

SOUTHWESTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL



**Webster County  
Student Attendance Protocol**

Updated May 26, 2021

## Table of Contents

I. Procedures	3
II. Absences – Definition of Terms	4
III. Tardies and Early Checkouts	4
A. Definition of Terms	
B. Consequences & Penalties	
IV. Student Withdrawal from School	5
V. Truancy Summary	
VI. Attendance Probation	5
VII. Criminal Prosecution for Violation of School Attendance Law	7
A. Filing Juvenile Complaints	7
B. Juvenile Justice Procedures	7
C. Prosecution in Superior Court	8
D. Notification to Parents	9
VIII. Community Support	9
A. Local Law Enforcement	9
B. Public Health	9
C. Family Connection	9
D. Mental Health	9
E. Department of Family and Children Services	10
IX. Monitoring the Protocol	10
X. Committee Members	10
XI. Appendices – Letters included here are examples and may be modified, as needed.	
A. Attendance Law Requirement	11
B. Parent Notification Letter of Absences	12
C. Parent Notification Letter of Tardies and/or Early Check-Outs	13
D. Invitation to Attendance Support Team Meeting	14
E. Invitation to AST/Truancy Intervention Meeting	15
E. Truancy Summary / Attendance Support Team Checklist	16

## I. SCHOOL SYSTEM PROCEDURES

Webster County Board of Education will monitor student attendance daily. The local Board of Education will adopt policy and procedure outlining the specific steps to be taken to monitor and address student attendance. Upon enrollment and registration each school year, parents and guardians will be given notice of State Compulsory Attendance Law pursuant to O.C.G.A. Code 20-2-690.1 and local Board of Education school attendance policy JBD. 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. This notice should also be included in each school's Code of Conduct.

An **Attendance Support Team**, or AST, will be established and may include as its members the school counselor and any faculty providing services to the specific student(s) to be discussed. The AST will meet as needed and be responsible for implementing and monitoring policy to reduce tardy days, early checkouts, and truancy. Parents/guardians shall be invited to and encouraged to attend these meetings.

### **Attendance:**

Absences over six days per year may result in the student failing his/her grade for the school year. The attendance committee will require documentation from a health care provider for patterned absences. An absence is an absence regardless of the excuse. **Documented COVID-related absences, will be given special consideration when making attendance-related decisions.**

### **Regulations for student attendance are as follows:**

- a. Students arriving late or leaving early will be recorded in order to monitor cumulative results.
- b. Students will be counted present if they attend school for at least 4.5 hrs during the day.
  - Students must check-in before 12:00 to be counted present for the day.
  - Students must check-out after 12:00 to be counted present for the day.

Additionally, students in grades 9-12 will be counted present if they attend at least 40 minutes of the class period; they will be counted absent if they miss more than 20 minutes of the class period.
- c. On the first day absent, the attendance staff will call a parent and convey a message of concern for the child listed as absent for the day. The office will document the call and record any pertinent information obtained from the parent on the School Daily Absentee Report. The parent will be reminded that a note is required stating the reason for the absence when the child returns to school. **Only three (3) handwritten excuses from a parent per semester will be accepted. All other excuses must be legal documentation.**
- d. A student who has been absent is required to bring a note signed by the parent or medical provider, stating the name of the student, date(s) of the absence(s), and reason for absence within 3 days of returning to school from the absences. After 3 days, the absence will be counted as unexcused and will not be changed unless approved by an administrator.
- e. If the school nurse calls a parent to pick a student up due to illness, the nurse will submit to the office staff documentation including the reason for the student leaving and the time checked out. The absence will be excused for the day of the check-out only.
- f. Students absent for 3 or more consecutive days MUST bring a note from the medical provider within 3 days after returning to school from the absence.
- g. Students will be allowed 3 days after returning to school from an absence to make up work. Teachers may extend this time due to extenuating circumstances.
- h. Absences due to out of school suspension are not counted as unexcused for the purpose of determining truancy.

**Additionally, students absent for 6 days will be red-flagged by the state. Each absence beyond 6 will require a medical excuse. Handwritten parent excuses will not be accepted for absences past the 6<sup>th</sup> absence.**

### **Out of County and Remote Learning Requirements**

- *In the event that the school must revert to or offer remote learning options, students who enroll as remote learners must abide by all additional attendance requirements as stated in the remote learning agreement.*
- *Any student attending from out of county must abide by all additional attendance requirements as stated in the out-of-county agreement.*

