

Student Attendance Protocol

Carroll County Schools

Purpose

This student attendance protocol is written as a cooperative effort in coordination with appropriate Carroll County and Carrollton City agencies for the purpose of commitment to improving student attendance through utilization of targeted strategies and interventions for reduction of unexcused absences and truancy (O.C.G.A. §20-2-690.2).

Student Attendance Protocol Committee

Representatives from the following agencies comprise membership of the Student Attendance Protocol Committee and participated in preparing this Student Attendance Protocol:

- Carroll County Superior Court
- Carroll County Juvenile Court
- Carroll County Solicitor of State Court
- Carroll County Office of the District Attorney
- Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- Carroll County Board of Education
- Carrollton City Board of Education
- Carroll County Sheriff's Office
- Carroll County Department of Family and Children Services
- Carroll County Health Department
- Carroll County Family Connection Authority
- Carroll County Youth Connection
- Carroll County Mental Health
- City Chiefs of Police: Bowdon, Carrollton, Mt. Zion, Temple, Whitesburg, Villa Rica

Operational Authority

The Student Attendance Protocol Committee is operational under authority of the chief superior court judge as defined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.2. Following adoption of this written protocol and filing with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), the committee will meet quarterly during its first year and twice annually thereafter for the purpose of evaluating compliance and effectiveness, and to modify the protocol as appropriate.

Tardies and Early Checkouts

Definition of Terms

Tardy to School: Any student arriving at school following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal established by the Principal and intended to indicate the start of the school day. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the bell, chime, or other audible signal will be considered tardy to school.

Tardy to Class: A student is "tardy to class" when he/she arrives to class following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal indicating the beginning of instructional time.

Excused tardy – A tardy resulting from events beyond a student's control, such as an accident, road closed due to an accident, area power outage, late bus, or other excuses determined by the Principal or designee as acceptable. Documentation is required to excuse a tardy.

Unexcused tardy – Incidents including over-sleeping, heavy traffic, errands, delays at a train crossing, or similar excuses determined by the Principal or designee as unacceptable are unexcused. Documentation will not obligate the Principal or designee to excuse an unexcused tardy.

Early Checkout- Leaving school prior to the end of instructional time and/or the end of the official school day.

- Excused: Early checkouts for emergency, illness, or other reasons that the Principal deems necessary or reasonable. Documentation is required to excuse an early dismissal. Records will be kept at each school to document the number of days a student misses due to early checkouts. Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the SST as the Principal deems necessary.
- Unexcused: Early checkouts for reasons other than those approved by the Principal. Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the SST as the Principal deems necessary.

Official School Start/End Time: The time designated by the principal and advertised to students and parents as the official start or end of the school day. Correct time will be the time as determined accurate by the school principal, indicated on a designated school clock, and displayed in a prominent public location.

Response to Intervention (RTI): A multi-tiered, incremental structure for targeted provision of services and interventions based on a student's progress as measured by data analysis, teacher observation, or other appropriate monitoring.

Student Support Team (SST): An interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning, behavior, and/or attendance problems of K-12 students in a school.

Attendance Team Committee (ATM): An interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to specifically address attendance problems of K-12 students in a school.

Unexcused Tardies and Early Checkouts

Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies will receive a referral to the Principal or Principal's designee for violation of Board Policy JCDA: Student Code of Conduct.

At the school system's discretion, students establishing a pattern of early checkouts maybe referred to the Principal or Principal's designee for disciplinary or other appropriate action.

Students leaving early or arriving late to class may be counted absent from the class or classes missed if they are not present for the entire instructional period.

Consequences and Penalties for Unexcused Tardies/Early Checkouts

The Principal or Principal's designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts.

Definition of Terms

Truant – any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences.

Exception for suspension

School days missed as a result of an out of school suspension shall not count as unexcused days for the purpose of determining student truancy.

Excused Absences

Local boards of education shall adopt policies and procedures excusing students from school under the following circumstances, as a minimum:

- Personal illness: The school will allow a maximum of five absences per year to be excused on the authority of written parent notes. The principal can exercise discretion in extreme cases of hardship to accept written parent notes in excess of the standard five per year. Additional absences will be excused only with an original medical excuse signed by a health care professional.
- Circumstances where attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others.
- Serious illness in a student's immediate family
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
- Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
- Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.
- When 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, a student 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.

