





Frequently Asked Questions

Why did I receive a letter regarding my child's absences?

Your child's school has reported that there are numerous unexcused absences on your child's record that may classify him or her as habitually or chronically truant, according to the State of Georgia. That means that your child's school has marked him or her absent multiple times without documentation of a legally acceptable reason.

What is considered a legally acceptable reason to be absent from school?

Students will not present unexcused absences or participate in truancy. Excused absences are defined by Georgia law as follows: personal illness; serious illness or death in the family; religious holiday; instances in which attendance could be hazardous as determined by the DeKalb County School District; registering to vote/voting in a public election; tests and physical exams for military service and the National Guard; and other such absences as provided for by law or by the local Board of Education.

Georgia law also provides for special treatment of absences in the following circumstances:

- Georgia law provides up to 5 days of excused absences for students whose parents are in the armed forces and who are called to duty or home on leave from overseas deployment in a combat zone.
- Students serving as Pages of the Georgia General Assembly will be counted as present for days missed from school for such service.
- Students volunteering to work as poll officers in the Student Teen Election Program (STEP) will be counted present for up to two (2) days of service in that program.
- Foster care students attending court proceedings related to their foster care shall be credited as present for any day(s) or portion of a day missed from school for that purpose.

What is the Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act?

Students 15-17 years of age are reminded that the state of Georgia will suspend their drivers license/permit or not allow them to get one if they have 10 or more unexcused absences in a school year or drop out.

What is an unexcused absence?

Unexcused absences are those absences that do not meet the above listed criteria.

What should I do if my child is absent from school?

The parent or guardian must supply the school with a written excuse signed by the parent upon student's return to school. If no report of absence or written excuse is received, the absence is considered an unexcused absence, which may result in a referral to juvenile court for truancy or Solicitor General's office for educational neglect.

Is my 5 or 6 year old kindergarten student subject to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law?

Yes, once your student is enrolled in school, compulsory attendance is applicable.

My child has chronic health problems and they will need to be absent. What do I do?

If your child has a chronic health problem such as asthma, diabetes, a seizure disorder or sickle cell anemia that causes frequent absences from school, please contact your school counselor for options.

I do not agree with the absences on record for my child. Who should I contact?

Disputes must be handled at the school. Please contact your child's school immediately and inquire about his or her attendance record.

I send my child to school and he/she chooses to go somewhere else or not to attend classes. Am I still responsible?

Parents/guardians are legally obligated by Georgia's State Compulsory Attendance Law to ensure that children between the ages of 5 and 18 attend school regularly. Not attending school or being truant from school and class is not the problem—it's an indicator of other problems. It is important, for parents and school personnel alike, to get to the root of the problem. Understanding that truancy is an indicator is a first step in approaching the problem. Contact your student's school and request assistance in determining how you can help your child attend school daily.

What happens if my child is truant?

The district may file a complaint in juvenile court jointly against the child.

How can I get a copy of my student's attendance record?

You may request a copy of your student's attendance record in the school office at any time.

If I am requested to provide a doctor's note to excuse an absence, does this violate HIPAA law?

If you are requested to provide a physician's statement, you need only provide documentation that the student was seen by the doctor and the date(s) covered. No confidential medical information is needed.

What if my student is absent due to a suspension from school?

Suspensions are excused absences and do not count against your student.

Can I take a vacation during the school year?

The school calendar includes school "holidays" or vacation time. Whenever possible, family vacations should align with school vacation days. Vacation is not an approved reason for absence in the state of Georgia.