## II. ABSENCES – Definitions of terms:

**Truancy** - is defined as being absent from school without appropriate documentation or permission.

**Truant** – A Student subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than five days of unexcused absences.

**Excused Absence** – The Webster County School System Board of Education excuses students from school under the following circumstances:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student’s health or the health of others. The principal is authorized to require students to present appropriate medical documentation upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused. With proper verification a student may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction as outlined in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-31, Hospital/Homebound Instruction
2. A serious illness or death in a student’s immediate family. The principal is authorized to require students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that absences are excused.
3. A court order or an order by a government agency, including pre-induction physical examination for services in the armed forces that would mandate absence from school.
4. Observing religious holidays.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety.
6. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in the military services in the U.S. Armed Forces or National Guard, and such parent has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted up to 5 days of excused absences per school year to visit with his or her parent prior to the parent’s deployment or during the parent’s leave.
7. Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

**Unexcused Absences** – Any absences resulting from an event or cause other than those listed above as acceptable excused absences will be considered an unexcused absence.

## III. TARDIES AND EARLY CHECKOUTS

### A. Definition of terms:

**Tardy to school** – A student arriving at school after 7:30 a.m. is considered *tardy to school*.

**Excused Tardy** – A tardy resulting from events beyond a student’s control, such as an accident, road closed due to an emergency, area power outage, late bus, or other events determined by the principal or Administrative designee as acceptable is considered an *excused tardy*. Documentation may be required to excuse a tardy. **If you are checking your child in late due to reasons other than those listed above, you must provide documentation in order for the tardy to be excused.**

**Unexcused Tardy** – A tardy resulting from any event not listed above as an acceptable excused tardy will be considered an *unexcused tardy*.

**Early Checkout** – A student’s leaving school prior to the end of the school day is considered *early checkout*.

**Excused Early Checkout** – An early checkout for a verified emergency, serious illness or death of an immediate family member (father, mother, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather), school sponsored program, school of higher learning visit, and/or service as a Page in the Georgia General Assembly will be considered and excused early checkout. **Documentation is required to excuse an early checkout.**

**Unexcused Early Checkout** – An early checkout for any reason not listed above as an acceptable excused early checkout will be considered an unexcused early checkout.

## **B. Consequences and Penalties for Unexcused Tardies and/or Unexcused Early Checkouts:**

*Five (5) unexcused tardies or unexcused early checkouts will result in an unexcused absence for your student (generally one absence per every 5 unexcused tardies).*

**Additionally, students in grades 6-12 may be assigned silent lunch or ISS during their lunch time beginning with their 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy and will continue the penalty for each subsequent tardy. Students who drive on campus and have 5 unexcused tardies may have their driving privileges revoked for 1 week.** This penalty may continue with any subsequent tardies.

A Student who accumulates five (5) unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts may receive a referral to the Attendance Support Team (AST). If this happens, the AST will review the case and notify the parents via letter, which will include dates of tardies and/or early checkouts and the possibility of a referral to the Truancy Officer(s). **TEN or more unexcused tardies/early check-outs during the school year may result in immediate referral to support agencies outside the school system, as the principal deems necessary; among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Truancy Intervention or other external agencies.**

## **IV. STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

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

- Accumulated ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absences.
- Is not subject to compulsory school attendance law, this falls to the guardian
- Is not receiving instructional services from the local system through homebound instruction or instructional services required by the federal Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA).
- Has been expelled due to a decision rendered in a tribunal hearing. O.C.G.S. 20-2-750-759

### **Parent Notification of Student Withdrawal:**

The superintendent or his/her designee shall use his/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 a student who is younger than eighteen (18) years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance.

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

## **V. THE WEBSTER COUNTY SCHOOLS TRUANCY SUMMARY:**

### **After one (1) absence and each subsequent absence:**

The school will contact parents each day the student is absent. Documentation for unexcused absences may be requested at this time. A home visit may be made if deemed necessary by the administrative staff.

### **At three (3) unexcused absences:**

An Attendance Support Team Meeting will be scheduled with the parent, student, and administrative staff for. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the number of days absent, outlining the penalty and consequences of future absences,. Parents/Guardians will be notified that referral to the Truancy Officer will be made at five (5) unexcused absences and a “truancy complaint” will be filed at six (6) unexcused absences. A home visit may be made if deemed necessary by the administrative staff.

### **At five (5) TOTAL absences:**

Attendance letters which will include absences, tardies, and early checkouts, compulsory attendance law, and potential consequences and penalties for failure to comply will be sent and parents through first class mail. A signature of receipt of this notice will be obtained, and kept on file for the remainder of the school year. The school may schedule an Attendance Support Team Meeting to discuss any excessive absences, tardies, or early checkouts.

