

PAULDING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

DEFINITIONS:

- 1) Early Dismissal - student is dismissed early from class/school when he/she leaves the school premises prior to the end of the scheduled school day.
- 2) Excused Absence - the reason for a student being absent meets the established criteria set forth in the school board policy for consideration of excused absences.
- 3) Excused Tardy - the reason for a student being tardy meets the established criteria set forth in the school board policy for consideration of excused tardiness.
- 4) Parent - for purposes of this Protocol, the term "Parent" may include any adult who has charge and control over the child, including a biological, adoptive, foster, or step-parent, a guardian or any other person who has control or charge of the child's attendance at school. In this regard, two parents residing in the same household with the child are equally responsible for the child's attendance at school.
- 5) Tardy to Class - a student is tardy to class when he/she arrives to class after the time established by the school.
- 6) Tardy to School - student is tardy to school when he/she arrives after the established start time for the school day.
- 7) Truancy – any instance where a student has more than five days of unexcused absences.
- 8) Truant - any child subject to compulsory education (ages 6 to 16 (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1), and 5-year olds who have been enrolled twenty (20) days in school (O.C.G.A. 20-2-150 (c)), who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences.
- 9) Unexcused Absence - the reason for a student being absent does not meet the established criteria set forth in the school board policy for consideration of excused absences.
- 10) Unexcused Tardy - the reason for a student being tardy does not meet the established criteria set forth in the school board policy for consideration of excused tardiness.
- 11) Unruly Child – any child who is habitually and without justification truant from school.
- 12) Core Mental Health Providers - mental health treatment providers that are contracted with the State of Georgia to provide mental health treatment services to persons insured by Medicaid or PeachCare, or who do not have insurance benefits covering mental health services. A sliding scale co-pay may be charged based on income, for uninsured and underinsured consumers.

PAULDING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES

❖ Attendance Goals:

The goals of the Paulding County Attendance Protocol Committee are to reduce the number of unexcused/unlawful absences from school, and to increase the percentage of students present in school to take state-mandated tests. The committee also promotes coordination and cooperation between the officials, agencies, and programs of Paulding County to promote punctual and regular attendance in school.

❖ School Policies:

The Paulding County School District will adopt policies and regulations outlining the specific steps to be taken to accomplish the goals of the Attendance Protocol Committee.

❖ Notification of Attendance Laws and Consequences:

Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents will be given notice in their child's handbook of the State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code §20-2-690.1 and the Paulding County Board of Education school attendance policy. The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure receipt and comprehension of the policy by requesting signatures from parents/guardians that this notice was received and understood. Students who have reached age ten (10) or above by September 1 of the school year will also provide their signature indicating understanding.

❖ Excused Absence:

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.

Appropriate written documentation must be submitted to the school to validate that the absence is an excused/lawful absence. The Principal or designee has the authority to require additional proof of the legitimacy of a written excuse. For example, the Principal or designee may require doctor's statements justifying the absence of the student, and may require proof that the child's condition rendered the child incapable of attending school. Written excuses must be submitted within **three (3)** school days of the date of absence, and must include: the date(s) of the absence; the student's

name; the reason(s) for the absence; and the signature of the parent. The school district will receive any written excuses after that period but will not change the absences to an excused/lawful absence. Students may receive make-up work for absences; however, any work missed because of an unexcused/unlawful absence will not count for credit.

Students placed in the hospital/homebound program will be considered present in accordance with the policies and procedures governing the administration of the program.

❖ **Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

Absences that do not meet the criteria of an excused absence per Georgia law, or that are not validated by appropriate documentation as determined by the principal or designee are unexcused/unlawful. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted as unexcused/unlawful. A student who accumulates five (5) unexcused absences will be considered truant.

❖ **Active Steps by Schools to Reduce Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

➤ **Daily:**

The parent/guardian may use the *Parent Portal* on the district website, www.paulding.k12.ga.us to verify the attendance of their child in school. They may also arrange to be notified by e-mail by this same program if their child is absent.

