days.
- 2nd offense- In-school suspension of up to 5 days
- 3rd and subsequent offense - Corporal punishment, in-school suspension of up to 10 days, short term suspension, long term suspension, corporal punishment, and/or possible recommendation to Chattooga Academy.

Consequence: ELEMENTARY PK-5

- Discretion of the Principal.

Excessive Unexcused Absences

Regular attendance in school is necessary for a student to make adequate academic progress. When a child is absent, parents, guardians, or other persons who have control of a child enrolled in the school district should follow the local school rules to report reasons for absences. **All absences should be documented with a doctor's note or parent note. Parent notes are limited to a maximum of three (3) per semester.** Georgia law requires that after any student accrues 10 (10) days of unexcused absences in a given school year, the parent/guardian, or other person who has control or charge of said child shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to fines, imprisonment, community service, or any combination of these penalties. OCGA § 20-2-690.1 (b).

Consequence: PK-12

Parents/Guardians:

- Must attend Truancy Treatment Team meeting if summoned for such a meeting.
- Charges may be filed against parents if their child misses over five (5) unexcused day of school.
- Judges may invoke the following consequences for this misdemeanor offense:
 - \$25 - \$100 fine for each offense after five (5) unexcused absences
 - Imprisonment for up to 30 days for each offense
 - Community Service
 - Any combination of the above
 - If juvenile charges are filed, then the parent, and/or student, may be placed under a court order and must abide by the rules set forth by the Judge.

Students:

- A truant student may be subject to a disposition for an unruly child in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-11-67.
- Students who have attained the age of fifteen may find their eligibility for a Georgia instruction permit or driver's license impacted. Reference O.C.G.A. State Statute 40-5-22 (2010).
- Juvenile charges may be filed against any student having five (5) or more days of unexcused absences.

The teacher should call the parents of any student who has three (3) days of unexcused absences. ~~After five.~~

When a student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences, the school will notify the parent/guardian of the consequences and penalties of such absences and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense in the court proceeding. After two (2) reasonable attempts to notify the parent/guardian or person having charge or control of a student of five (5) unexcused absences without response, the school will send written notice via certified mail with return receipt requested.

Principals, assistant principals, and counselors may refer a student to the Social Worker/Tuancy Officer anytime when, in their judgment, the intent of the Compulsory Attendance Act is not being adhered to by a student. ~~Referrals are required on students when they accumulate eight (8) unexcused absences. This referral to the Social Worker/Tuancy Officer should include the attendance sheet and the Absent Again form.~~

SECTION III

Sample Parent Letters



Sample 3 Unexcused Absences Letter

<School>
Address
City State Zip

Parent/Guardian of: _____
Address
City State Zip

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our records indicate that _____ has three (3) unexcused absences. In order for your child to have the highest degree of academic success, it is essential that he/she arrive on time on a daily basis.

Georgia law requires schools to notify parents when their child has at least three (3) unexcused absences and the possible consequences for unexcused absences. According to Georgia law, after five (5) unexcused absences, any parent, guardian, or other person responsible for a student under the age of 16 can be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties.

If available and you have not already done so, please send any parent notes, medical notes, or other documentation to verify that absences are excused. Should you have any questions, please contact the school.

Thank you,

<Principal Name>
Principal

Cc: Student's Attendance Record
School Social Worker/Truancy Officer

Sample 5 Unexcused Absences Letter

<School>

Parent/Guardian of: _____

Address

City State Zip

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our records indicate that _____ has five (5) unexcused absences. Attendance is an essential component to a student’s academic success. It is imperative that your child attend school every day for the full day.

Georgia law requires schools to notify parents when their child has at least five (5) unexcused absences and the possible consequences for unexcused absences. According to Georgia law, after five (5) unexcused absences, any parent, guardian, or other person responsible for a student under the age of 16 can be subject to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties.

