

# ATTENDANCE

## ABSENCES

Research documents that frequent absences interrupt student learning, which can affect their interest and attitude toward school. Clayton County Public Schools is committed to working cooperatively with parents and students to improve daily and on-time attendance. For a student to be marked present for a full school day, a student must be in attendance for one half or more of the school day. The student will be marked absent if the requirements for a full school day are not met. According to the Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10(JB), "Local boards of education shall adopt policies and procedures excusing students under the following circumstances as a minimum."

Absences will be coded in accordance with Georgia Department of Education guidelines. Georgia State Board of Education delineates excused absences for the following reasons:

- Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others
- A serious illness or death in student's immediate family necessitating absence from school
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency including pre-induction physical examination for service in the armed-forces, mandating absence from school
- Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school
- Serving as a page for the Georgia General Assembly (Students will be marked present)
- Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- Up to five school days when a parent is called to duty or on leave from a combat zone or a combat support posting
- Students in foster care who attend court proceedings related to their foster care (Students will be marked present)
- Up to two days per school year for a student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Election Participant program (Students will be marked present)

Students shall not be permitted to leave school without parental permission. Students shall not encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this rule.

## ABSENCES/AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

As a rule, students who are absent from school will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities, such as athletic contests and club meetings. On rare occasions, there may be extenuating circumstances in which a teacher or parent/guardian may appeal to the principal to make an exception to the rule. The final decision will be left to the discretion of the principal in each individual case.

## ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

Parents/guardians are required to notify the school by phone when their child is absent. In order to have the absence recorded, a written excuse from parent/guardian explaining the reasons for the absence must be received by designated school personnel within **three school days** of the student's return. A doctor's note will also be accepted. Emails and text messages are not acceptable as the official notice. The absence must comply with the reasons listed under the ABSENCES section above. The note must be signed and dated by parent/guardian. A doctor's note will be required if there are excessive absences, which is considered to be three (3) or more consecutive days. If a parent/guardian has provided 10 or more days of hand written excuses, a doctor's note is required for any subsequent absences. This level of absences sets in place a set of procedures that addresses the reasons for the student's absences which may ultimately impact the student's academic achievement.

The school staff will make a conscious effort to notify parents that their child is absent from school; however, this cannot be achieved if the school does not have updated phone numbers. If your child has an appointment, please check the student in as soon as possible to get the most benefit of the academic day. **Parents: If your phone number(s) and/or address changes during the school year, please notify the school immediately. Ensuring that the school has up-to-date contact information is imperative to make certain that you will be immediately contacted in the event of an emergency.**

## ATTENDANCE

- Students 10 years or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of the letter that states the possible consequences and penalties related to absenteeism.
- Under Georgia's Compulsory Attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150), every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state of Georgia is required to enroll and send children in their care between the ages of 6 and 16 to a public, private, or home school unless the child is specifically exempt. Children shall be expected to attend for 200 days, unless lawfully excused, for the full session or sessions of the school that the child is eligible to attend. Children enrolled for 20 days or more in the public schools of Georgia prior to their seventh birthday shall be subject to the provisions of the Compulsory Attendance Law.

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

In compliance with state law, the Chief Judge of the Superior Court has established a Student Attendance Protocol Committee in Clayton County to ensure coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies, as well as programs, reducing the number of unexcused absences from school and increasing the percentage of students present to take state mandated tests. Three of the positions on the committee are allocated to school system employees (the Superintendent, a certificated school employee, and a certificated school social worker) and one position is allocated to a local school board member. To meet the requirements of the state law, Clayton County Public Schools has collaborated with the Student Attendance Protocol Committee in developing attendance procedures that will be implemented at each school. The chart on the next page summarizes the procedures related to compulsory school attendance laws.

## ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Absenteeism is an obstacle to student success. Clayton County Public Schools recognizes that significant improvement in attendance can only occur when stakeholders work collaboratively to promote student achievement. A part of that collaboration requires an understanding of responsibilities that the school, student, and parent should be accountable for promoting daily and on-time attendance.