Schools may also devise other strategies to notify a parent/guardian when a child is absent from school.

➤ **Three (3) Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

A teacher will make direct contact with the parent of a student when they accumulate three unexcused/unlawful absences. The attendance procedures and consequences of additional unexcused/unlawful absences will be explained. This action will be documented.

➤ **Four (4) Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

A teacher will refer students to the school counselor upon four unexcused absences.

➤ **Five (5) Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

- A teacher will refer any student with five unexcused/unlawful absences to the principal or designee, with a discipline slip.
- The principal or designee will notify the parent by letter of the consequences of continued truancy, and that every unexcused absence after five will constitute a separate offense. A school attendance contract will be attached to the 5-day Letter of Notification. After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent/guardian, the school shall send a notice by certified mail return receipt requested or first class mail to the parent.

➤ **Seven (7) Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

- The principal or designee will make a referral to the School Social Worker for each student with seven unexcused absences. The 5-day Letter of Notification with parent signature or certified letter receipt will be attached to the referral.

➤ **Subsequent Absences:**

- The principal or designee will notify the School Social Worker (SSW) upon the 10th and 15th unexcused absence.
- The School Social Worker will:
 - file a juvenile complaint against students aged thirteen to sixteen to Juvenile Court for truancy or students age five through twelve for educational deprivation, upon fifteen or more unexcused absences, when appropriate, with notice sent to parent/guardian by certified mail, return receipt requested.
 - coordinate with other agencies and officers to secure a warrant for the arrest of a parent of a student age five to sixteen to the Magistrate Court for failure to comply with the compulsory attendance provisions of Georgia law;
 - refer a parent to the Department of Family and Children Services for suspicion or indications of abuse/neglect, and/or
 - make appropriate referrals to other agencies.

❖ **Drivers License**

In accordance with subsection (a.1) of Code Section 40-5-22, the instruction permit or driver's license of a minor shall be suspended or not issued, subject to review, if one or *more* of the following occurs:

- Has dropped out of school without graduating and has remained out of school for ten school days; or
- Has ten or more school days of unexcused absences in the academic year or in the previous academic year
- Has been found in violation by a hearing officer, panel, or tribunal of one of the following offenses, has not received a change in placement for committing one of the following offenses, or has not waived his or her right to a hearing and pleaded guilty to one of the following offenses: threatening, striking, or causing bodily harm to a teacher or other school personnel; possession or sale of drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school sponsored event; possession or use of a weapon on school property or at a school sponsored event; 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.

School personnel shall report to the Department of Driver Services any child 14 years through seventeen who does not meet the attendance requirements contained in subsection (a. 1) of Code Section 40-5-22. Such report shall include the child's name, current address, and social security number, if known.

School personnel shall use their best efforts to notify any child 14 years of age through seventeen who has only three absences remaining prior to violating the attendance requirements contained in subsection (a.1) of Code Section 40-5-22. Such notification shall be made via first-class mail.

➤ **Seven (7) Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

The principal or designee will notify by letter the parent of a student, fourteen years of age through seventeen who has seven unexcused absences, of the consequences of violating the attendance requirements contained in subsection (a.1) of Code Section §40-5-22 concerning the suspension of instructional permits or drivers licenses by the Department of Driver Services.

➤ **Ten Unexcused/Unlawful Absences:**

Send the name, current address, and social security number of any student age fourteen through seventeen with ten unexcused absences to the Department of Driver Services.