A meeting has been scheduled at _____ School on _____
_____. Your attendance is mandatory. There will be no further notice for this meeting. Failure to attend may result in an automatic referral to Juvenile or Magistrate Court for Failure to Comply with the Compulsory Attendance provisions of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.)

If available and you have not already done so, please send any parent notes, medical notes, or other documentation to verify that absences are excused. If you should have any questions, please contact the school.

Thank you,

<Principal Name>

Principal

Cc: Student’s Attendance Record
School Social Worker/Truancy Officer

SECTION IV

Registrar Information





Attendance Process Sheet

- 3 Day Parent Letter
 - Mark 3-day letter on student's Infinite Campus under discipline.
- 5 Day Parent Letter
 - Schedule Meeting Time and Date
 - Send Social Worker/Truancy Officer copies of letters
 - Attendance Clerks mark 5-day letter on student's Infinite Campus under discipline.
- Parent Meeting/COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONTRACT
 - Original to Social Worker/Truancy Officer and additional copy to school and parent/guardian.
 - Mark attendance contract on student's Infinite Campus under discipline.
- If No Show to the 5 Day Meeting, Social Worker/Truancy Officer will refer student to Truancy Board
- Truancy Board Meeting
 - COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONTRACT to be completed
- After the Meeting/Contract with parents, monitor the attendance.
 - The Social Worker/Truancy Officer will monitor as well.
 - After 3 UNEXCUSED after Contract date signed, notify Social Worker/Truancy Officer
 - Double Check absences are correct. Any special circumstances (death in family, house fire, homelessness)? Did the student eat in the lunchroom but marked absent?
 - Social Worker/Truancy Officer refer to Magistrate or Juvenile Court

SECTION V

School Board Policy and Other Supporting Documents



Chattooga County Schools
Board Policy JBD: Absences and Excuses

JBD - HIGH SCHOOL ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or from any other required school hours except for illness or other providential cause without written permission of the teacher, principal or their duly authorized school official. No student shall encourage, urge, or counsel other students to violate this policy.

As permitted under state law and State Board of Education policies, pupils may be excused for the following reasons:

- a. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others;
- b. A serious illness or death in their immediate family;
- c. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces or by a court order;
- d. Celebrating religious holidays;
- e. Registering to vote or voting for a period not to exceed one day;
- f. Conditions which render attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.
- g. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U. S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.

Students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly shall be counted as present by the school in which they are enrolled for the day missed from school for this purpose.

For this policy, the Chattooga County Board of Education defines the term "immediate family" to include the following individuals: a student's father, mother, grandparents, brother, sister, or relative living in the same household.

Students shall be permitted to make-up work when absences are excused, provided all missed work is satisfactorily completed within three (3) days of the student's return to school. Principals may waive the three (3) day requirements at semester's end, not to exceed 14 days.

Students may also be excused in the event of a pre-arranged absence approved by the school principal or his or her designee at least ten (10) days in advance of the absence. Pre-arranged absences will not be approved during the exam schedule at the end of every grading period. Examples of pre-arranged absences include college visits for juniors and seniors (no more than two per year) and educational trips as determined by the school principal or his or her designee. For educational trips to be approved as pre-arranged absences, the student must complete and turn in a trip related project by the due date set by the administrator approving the absence.

Excuses for absences shall be furnished in writing, shall be signed by the student's parent or guardian, and shall specifically state the reasons for the absence. The excuse must also include the telephone number where the parent can be reached during the day. All excuses shall be dated and brought to the homeroom teacher within three (3) days after the student's absence. After three (3) absences excused by the parent, per semester (August to December and January to June), medical or other appropriate documentation in support of each

and every further absence which the student claims is excused will be required. All excuses will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

If a high school student has more than five (5) unexcused absences, the matter may be pursued in either Juvenile or Magistrate/State Court. Any high school student having more than six (6) unexcused absences in a class(es) during a semester will receive no credit for that class(es) unless a waiver is granted by the principal and superintendent. The principal and superintendent shall determine whether there exist unusual conditions or extenuating circumstances relating to the student's personal life or family situation which would require that the provisions of this policy be waived. If so, the student shall not be denied credit for a class(es) that semester based on excessive absences. Absences due to out-of-school suspension shall be deemed to be temporarily excused, but a student shall not be denied credit for a class(es) solely because of out-of-school suspension.

