



Student Attendance (See Form 1, 2, 3 & 4)	JE	8/10/11
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RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:

In compliance with the requirement set forth in O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, the parents/guardians, or other persons having charge of any child(ren) between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays are required by law to enroll and send such child(ren) to a public or private school or utilize a home study program. The State Board of Education’s Student Attendance Rule defines “ Truant” as any child subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than five days of unexcused absences. The District will comply with all applicable State authority, including law and State Board Rules, regarding student attendance.

RULE:

The Cobb County School District (District) requires that principals, teachers, and other designated personnel make and keep proper attendance records and administer disciplinary measures necessary to maintain regular student attendance.

- The District requires that principals, teachers and other designated personnel make and keep proper attendance records. It is important that local schools keep accurate data to reflect each student’s excused and unexcused absences. A copy of this documentation should remain on file in the school throughout the school year.
- Attendance should be taken in every class period for middle and high schools. Elementary schools shall take attendance daily.
- Local schools will provide to the parent/guardian or other person having control or charge of the student enrolled in the school, possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance.
- By September 1 of each school year or within 30 school days of a student’s enrollment in the school system, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of such student shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age ten or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the local system’s policy. The school will make two reasonable attempts by the school to secure such signature or signatures, and will be considered to be in compliance 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. The school will retain signed copies of statements through the end of the school year.

The following procedures shall be observed in regard to attendance of students:

A. Absences Considered Excused in Accordance with State Attendance Rule 160-5-1-10 and O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1:

1. When personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
2. When, in their immediate family, there is a serious illness or death which would reasonably necessitate absence from school. Immediate family is defined as mother, father, siblings, grandparents, step-parents or legal guardian.
3. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
4. When mandated by order of governmental agencies (examples: pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed forces or a court order).
5. Children may be excused from school attendance when prevented from such attendance due to conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to their health or safety.
6. Children who attend court proceedings relating to their foster care or who are serving as Pages in the Georgia General Assembly shall be credited as present by the school for days or class periods missed from school for this purpose. A student in foster care means a student who is in a foster home or otherwise in the foster care system under the Division of Family and Children Services of the Department of Human Services.
7. A student may be granted an excused absence not to exceed one day in order to register to vote or to vote in a public election.
8. A student whose parent/guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent/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 (5) school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his/her parent/guardian prior to such parent/guardian's deployment or during such parent/guardian's leave.

B. Excused and Unexcused Absences:

1. A letter written by a parent/guardian and/or licensed physician explaining the reasons for absences must be presented to school authorities by all students on the date of return to school or no later than the following school day after a period of absence from school. Failure to submit a note within three schools days after a student's return from an absence will result in the absence being marked as unexcused.
2. The principal may ask for additional medical or other documentation to verify that absences are excused, particularly when more than three (3) absences have been accumulated during the semester.
3. Students who become ill or injured while at school shall be dismissed from school only after parents/guardians have been notified. Exceptions to this policy shall be made only in cases of emergency.
4. A student shall be dismissed before the school day officially ends when a parent or guardian sends a written request or speaks by telephone with the principal or principal's designee, explaining the reason for early dismissal to the principal or appears in person requesting the student's dismissal The school shall verify the identity of anyone requesting early dismissal of a student from school.
5. Individual students who have emergencies necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must have been present for one-half of the instructional day in order to be included in the average daily attendance count.
6. Students shall not leave the school grounds during school hours without permission from the principal or principal's designee.
7. Principals or principal's designees may require verification of right of custody/identification of anyone requesting early dismissal of a student.
8. Pregnant Students – See Admin Rule JIG

C. Late arrivals/early checkouts

1. To be considered "in attendance" for a school day, a student must be present for at least one-half of the school day, excluding the lunch period. Students leaving school before

- meeting that requirement will be considered absent for the day.
2. A parent/legal guardian may be required to bring appropriate documentation showing the necessity of an early checkout/late arrival.

D. Excessive Absences

As required by Georgia law, the District will participate in a Student Attendance Protocol Committee, and will address excessive absences as discussed in the Student Attendance Protocol (Form JE-5, incorporated by reference here), which contains procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with parents and guardians.

The parental contacts discussed in the Attendance Protocol are the minimum to be utilized. The District and/or local school administrators may initiate additional contacts with parents/guardians if deemed appropriate to address the attendance issues of their respective school communities. Likewise, local school administrators may make a referral to the School Social Worker at **any time** it is deemed appropriate.

After fifteen occurrences: The school administrator should confer with a School Social Worker to determine whether a referral is warranted.

E. Suspensions/Expulsions

Absences due to out-of-school suspensions or expulsions are considered unexcused absences but do not count towards truancy. Parents of students who are suspended or expelled will be notified pursuant to Administrative Rules [JKDB](#) and [JKDA](#).

F. Penalties

Pursuant to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Statute, O.C.G.A. & 20-2-690, et seq., a parent or legal guardian who fails to send his or her child to school may be charged with a misdemeanor. At its discretion, a court having jurisdiction may subject the parent or guardian to a fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00, imprisonment not to exceed thirty (30) days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, if found guilty of violating the Compulsory Attendance Statute. Each day's absence 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 be considered a separate offense as related to the penalty.

Reclassified an Administrative Rule: 9/1/04

Revised: 1/27/05; 6/21/05; 7/1/06, 8/10/11