❖ **Extracurricular Activities:**

The following procedures will be followed regarding school supported extracurricular activities:

- Students will not participate in activities, rehearsals, practices and/or games on days that they are absent from school.
- Students who accumulate five (5) or more unexcused absences in a semester will be ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities for the following semester. Absences from the previous school year will carry over to a new school year. For example, if a student accumulates five (5) or more unexcused absences in the final semester of the previous school year, they will not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities during the first semester of the new school year.
- A student may regain his/her privileges at the end of the next semester by meeting all the standards stated below:
 - Have less than five (5) unexcused absences;
 - Have less than three discipline referrals;
 - Have four or less instances of being late (tardy) to school and/or instances of checking out of school early.

Athletic Directors, coaches, band directors, and sponsors will discuss these rules with students prior to their respective extracurricular activity and maintain compliance.

❖ **Driving Privileges:**

Students who have the privilege of driving automobiles to school and parking on campus must maintain good attendance. Students shall lose these privileges and parking permit for the following semester if they:

- Have five or more unexcused absences;
- Have more than three discipline referrals; or
- Have four or more incidences of being late to school and/or checking out early.

This policy will continue from the previous school year. For example, if a student accumulates five (5) or more unexcused absences in the last semester of the previous school year he/she will not be eligible for driving privileges and permits during the first semester of the new school year.

- A student may regain his/her privileges at the end of the next semester by meeting all of the attendance and discipline criteria below:

- Have less than five unexcused absences;
- Have less than three discipline referrals;
- Have four or less instances of being late (tardy) to school and/or instances of checking out of school early.

Students who have lost their driving and/or other privileges and who violate the intent of these procedures by driving to school, parking on and off campus, and/or participate in extracurricular activities, shall be subject to discipline that may include permanent loss of parking and other privileges and punishment for insubordination.

❖ **Unexcused Tardiness and/or Early Dismissal:**

Each school will develop policies and procedures for reducing tardiness and early checkouts. A progressive system should be incorporated in each school whereby appropriate consequences increase based on the number of events. Careful consideration will be made to ensure that the consequences employed are not so stringent as to cause the student to choose to be absent rather than tardy.

❖ **Rewards Program:**

The Paulding County School District will establish incentive programs to promote punctual and regular attendance in its schools. The programs may include, but are not limited to, rewards based on the following:

- Perfect Attendance for the year;
- Perfect Attendance per semester;
- Reduction of absences from the previous year by 3 or more days; and/or
- Being under the daily average for days missed for the school year.

The District and individual schools should coordinate with the local businesses to acquire sponsors to support the incentive programs.

❖ **Proactive Steps:**

At the beginning of each school year, each school will create a list of students who had ten or more absences, excused or unexcused, for the previous year. The school will consider placing each of these students, on a case-by-case basis, into an absence intervention program for the coming year. This intervention program may consist of the following:

- The establishment of an attendance contract consistent with the provisions of this protocol, state law, and Board of Education policies and regulation;
- The assignment of a mentor to provide support and assistance in approving attendance during the coming school year; and/or
- The involvement of community support.

❖ **Recurring Reports:**

The Paulding County School District will establish procedures for collecting the necessary data to monitor attendance at each school. The principal at each school, in cooperation with the School Social Worker/Attendance Officer will be responsible for reviewing and providing the data in the designated format to the central office as directed by the Superintendent. The Superintendent will make this data available for each meeting of the Paulding County Attendance Protocol Committee.

❖ **School Social Worker/Attendance Officer:**

The School Social Worker/Attendance Officer will:

- Review referred information from the school;
- Consult with the school attendance contact (administrator);
- Determine the need for immediate referral of:
 - Students age ten (10) to sixteen (16) to Juvenile Court for being truant;
 - Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students ages five (5) to (16) to the Magistrate Court for failure to comply with the compulsory attendance provisions of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1;
 - Refer the family to the Department of Family and Children Services for suspicion or indicators of abuse/neglect; Send copy to Juvenile Court.
 - Make appropriate referrals to other agencies.

❖ **Form Letters:**

Sample letters may be found in the *Appendix*.

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION FOR THE VIOLATION OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAWS

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 requires any person in this state who has control or 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.