A student will be allowed to leave school only in accordance with the school's checkout procedures.

JBD(A) - ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or from any other required school hours except for illness or other providential cause without written permission of the teacher, principal, or their duly authorized school official. No student shall encourage, urge, or counsel other students to violate this policy.

As permitted under state law and State Board of Education policies, pupils may be excused for the following reasons:

- a. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others;
- b. A serious illness or death in their immediate family;
- c. Celebrating religious holidays;
- d. Conditions which render attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.
- e. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the U. S. armed forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent's deployment or during the parent's leave.

Students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly shall be counted as present by the school in which they are enrolled for the day missed from school for this purpose.

For this policy, the Chattooga County Board of Education defines the term "immediate family" to include the following individuals: a student's father, mother, grandparents, brother, sister, or relative living in the same household.

Students shall be permitted to make-up work when absences are excused, provided all missed work is satisfactorily completed within three (3) days of the student's return to school. Principals may waive the three (3) day requirements at semester's end, not to exceed 14 days.

Students may also be excused in the event of a pre-arranged absence approved by the school principal or his or her designee at least ten (10) days in advance of the absence. Pre-arranged absences will not be approved during the exam schedule at the end of every grading period. Examples of pre-arranged absences include educational trips as determined by the school principal or his or her designee. For educational trips to be approved as pre-arranged absences, the student must complete and turn in a trip related project by the due date set by the administrator approving the absence.

Excuses for absences shall be furnished in writing, shall be signed by the student's parent or guardian, and shall specifically state the reasons for the absence. The excuse must also include the telephone number where the parent can be reached during the day. All excuses shall be dated and brought to the homeroom teacher within three (3) days after the student's absence. After three (3) absences excused by the parent, per semester (August to December and January to June), medical or other appropriate documentation in support of each and every further absence which the student claims is excused will be required. All excuses will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

If a student in K-8 has five (5) or more unexcused absences, the matter may be pursued in either Juvenile Court or Magistrate/State Court. The principal and Superintendent shall determine whether there exists conditions or extenuating circumstances relating to the student's personal life or family situation which would require that the provisions of this policy be waived. Absences due to out-of-school suspension shall be deemed to be temporarily excused, but a student shall not be pursued in court solely because of out-of-school suspension.

A student will be allowed to leave school only in accordance with the school's checkout procedures.

Uniform Withdrawal Criteria

For the purpose of accurately measuring the academic performance of students continuously enrolled in public schools, the Board adopts the following uniform criteria for withdrawing students.

1. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who:
 - a. Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences;
 - b. Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and
 - c. Is not receiving instructional services through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 - d. The Superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person 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.
2. Appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance if the superintendent or 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.
3. Appropriate school personnel shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

When a student desires to withdraw from school, he/she must have the written permission of his/her parents or guardian if under the age of eighteen prior to withdrawing. Prior to accepting such permission, a school administrator will have a conference with the student and parent/legal guardian within two school days of receiving notice of the intent of the student to withdraw. The purpose of the conference is to share with the student and parent/guardian educational options available and the consequences of not earning a high school diploma.

Policies and Procedures to Reduce Unexcused Absences: Notification

1. The school system requires its schools to provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student enrolled in school a written statement of attendance requirements. The parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student will sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement. After two reasonable attempts by the school to secure such signature or signatures, the school shall be

considered to be in compliance with this subsection if it sends a copy of the statement, via certified mail, return receipt requested, or first class mail, to such parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child or children. Schools will retain signed copies of statements through the end of the school year.