All other absences are considered unlawful.

Grades and Absences

Final student course grades shall not be penalized because of absences if the following conditions are met:

1. Absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons
2. Make up work for excused absences was completed satisfactorily. Local boards of education are not required to provide make up work for unexcused absences.

Absence Reduction Plan

The Board of Education adopts the following policies and/or procedures to reduce unexcused absences:

Parental Notification

Statement of Receipt

- The school system will provide the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of each student enrolled in public school with a written summary **in the student handbook** of 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(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of such student must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.
- Students age ten or older by September 1 must sign a statement indicating receipt of the written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance with local school compulsory attendance policy and protocol.

Consequences and Penalties for Violation of Compulsory Attendance

The Principal or Principal's designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused absences and/or early checkouts at any time if he/she deems necessary. Consequences and penalties may include, but are not limited to the following:

Third Unexcused Absence in the School Calendar Year: Contact with the student's parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student will be made and documented by the Principal or the Principal's designee. The Principal or Principal's designee may refer the student for RTI, SST, or other appropriate support.

Five Unexcused Absences in the School Calendar Year:

- Schools will document and notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student when such student has accumulated five unexcused absences in the school calendar year.
- Notice of five accumulated absences will include notification of the penalties and consequences of such absences, including but not limited to RTI, SST referral, or other appropriate action.

Notification

Schools will make two reasonable attempts by phone, conference, letter, email, or other appropriate means to notify the parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) who has control or charge of the student when five unexcused absences in an academic year have occurred and of the penalties and consequences for violation of compulsory attendance. Students accumulating (5) days of unexcused absences in the school calendar year will receive a referral to the Principal or administrative designee for violation of Board Policy JCDA: Student Code of Conduct.

Eight Unexcused Absences: Upon a student's accumulation of eight (8) unexcused absences in the school calendar year, a referral will be made to the school's Attendance Team Committee to set up an attendance meeting at the local school.

The school social worker will assist the Attendance Team Committee. At the attendance meeting school staff will work together with the parent and student to development interventions and strategies for improvement of the student's school attendance. At this time a referral to outside support agency may be considered. Also discussed will be a referral to CHINS truancy committee at ten (10) unexcused days.

Prior to filing complaints and petitions the school must first show the district sought to resolve the problem through available educational approaches, and the school made efforts to engage the parent without success. When a student is eligible or suspected to be eligible under IDEA or 504 the school must also show that the IEP has been reviewed and modified as necessary.

Ten Unexcused Absences: Upon a student's accumulation of ten (10) unexcused absences in the school calendar year, the school social worker will refer the student and parent to Carroll County Children in Need of Services (CHINS) committee. The committee will determine possible services and/or sanctions, which will be upheld through a diversion contract or protective order. The school social worker will serve to coordinate efforts between the school and CHINS committee in monitoring attendance.

In a situation where the student has less than ten unexcused absences; however, he/she has developed a pattern of unexcused absences from one year to the next, the Social Worker may use their discretion to make an early referral to CHINS.

Violation of CHINS Truancy Contract or refusal to participate in the CHINS truancy diversion program may result in immediate referral to Juvenile Court.

Student Withdrawals

The school system is authorized to withdraw a student for the following reasons when the student:

- Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences
- Is not subject to compulsory school attendance; and
- Is not receiving instructional services from the local school system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Parental Notification of Student Withdrawal

The Superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall use his or her best efforts to notify the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or 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. The principal or designee will make a reasonable attempt to hold a conference with the student and parent or guardian to share the educational options available pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1(e).

The school system is authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance only if the local superintendent or the 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.

Monitoring

The Principal will review attendance records at the end of each school year for the purpose of identifying students for attendance monitoring at the start of the next school year. Students referred to Attendance Team Committee for violation of compulsory attendance during a school year will be considered as an active referral for continued monitoring at the beginning of the next school year.

Student Attendance Protocol Committee
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