A child is responsible to attend school and is subject to adjudication in Paulding County Juvenile Court as any unruly child for violation of this statute. If a parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of the child causes the child's absence, then that person, and not the child, is in violation of this statute. Such a violation is a misdemeanor and carries a penalty of up to \$100 fine and 30 days in jail for each violation. The law specifies that each day's absence constitutes a separate offense.

For purposes of this Protocol, the term "Parent" may include any adult who has charge and control over the child, including a biological, adoptive, foster, or step-parent, a guardian or any other person who has control or charge of the child's attendance at school. In this regard, two parents residing in the same household with the child are equally responsible for the child's attendance at school.

❖ **Filing Juvenile Complaints:**

A juvenile complaint should be filed in the Juvenile Court of Paulding County against a child, who is habitually and without justification truant from school. Such a child is "unruly."

For purposes of this Protocol, habitual truancy or absence is defined as five (5) or more days of unexcused absences from school. The following options will be considered, at a minimum:

- Referral of the student and/or parent to the appropriate social services;
- Requesting further medical documentation if appropriate;
- File an "unruly child" complaint with the Juvenile Court of Paulding County; and/or

- Seeking a citation and/or criminal warrant for the parent from the Magistrate Court of Paulding County or other authority as prescribed.

❖ **Juvenile Justice Procedures:**

The intake process for Juvenile Complaints requires the following:

- All complaints for truancy will be forwarded to the Clerk of Juvenile Court;
- The Clerk of Juvenile Court may contact the School Social Worker for any further pertinent information;
- Truancy complaints will receive immediate attention and be placed on the most current Juvenile Court Calendar for arraignment.

❖ **Adjudication and Disposition:**

A youth may be placed on Probation for Truancy by the Juvenile Court Judge upon adjudication of a Truancy charge. At this time, the Juvenile Solicitor may request a Protective Order to ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) actively assist in the youth's compliance with Conditions of Probation and the youth's attendance at school.

A Probation Officer will monitor the student's attendance, at a minimum, on a weekly basis. Further unexcused absences from school by youth will result in immediate sanction by the Department of Juvenile Justice, including possible Violation of Probation. Upon adjudication for Truancy-related Violation of Probation, the Juvenile Court Judge will determine what further action or intervention is appropriate.

Judicial truancy reviews will be held on a monthly basis from the date of the initial Probation Order for Truancy-related Probation cases. These reviews will assess the youth's attendance at school and effectiveness of any services that may be involved to assist youth and/or family. All parties involved should be prepared to report on youth's progress at these reviews.

A Probation Order may be terminated by the Juvenile Court Judge prior to the two-year expiration date if youth's attendance and/or progress have reached a level satisfactory to all parties involved.

❖ **Prosecution of a Parent**

When it is clear that a parent is the direct cause of the child's absence, a citation or warrant for violation of O.C.G.A § 20-2-690.1 should be sought against the parent. In other circumstances, the Magistrate Court Judge, may, but is not required to, take into account the following considerations when issuing a criminal citation or warrant is sought for the parent of a child;

- The child is under the age of 13 years;
- The child has an illness for which the parent has not been diligent in pursuing medical attention or in seeking financial assistance to procure the proper medical attention, as determined by competent authority;
- The parent has not actively sought assistance from community social services and resources to assist in getting the child to school;
- The parent is absent from the home or neglectful to an extent that it hinders the child's willingness or ability to attend school; or
- The child is a deprived child.

The child and parent must comply with the Court's recommendations. Failure of the child or parent to comply with the recommendations, including further unexcused absences

from school, will result in possible juvenile adjudication of the child and/or criminal prosecution of the parent. In any event, if the child accumulates **fifteen** (15) or more unexcused absences in any school year, the School Social Worker will file a juvenile complaint and/or apply for a criminal warrant for violation of compulsory school attendance laws. When a parent is prosecuted, regular school attendance will be assigned as a condition of bond.