2. The school system will notify the parent, guardian or other person 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. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence without response, the school system shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by certified mail, return receipt requested, or first class mail.
3. The School System will use its best efforts including first class mail to notify a student age 14 and older when the student has only three absences remaining before violating the state's attendance requirements pursuant to O.C.G.A. 40-5-2 regarding the denial of driver's permits and licenses.
4. Students shall be notified through the student codes of conduct of the definition of truancy and a summary of possible consequences and penalties for truancy, including possible dispositions for unruly children in accordance with O.C.G.A. 15-11-67 and the possible denial of or suspension of a driver's license.

Establishment of Student Attendance Protocol Committee § 20-2-690.2 (2010)

(a) The chief judge of the superior court of each county shall establish a student attendance protocol committee for its county. The purpose of the committee shall be 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 chief judge is responsible for ensuring that all members of the committee are notified of their responsibility to the committee and shall call the first meeting of the committee in each county. The committee shall elect a chairperson and may elect other officers.

(b) Each local board of education shall participate in, consider, and make publicly available, including but not limited to posting in a conspicuous location, its decision regarding the recommendations of the committee as provided in this Code section. Independent school systems may participate in the committee in the county where the system is located. Independent school systems whose geographic area encompasses more than one county may select one of such counties in which to participate. An independent school system that elects not to participate in the committee of the county where it is located shall request that the chief judge of the superior court of a county encompassed by its geographic area to establish an independent student attendance protocol committee in the same manner as established for the county school system.

(c) Each of the following agencies, officials, or programs shall designate a representative to serve on the committee:

(1) The chief judge of the superior court;

(2) The juvenile court judge or judges of the county;

(3) The district attorney for the county;

(4) The solicitor-general of state court, if the county has a state court;

(5) The Department of Juvenile Justice, which may include representatives from area youth detention centers or regional youth detention centers;

(6) The superintendent, a certificated school employee, and a local school board member from each public school system in the county and a certificated school Social Worker/Truancy Officer from each public school system, if any are employed by the school system;

(7) The sheriff of the county;

(8) The chief of police of the county police department;

(9) The chief of police of each municipal police department in the county;

(10) The county department of family and children services;

(11) The county board of health;

(12) The county mental health organization;

(13) The county Family Connection commission, board, or authority, or other county agency, board, authority, or commission having the duty and authority to study problems of families, children, and youth and provide services to families, children, and youth; and

(14) The court approved community based risk reduction program established by the juvenile court in accordance with Code Section 15-11-10, if such a program has been established.

(d) The committee thus established may appoint such additional members as necessary and proper to accomplish the purposes of the committee.

(e) Each committee shall, by June 1, 2005, adopt a written student attendance protocol for its county school system and for each independent school system within its geographic boundaries 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.

(f) 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 their parents or guardians in complying with Code Section 20-2-690.1.

(g) 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 schools 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 a driver's license for a child in accordance with Code Section 40-5-22.

(h) 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.

(i) 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 State Board of Education.

Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law § 20-2-690.1 (2010)

(a) Mandatory attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program shall be required for children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays. Such mandatory attendance shall not be required where the child has successfully completed all requirements for a high school diploma.

(b) Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children during the ages of mandatory attendance as required in subsection (a) of this Code section shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program; and such child shall be responsible for enrolling in and attending a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program under such penalty for noncompliance with this subsection as is provided in Chapter 11 of Title 15, unless the child's failure to enroll and attend is caused by the child's parent, guardian, or other person, in which case the parent, guardian, or other person alone shall be responsible; provided, however, that tests and physical exams for military service and the National Guard and such other approved absences shall be excused absences. The requirements of this subsection shall apply to a child during the ages of mandatory attendance as required in subsection (a) of this Code section who has been assigned by a local board of education or its delegate to attend an alternative public school program established by that local board of education, including an alternative public school program provided for in Code Section 20-2-154.1, regardless of whether such child has been suspended or expelled from another public school program by that local board of education or its delegate, and to the parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of such child. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require a local board of education or its delegate to assign a child to attend an alternative public school program rather than suspending or expelling the child.

