

# Attention Parents!

## School Attendance is Critical

**Recent Research Data from the Georgia State Department of Education** indicates that **missing more than five days of school each year, regardless of the cause, begins to impact student academic performance and starts shaping attitudes about school.** Chronically truant students **are not** the only students negatively impacted by absences. For students in the 6th grade through the 9th grade, student attendance is a better predictor of dropping out of school than test scores. This predictor is not limited to chronically truant students. Excused absences and unexcused absences have similar impact on student academic performance. For additional information please visit the state

**Cobb County School District (CCSD)** is required by law to have a policy/protocol to address excessive absences to include procedures for **identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law.** The **CCSD Attendance Protocol** includes the following:

**Three (3) unexcused absences**-teachers will communicate with parents via email, phone, conference or postcard regarding the attendance concern.

**Five (5) unexcused absences**-communication to parents via letter

**Seven (7) unexcused absences**-student will be referred to the school social worker to address concerns regarding the unexcused absences.

**Ten (10) or more absences**-students and/or parents will be subject to a referral to The Juvenile Court of Cobb County, Magistrate Court of Cobb County and/or Department of Family and Children Services for truancy and/or Educational Neglect.

**Please note that a principal can refer a student to the school social worker at any time he/she deems necessary.**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Don't let your child stay home unless he or she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Maintain communication with the school about reasons for absences. Remember, excessive parents notes can also be an issue.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Ride the bus! Prevent tardies! As soon as a child steps on the bus, he or she is counted present at school.

**It's the Law!** If your child is between the ages of 6 and 16, the **Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law** requires that your child be enrolled and attending a public, private or home school program. The law further states that if your student has five or more unexcused absences you could be in violation of the law and is subject to various penalties allowed under the law. For a copy of the law please visit the state website at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)

For additional information contact your School Social Worker, Mandy Goodwin at 770 437-5937