❖ **Law Enforcement**

The law enforcement agencies within the jurisdiction of Paulding County will immediately institute pro-active patrols of businesses, streets and other areas within their jurisdiction to identify truant students. Students who have no legal excuse for being out of school will be transported to the appropriate school and delivered to the school administrator for appropriate action. Incident reports and/or juvenile complaints will be completed as necessary.

Each respective entity will issue appropriate citations/warrants as directed and identified by the Paulding County School district to individuals in violation of the compulsory school attendance laws.

❖ **Health Agencies**

➤ **Public Health**

- Each school in Paulding County has a part-time licensed or registered nurse available to provide school nursing services. While at a school, these personnel shall :
 - work in conjunction with teachers, school administrators, Public Health, and the School Social Worker to promote general health and safety of students, school staff, and the community;
 - cooperate with other staff, in determining when a child should be sent home early for the day, due to health related concerns;
 - follow orders written by a student's physician, within the Board of Education policies regulations, regarding medication or other medical treatment to be provided during school hours; and
 - assist the principal or designee in evaluating a written excuse for an absence.
- The Paulding County Health Department is an integral partner in community health related to school readiness, attendance, and success. The Paulding County Health Department shall:
 - Continue to support and promote Paulding County Youth Health Services;
 - Provide immunization evaluations, immunizations, and immunization records required for school enrollment;
 - Provide Scoliosis screens for students; and
 - Provide various medical, dental, and prescription services, referrals, and education to students and families in Paulding County to promote personal and community health.

❖ **Mental Health**

The Paulding County Core Mental Health Providers, including, but not limited to, Highland Rivers and Family Intervention Specialists, provide crucial support for the mental, physical, and emotional well being of students and their families, including individual and group sessions on-site at the school for student clients of Paulding

County Mental Health. In support of this Protocol, Paulding County Core Mental Health Providers shall:

- Notify and/or refer student clients to the School Counselor or Social Worker when efforts to conduct individual or group sessions at school repeatedly fail, due to absences;
- Coordinate and host regular Interagency Staffing Committee meetings, which facilitate support and treatment planning for at-risk youth, including students who are truant;
- Attend court proceedings, when appropriate, for cases involving truancy and support any court orders for treatment of emotional or family issues contributing to absences; and
- Offer clinical support, when possible and appropriate, to any truancy prevention or treatment programs instituted.

In accordance with state and federal laws related to confidentiality, Paulding County Core Mental Health Providers and Paulding County Schools shall, as appropriate, obtain written releases of information to allow communication as outlined above.

❖ **Department of Family and Children Services**

The Paulding County Department of Family and Children Services often provide social services to the families of truant students. In support of this Protocol, the Paulding County Department of Family and Children's Services shall:

- Accept and consider information related to school attendance, behavior, and performance in reports and investigations related to suspected abuse and/or neglect;
- Address school attendance in departmental case plans and safety plans;
- Ensure school enrollment and regular attendance for students in emergency shelter care, temporary placement arranged by the Department, or foster care;
- Verify involvement of the School Social Worker when available attendance information indicates more than ten (10) unexcused absences; and
- Attend court proceedings, when necessary, for cases involving truancy and/or complaints against parents related to mandatory school attendance. Subpoena(s) should be issued to the appropriate Case Manager and/or Investigator when participation by the Department of Family and Children Services is desired.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

❖ **Paulding County Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber of Commerce will form an Education Committee, which will support this Protocol by facilitating a partnership between local businesses employing students during the school year and Paulding County Schools. Businesses will be asked to sign an agreement with their student employees that states the following:

Employment hours shall be restricted to no more than twenty (20) per week. Student employees shall not knowingly be allowed to work on days they are absent from school. Students shall share grade and attendance information each term. Student employees shall be placed on probation and/or work hours shall be reduced if grades or school attendance decline.