(c) 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 less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this part after the child's school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence for a child shall constitute a separate offense. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child of five unexcused days of absence without response, the school system shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by certified mail, return receipt requested. Public schools shall provide to the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each child enrolled in public school a written summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance under this Code section for children and their parents, guardians, or other persons having control or charge of children. The parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child or children shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties; children who are age ten years or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. After two reasonable attempts by the school to secure such signature or signatures, the school shall be considered to be in compliance with this subsection if it sends a copy of the statement, via certified mail, return receipt requested, to such parent, guardian, other person who has control or charge of a child, or children. Public schools shall retain signed copies of statements through the end of the school year.

(d) Local school superintendents in the case of private schools or home study programs and visiting teachers and attendance officers in the case of public schools shall have authority and it shall be their duty to file proceedings in court to enforce this subpart.

(e) An unemancipated minor who is older than the age of mandatory attendance as required in subsection (a) of this Code section who has not completed all requirements for a high school diploma who wishes to withdraw from school shall have the written permission of his or her parent or legal guardian prior to

withdrawing. Prior to accepting such permission, the school principal or designee shall convene a conference with the child and parent or legal guardian within two school days of receiving notice of the intent of the child to withdraw from school. The principal or designee shall make a reasonable attempt to share with the student and parent or guardian the educational options available, including the opportunity to pursue a general educational development (GED) diploma and the consequences of not having earned a high school diploma, including lower lifetime earnings, fewer jobs for which the student will be qualified, and the inability to avail oneself of higher educational opportunities. Every local board of education shall adopt a policy on the process of voluntary withdrawal of unemancipated minors who are older than the mandatory attendance age. The policy shall be filed with the Department of Education no later than January 1, 2007. The Department of Education shall provide annually to all local school superintendents model forms for the parent or guardian signature requirement contained in this subsection and updated information from reliable sources relating to the consequences of withdrawing from school without completing all requirements for a high school diploma. Such form shall include information relating to the opportunity to pursue a general educational development (GED) diploma and the consequences of not having earned a high school diploma, including lower lifetime earnings, fewer jobs for which the student will be qualified, and the inability to avail oneself of higher educational opportunities. Each local school superintendent shall provide such forms and information to all of its principals of schools serving grades six through twelve for the principals to use during the required conference with the child and parent or legal guardian.

Requirements for Licensure; School Attendance Requirements § 40-5-22 (2010)

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Code section, the department shall not issue any Class C driver's license to any person who is under 18 years of age or Class M driver's license to any person who is under the age of 17 years, except that the department may, under subsection (a) of Code Section 40-5-24, issue a Class P instruction permit permitting the operation of a noncommercial Class C vehicle to any person who is at least 15 years of age, and may, under subsection (b) of Code Section 40-5-24, issue a Class D driver's license permitting the operation of a noncommercial Class C vehicle to any person who is at least 17 years of age. On and after January 1, 1985, the department shall not issue any driver's license to any person under 18 years of age unless such person presents a certificate or other evidence acceptable to the department which indicates satisfactory completion of an alcohol and drug course as prescribed in subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-142; provided, however, that a person under 18 years of age who becomes a resident of this state and who has in his or her immediate possession a valid license issued to him or her in another state or country shall not be required to take or complete the alcohol and drug course. The department shall not issue a driver's license or a Class P instruction permit for the operation of a Class A or B vehicle or any commercial driver's license to any person who is under the age of 18 years.

(a.1) (1) The department shall not issue an instruction permit or driver's license to a person who is younger than 18 years of age unless at the time such minor submits an application for an instruction permit or driver's license the applicant presents acceptable proof that he or she has received a high school diploma, a general educational development (GED) diploma, a special diploma, or a certificate of high school completion or has terminated his or her secondary education and is enrolled in a postsecondary school, is pursuing a general educational development (GED) diploma, or the records of the department indicate that said applicant:

(A) Is enrolled in and not under expulsion from a public or private school and has satisfied relevant attendance requirements as set forth in paragraph (2) of this subsection for a period of one academic year prior to application for an instruction permit or driver's license; or

(B) Is enrolled in a home education program that satisfies the reporting requirements of all state laws governing such program.

