

Why is there so much emphasis on student attendance?

A recent study conducted by the Georgia Department of Education cites student attendance as a primary indicator of student achievement, more importantly students dropping out.

Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law 20-2-290.1

requires all students ages six to sixteen to be enrolled in a public or private school or home-study program— In other words “it’s the law”. Students accruing (5) five or more unexcused absences are considered in violation of the law.

School attendance is addressed in the Georgia Teenage Driver Law: (10) ten unexcused absences will result in the revocation of driving privileges for up to one year for students ages: 15, 16, and 17. Students dropping out of school at 16, will not be eligible for a driver’s license until they turn 18.

Definitions

Excused Absence: Excused absences are defined by the State Board of Education Rules. As applied in the District, students may be temporarily excused from school if:

- A child is ill or attendance in school would endanger his/ her health or the health of others*
- A serious illness or death occurs in the immediate family of the child*
- A child is observing a recognized religious holiday of his/her faith*
- A child is mandated by order of a governmental agency*

A complete listing of excused absences can be found in Cobb County School District’s Policy Administrative Rule JE.

**Please note that doctor and illness notes must be provided within 3 days of the absence in order for it to be marked excused.*

Excuse Note: Notes may be tendered by parents and guardians. An excuse note must include the date(s) of the student’s absences, nature of the student’s absence, and signature of the parent or guardian. Excuse notes originating from a medical professional must be written on stationary that includes the doctor and/ or practice contact information. Excuse notes may be submitted electronically.

Medical Documentation: Medical verification may include standard doctor notes that include date(s) of student absence from school, the doctor and/ or practice contact information. These notes include dentist, doctors, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.

Unexcused Absence: It does not meet the established criteria set forth by the school board policy for consideration of excused absences for the following reasons: Missing the school bus, attending appointments with parents to translate, baby sitting, not having anything clean to wear, weather conditions that do not necessitate school closures, not wanting to attend school that day, etc.

School Attendance 101: for Students and Families



A Community with a Passion for Learning

**Important changes to the Cobb
County School District's
Administrative Rule JE– Student
Attendance (adopted 8/10/11):**

3 unexcused absences: Contact is made with the student's family by the teacher.

5 unexcused absences: Written notification is sent to the student's family.

7 unexcused absences: For students ages six to sixteen a referral is made to the School Social Worker. A truancy intervention panel may be scheduled.

10 unexcused absences: Referral to the court of jurisdiction. For students, this is the Juvenile Court of Cobb County. Parents may be charged with educational neglect, thus possibly leading to the issuance of a criminal warrant and prosecution in the Cobb County State Court.

* Additionally, doctor notes may be required once a student has accrued (3) three absences in a semester.

**Promoting Exceptional
Attendance!**

- Students and families should discuss school- make it a priority!
- Know and follow school district policies pertaining to attendance.
- Be an advocate for your child and education!
- Establish routines that promote organization and preparedness.
- Parents and/or guardians are encouraged to communicate with teachers at the first sign their student is struggling.
- Middle and High School families sign-up for Pinnacle - Use it regularly!

If you have further questions visit the School Social Work site on the Cobb County School District's webpage at www.cobbbk12.org
Prepared by the:
Cobb County School District's
School Social Work Department

**School Social Worker
Communication and Referrals:**

Upon receipt of a written referral:

1. The school social worker will assess the student and family circumstances related to poor attendance.

2. Other interventions and strategies may be utilized depending on the circumstances of the case and may include the following:

a. Consultation with school staff (teacher, counselor, assistant principal, principal, other)

b. Consultation with student, and parent or guardian

c. Home visit(s)

d. Participation in the Response to Intervention process, Special Education due process, school conferences, and other school-based interventions as necessary

e. Referral to Juvenile Court

f. Referral to the Department of Family & Children Services for educational neglect

3. If you have questions or need further information, contact your local school.