The agreement forms shall be provided by the school district. The school district shall require that students requesting agreement forms or employment permits identify

their prospective employer and, along with their parent(s)/guardian(s), give permission for attendance and grades to be shared with that employer.

The Chamber will encourage business leaders to help keep students in school during school hours. Businesses will also be asked to not provide service to any student under the age of 16 during school hours.

❖ **Paulding County Family Connections**

One of the primary goals of Paulding Family Connections is to ensure the academic success of school children. As a part of this primary goal there is a committee that is devoted to reducing school absences. This committee will work with various agencies and the media to promote schemes intended to reduce school absentees. Specifically, the committee may apply for grants from various agencies to obtain funding to provide an attendance assistant for each of the schools in Paulding County. The assistant would work with the teachers, social worker, and administrators to identify absentees and to take action as indicated by the procedures and protocol.

In addition the committee should work with the Boys and Girls club to provide counseling and activities for those students that are identified as potential beneficiaries of such intervention.

The committee should also work with various agencies and the media to insure public awareness of the value to the individual and community, and penalties to the parent and child of school absences.

❖ **Paulding County Recreation Department**

The Paulding County Recreation Department will take active steps to help reduce truancy in the Paulding County Schools. Specifically, the department will:

- Ask the coaching staff of recreational sports to stress the importance of regular school attendance;
- Include information regarding attendance laws and consequences on sign-up fliers. Post conspicuous signs at the recreation department and at the fields stating:

The Paulding County Recreation Department supports the efforts of the Paulding County School District and other collaborative agencies to reduce truancy. Students who are too sick to attend school should not attend recreational sports practices, games or other activities after school hours on the days when they are absent from school.

MONITORING THE PROTOCOL

To ensure that these written protocol procedures are followed, the Protocol Committee will meet quarterly for a year, which will begin on the date of the protocol's adoption. The Protocol Committee will then meet semiannually, as required by law, unless the Committee determines more frequent meetings are required. The Committee's goal will be to improve communication between agencies, encourage interagency cooperation, and update the protocol as necessary. Each participating agency shall monitor and evaluate compliance with this protocol and, as needed, recommend protocol revision and implementation that best meets the needs of the community and complies with Federal, State, and local statutes, as well as agency policy.

In accordance with this Protocol, the Paulding County School District will provide this committee with necessary reports needed to determine compliance and progress.

Signatures

In signing this protocol, we, the undersigned, state that we are proper representatives of the perspective entities listed, and that we commit our entities to the procedures outlined above.

David Austin, Chairman of the Paulding County Commission	Date
Kathy West, Chair, Paulding County Board of Education	Date
Larry Ragsdale, Superintendent, Paulding County Board of Education	Date
Tonny Beavers, Paulding County Superior Court	Date
Martin Valbuena, Paulding County Magistrate Court	Date
Sandra Miller, Paulding County Juvenile Court	Date
Drew Lane, Paulding County District Attorney	Date
Terry Isaac, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice	Date
Gary Gulledge, Paulding County Sheriff	Date
Barbara Burnley, Paulding County Division of Family and Children Services	Date
Teresa Knight, Paulding County Health Department	Date
Dr. David Anthony, Family Intervention Specialists, Core Mental Health Provider	Date
Kim Johnson, Highland Rivers, Core Mental Health Provider	Date
Denise Johnston, Paulding County Family Connections	Date
Carolyn Delamont, Paulding County Chamber of Commerce	Date
Chief Scott Halter, Dallas Chief of Police	Date
Johnny Shirley, Hiram Chief of Police	Date
Michael Justus, Paulding County Recreation Department	Date

SAMPLE/OPTIONAL
(School Name) Principal Letter

Date

Parent/guardian name

Street/P.O. Box #

City, State Zip code

Dear _____:

The Paulding County Board of Education Policy, JB, *Student Attendance*, states, "In responding to student attendance issues, the school district shall comply with all requirements of state law, State Board of Education rules, and the Student Attendance Protocol that has been developed by the county's Student Attendance Protocol Committee."