The department shall notify such minor of his or her ineligibility for an instruction permit or driver's license at the time of such application.

(2) The department shall forthwith notify by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery, return receipt requested, any minor issued an instruction permit or driver's license in accordance with this subsection other than a minor who has terminated his or her secondary education and is enrolled in a postsecondary school or who is pursuing a general educational development (GED) diploma that such minor's instruction permit or driver's license is suspended subject to review as provided for in this subsection if the department receives notice that indicates that such minor:

(A) Has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for ten consecutive school days;

(B) Has ten or more school days of unexcused absences in the current academic year or ten or more school days of unexcused absences in the previous academic year; or

(C) Has been found in violation by a hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of one of the following offenses, has received a change in placement for committing one of the following offenses, or has waived his or her right to a hearing and pleaded guilty to one of the following offenses:

(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 or at a school sponsored event;

(iii) Possession or use of a weapon on school property or at a school sponsored event. For purposes of this division, the term "weapon" shall have the same meaning as in Code Section 16-11-127.1 but shall not include any part of an archeological or cultural exhibit brought to school in connection with a school project;

(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.

Notice given by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested mailed to the person's last known address shall be prima-facie evidence that such person received the required notice. Such notice shall include instructions to the minor to return immediately the instruction permit or driver's license to the department and information summarizing the minor's right to request an exemption from the provisions of this subsection. The minor so notified may request in writing a hearing within ten business days from the date of receipt of notice. Within 30 days after receiving a written request for a hearing, the department shall hold a hearing as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 50, the "Georgia Administrative Procedure Act." After such hearing, the department shall sustain its order of suspension or rescind such order. The department shall be authorized to grant an exemption from the provisions of this subsection to a minor, upon such minor's petition, if there is clear and convincing evidence that the enforcement of the provisions of this subsection upon such minor would create an undue hardship upon the minor or the minor's family or if there is clear and convincing evidence that the enforcement of the provisions of this subsection would act as a detriment to the health or welfare of the minor. Appeal from such hearing shall be in accordance with said chapter. If no hearing is requested within the ten business days specified above, the right to a hearing shall have been waived and the instruction permit or driver's license of the minor shall remain suspended. The suspension provided for in this paragraph shall be for a period of one year or shall end upon the date of such minor's eighteenth birthday or, if the suspension was imposed pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, upon receipt of satisfactory proof that the minor is pursuing or has received a general educational development (GED) diploma, a high school diploma, a special diploma, a certificate of high school completion, or has terminated his or her secondary education and is enrolled in a postsecondary school, whichever comes first.

(3) The State Board of Education and the commissioner of driver services are authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this subsection.

(4) The Technical College System of Georgia shall be responsible for compliance and noncompliance data for students pursuing a general educational development (GED) diploma.

(a.2) (1) On and after January 1, 2002, the department shall not issue any initial Class D driver's license or, in the case of a person who has never been issued a Class D driver's license by the department or the equivalent thereof by any other jurisdiction, any initial Class C driver's license unless such person:

(A) Is at least 16 years of age and has completed an approved driver education course in a licensed private or public driver training school and in addition a cumulative total of at least 40 hours of other supervised driving experience including at least six hours at night, all of which is verified in writing signed before a person authorized to administer oaths by a parent or guardian of the applicant or by the applicant if such person is at least 18 years of age; or

(B) Is at least 17 years of age and has completed a cumulative total of at least 40 hours of supervised driving experience including at least six hours at night, and the same is verified in writing signed before a person authorized to administer oaths by a parent or guardian of the applicant or by the applicant if such person is at least 18 years of age; provided, however, that a person 17 years of age or older who becomes a

resident of this state, who meets all of the qualifications for issuance of a Class C license with the exception of the completion of an approved driver education training course and at least 40 hours of supervised driving experience as required by this subsection, and who has in his or her immediate possession a valid license equivalent to a Class C license issued to him or her in another state or country shall be entitled to receive a Class C license.