### School Responsibilities

- School personnel will call parents/guardians utilizing the phone numbers listed in the district's student information system when a student is absent from school.
- Teachers will input attendance at the middle and high schools every period, every day.
- Schools will keep on file telephone numbers where parents/guardians can be reached. Parents/guardians will be asked to furnish the school with an alternate person should the school be unable to reach them.



### Parent Responsibilities

- Support the school and your children by discussing with them the importance of daily and on-time attendance and the effect it has on the educational process.
- Communicate with the school regularly to monitor the progress of your child.
- Provide current and accurate phone numbers to prevent delay/lack of communication between you and your child's school.
- Inform your child of the time the school day begins and ends.
- Be aware of state law (Georgia codes) for attendance and understand the penalties/consequences for absences and tardies.
- Understand and adhere to CCPS attendance and procedures.
- Call the school to inform them that your child is absent. Arrange for make-up work and/or missed tests/quizzes at the time of the call.
- Provide notes/doctor's excuses with date(s) and reason(s) for absence within three days of your child's return to school.

### Student Responsibilities

- Be aware of state law (Georgia Codes) for attendance and understand the penalties/consequences for absences and tardies
- Understand and adhere to CCPS attendance and procedures
- Bring the note/doctor's excuse provided by your parent to the designated person at the school within three days of your return to school
- Be aware of the time school begins and ends
- Attend all classes
- Be on time for all classes
- Complete all make-up work, homework, and missed tests
- Request assistance when there are questions concerning make-up work, homework, and missed tests

### Tardy

A student is late when he/she arrives at school after the morning bell or arrives to class after the bell has rung for class to begin. An excused tardy includes the same reasons for an excused absence (see definition of excused absence).

## Attendance Protocol Chart for Elementary, Middle and High School

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| By September 1 of each school year or 30 days after enrollment of student (Students under 16 years of age) | A parent notification will be issued, explaining attendance expectation and possible penalties/consequences of unexcused absences. The form requires signature of parent/guardian and student (ages 10 and up) by September 1 of each school year.  |
| Three (3) Unexcused Absences   | A notification letter will be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) reminding of possible penalties/consequences of absences, as well as explaining attendance expectations. The principal designated attendance designee and the school social worker will collaborate weekly to review data and ensure that letters have been generated and processed according to procedures.  |
| Five (5) Unexcused Absences  | Principal designated attendance personnel will send a notification letter reminding parent(s)/guardian(s) of possible penalties/consequences of misdemeanor violation and requesting participation in Student Attendance Committee (SAC) Meetings. The purpose of the meeting is to identify and implement strategies to deter continued absenteeism. The school may refer the family to the school social worker to assess the attendance problem, increase intensity of strategies, and/or refer to community agencies. Community agencies may include the Attendance Support Center Saturday Sessions or other agencies to support student attendance. |
| Ten (10) or more Unexcused Absences (Truancy Protocol)   | Additional Student Attendance Committee (SAC) meetings may take place, and appropriate referrals to Clayton County Child Student Team (Quad CST) may be initiated. The school system may refer the student and family to the Clayton County Juvenile Court if parent(s)/guardian(s) are noncompliant with attendance interventions or attendance does not improve after the student has accumulated ten unexcused absences according to House Bill 242.   |

### COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

State law requires that every child who has celebrated his/her sixth birthday, but not yet celebrated his/her 16th birthday, must be enrolled in school **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 (a)**. According to **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150 (c)**, all children enrolled for 20 days or more prior to their seventh birthday are subject to the Code Sections § 20-2-690 through § 20-2-702, and the rules and regulations of the Georgia State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance.

A parent/guardian, or other person residing in the State of Georgia who has control or charge of a student who is enrolled in public school, is responsible for ensuring that the student attends school, in accordance with **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1 (b)**. Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of a child or children and who violates 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 services, 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 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 constitute a separate offense. **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1(b)** also states that it is the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian to see that the student maintains regular attendance for a full session of school in accordance with the law.

Any student shall have the right to request and receive, within three business days from the date of such request, a letter from his or her school administrator indicating that the student is enrolled full-time and has an attendance record in good standing for the current academic year.