The policy further provides that, "The principal *may in certain circumstances* require students to present appropriate medical or other documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused. The principal may ask for proper documentation when one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. more than three (3) absences have been accumulated during the semester, or
2. more than 10 days of absences were recorded the previous school year.

This letter serves as your notification that further absence by your child will require the appropriate medical or legal documentation. Failure to produce this documentation will result in the absence being considered "unlawful/unexcused." Please contact my office at _____ to arrange a conference concerning this matter.

Thank you,

Principal

Sample 5 Day Unexcused Letter

Date
Parent name

To the parent(s)/guardian(s) of:

In compliance with Georgia Law (Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) Section 20-2-690.1), this letter is to notify you that our school records indicate your child has missed five or more unexcused absences.

O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-690.1 requires any person in this State who has control or 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. This law further states that 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 district 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.

For the purpose of accurately measuring the academic performance of students continuously enrolled in public schools, the Board has adopted uniform criteria for withdrawing students which includes that appropriate school personnel are authorized to withdraw a student who has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences. **(Refer to Policy JB for student attendance for more information.)**

Please sign and return this letter as acknowledgement of notification of the compulsory attendance law.

Sincerely,

Principal Signature

Parent Signature

Student Signature (age 10 or more)

Attendance Checklist/ Visiting Teacher Referral

Individual Student Documentation

Student: _____ **Student ID #** _____ **: Grade:** _____

School: _____ **Administrator:** _____

Homeroom: _____ **DOB** _____

Step	Date	Action	Responsible Personnel
1		Board of Education policies and regulations are communicated to the general student population and parents. Consequences for truancy explained.	Superintendent and Staff
2		The school administration and staff communicate Board of Education policies and regulations regarding attendance and truancy to students and parents by reviewing provisions of the Student Handbook.	School administration and staff
3		School creates a report of students with excessive absences (10) unexcused absences from the previous year. Teachers notified of students with 10 unexcused absences from the previous school year. Principal notifies parent in writing that appropriate medical and other documentation is required to validate that an absence is excused this year. An attendance contract is developed between the school, excessively absent and/or truant students, and their parents.	Administration
4		Teacher contacts the parent directly upon the third unexcused absence of the student. The consequences of continued unexcused absences are shared with the parent/student.	Teacher
5		Teacher refers student to counselor upon 4 unexcused absences for proper guidance.	Teacher
6		Upon fifth unexcused absence, the teacher refers the student to the principal and/or his/her designee with a discipline referral. The student takes home a copy of the discipline referral and a copy of the 5 day unexcused absences letter with a student attendance contract attached. If the 5-day letter and contract are not returned, the principal or his/her designee mails a copy of the 5-day unexcused absences letter and the student attendance contract. Parents are requested to sign and return to the school the 5-day letter and attendance contract. A third letter is sent by first class mail if the first two attempts to obtain the parent's signature concerning the student's five unexcused absences have failed.	Teacher Principal or designee
7		Administrator refers the student to the School Social Worker or Attendance Officer for Truancy upon the 7th unexcused absence. Clerk sends referral on email.	Teacher/Administrator
8	_____ _____ _____	Principal refers the student to the School Social Worker/Attendance Officer upon the 10th and 15th unexcused absence, after the 3-day period to submit notes has expired. Clerk sends referral on email.	Principal or designee
9		School Social Worker/Attendance officer refers the student, under age 16, to Juvenile Court for truancy or educational deprivation. A certified letter with return receipt requested is sent prior to filing a complaint.	School Social Worker or Attendance Officer
10		Social worker works with Juvenile Judge and other officers to refer the parent(s) of the student age six (6) to sixteen (16) to the Magistrate Court for failure to Comply with the compulsory attendance provisions of Georgia law.	School Social Worker or Attendance Officer