(2) The commissioner shall by rule or regulation establish standards for approval of any driver education course for purposes of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of this subsection, provided that such course shall be designed to educate young drivers about safe driving practices and the traffic laws of this state and to train young drivers in the safe operation of motor vehicles.

(3) For purposes of supervised driving experience under paragraph (1) of this subsection, supervision shall be provided by a person at least 21 years of age who is licensed as a driver for a commercial or noncommercial Class C vehicle, who is fit and capable of exercising control over the vehicle, and who is occupying a seat beside the driver.

(4) For the purposes of this Code section, the term "approved driver education training course" shall include those driver education training courses approved by the Department of Driver Services.

(5) For purposes of this Code section, the term "approved driver education training course" shall include instruction given in the course of a home education program that satisfies the reporting requirements of all state laws governing such programs, provided that such instruction utilizes a curriculum approved by the department.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this Code section, any person 14 years of age who has a parent or guardian who is medically incapable of being licensed to operate a motor vehicle due to visual impairment may apply for and, subject to the approval of the commissioner, may be issued a restricted noncommercial Class P instruction permit for the operation of a noncommercial Class C vehicle. Any person permitted pursuant to this subsection shall be accompanied by such visually impaired parent or guardian whenever operating a motor vehicle.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this Code section, any person 15 years of age or older who has a parent or guardian who is medically incapable of being licensed to operate a motor vehicle due to physical impairment and has been issued an identification card containing the international handicapped symbol pursuant to Article 8 of this chapter may apply for and, subject to the approval of the commissioner, may be issued a restricted noncommercial Class P instruction permit for the operation of a noncommercial Class C vehicle. Any person permitted pursuant to this paragraph shall be accompanied whenever operating a motor vehicle by such physically impaired parent or guardian or by a person at least 21 years of age who is licensed as a driver for a commercial or noncommercial Class C vehicle, who is fit and capable of exercising control over the vehicle, and who is occupying a seat beside the driver. The department shall require satisfactory proof that the physically impaired parent or guardian previously held a valid driver's license in the State of Georgia, another state, or the District of Columbia before issuing an instructional permit pursuant to this paragraph.

(c) The department shall not issue any driver's license to nor renew the driver's license of any person:

(1) Whose license has been suspended during such suspension, or whose license has been revoked, except as otherwise provided in this chapter;

(2) Whose license is currently under suspension or revocation in any other jurisdiction upon grounds which would authorize the suspension or revocation of a license under this chapter;

(3) Who is a habitual user of alcohol or any drug to a degree rendering him or her incapable of safely driving a motor vehicle;

(4) Who has previously been adjudged to be afflicted with or suffering from any mental disability or disease and who has not at the time of application been restored to competency by the methods provided by law;

(5) Who is required by this chapter to take an examination, unless such person shall have successfully passed such examination;

(6) Who the commissioner has good cause to believe would not, by reason of physical or mental disability, be able to operate a motor vehicle with safety upon the highway; or

(7) Whose license issued by any other jurisdiction is suspended or revoked by such other jurisdiction during the period such license is suspended or revoked by such other jurisdiction.

SECTION VI

Teenage and Adult Drivers Responsibility Act (TAADRA) Information and Forms



The following links can be found at:

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/TAADRA.aspx>

<http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/State-Board-of-Education/SBOE%20Rules/160-5-1-.10.pdf>

- Teenage and Adult Drivers Responsibility Act Implementation Guidelines
- TAADRA Web Application User Instructions
- Certificate of Non-Compliance
- Certificate of Attendance
- Certificate of Eligibility for Restoration of Driving Privileges
- Reinstatement Office Locations
- Petition for Hardship Exemption
- TAADRA FAQs
- Student Attendance Definitions