**At five (5) UNEXCUSED absences:**

1. A second Attendance Support Team meeting for the purpose of Truancy Intervention will be scheduled with the parent/guardian; ***a referral to the Truancy Officer will be made and the Truancy Officer will set a time to meet with the parent/guardian and the Attendance Support Team at the school. This meeting will be mandatory and failure to attend may result in an immediate filing with the court.*** The parent/guardian will be informed that in the event of one (1) additional unexcused absence, for a total of six (6) unexcused absences, a “truancy complaint” may be filed with the Truancy Officer for Webster County and parents/guardians will be referred to appropriate Court for Deprivation of Violating the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1).
2. If there is no response from the parent, a third Attendance letter will be sent via certified mail, with return receipt requested. The school should keep a copy of the notice mailed. Once the receipt is obtained, it will be kept on file by the school, attached to the copy of the notice. It will include the statement, “a possible referral will be made to the Truancy officer.” A signature of receipt of this notice will be obtained, and kept on file for the remainder of the school year. A home visit may be made if deemed necessary by the administrative staff.

**At six (6) UNEXCUSED absences:**

The AST will review the case, and under advisement from the Truancy Officer, the school may refer parents/guardians to the local Magistrate Court for Violation of Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1). A referral may also be made to DFACS as deemed necessary.

**Absences that EXCEED six (6) days:**

Parents/Guardians of students who exceed a total of **six (6)** absences, regardless if the absences are excused or unexcused, may be required to attend an end-of-year Attendance Support Team meeting to discuss the student’s absences in relation to promotion or retention. Absences over **six (6)** days per school year may result in the student being retained for the following school year. “Attendance Probation” status will also be considered to more closely monitor absences the following school year.

**The Truancy Officer(s) will:**

1. Review available information from the AST and parent contacts from school staff.
2. Meet with the student(s) or attempt a home visit to further explore reasons for absence and offer assistance to the student and family for addressing the causes of absences. Examples of such assistance would include, but is not limited to:
  - Brief individual or group therapeutic intervention with students at school
  - Referral to public or private mental health or counseling services
  - Referral to public or private medical or dental services
  - Referral to public assistance programs
  - Referral to the school’s Student Support Team
  - Referral to outside social service or counseling providers for intensive in- home support
3. Upon further investigation, determine the need for immediate referral of:
  - Students ages ten (10) to sixteen (16) to Juvenile Court for Truancy
  - Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students ages six (6) to sixteen (16) to the appropriate Court for Deprivation or for Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

**In most cases, Court referrals will be made at this point or at the next unexcused absence.**

  - The family to the Department of Family and Children Services for suspicion or indicators of abuse and/or neglect. *If a referral is necessary, the local Child Abuse Protocol will take precedence regarding further action.*
4. Continue to monitor student attendance weekly and provide support related to the student and family’s educational needs once a referral is made to a Court or to the Department of Family and Children Services.
  - Review end of year attendance records with each school’s Principal and determine a list of active referrals for the beginning of the next school year.

*In general, students known to be on probation for Truancy and students with more than **six (6)** total absences or any combination of tardies and early checkouts totaling **six (6)** may be referred to the Administrative designee or monitored for attendance concerns on a monthly basis the next school year.*

## **VI. ATTENDANCE PROBATION**

The Webster County Schools Attendance Probation Procedure exists to hold students and parents accountable for their attendance. Absenteeism and tardiness are serious issues that can have an extremely negative effect on a student's education and, as such, are treated very seriously. When a student has accumulated 6 or more absences from school or a combined total of 10 or more tardies and/or early checkouts, the student may be placed on attendance probation. This includes all absences and tardies/early-checkouts (excused or unexcused) except for those that are accompanied by a doctor's note or excused in writing by the school nurse or administrator. All excuses must be submitted within three school days in order to be accepted.

If a student is placed on attendance probation, he/she must obtain a doctor's note or a written excuse from the school nurse or administrator, in order to have their absence excused; no parent notes will be accepted. Students who are placed on attendance probation are not permitted to attend or participate in school extracurricular activities of any kind. This includes but is not limited to field trips, sports teams, sporting events, club meetings, or any recreational after school activity; no refund of trip, club, or team funds paid is guaranteed. In order to be removed from academic probation, the student must schedule to meet with the attendance support coordinator to review their attendance, academics and disciplinary record to determine if attendance probation can be rescinded. Attendance must remain infraction free for 30 school days in order for consideration to be made for attendance probation to be removed. This means no unexcused absences, tardies, or early check-outs.

## **VII. CRIMINAL PROSECUTION FOR VIOLATION OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LAW**

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 Webster County Juvenile Court as an 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.

### **A. Filing Juvenile Complaints**

A juvenile complaint should be filed in the Juvenile Court of Webster 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.** At this point the child's circumstances will be reviewed by the AST, to which the parent may request to attend.

At this meeting the following options will be discussed:

- Refer the child and/or parent to the appropriate social services
- Request further medical documentation if appropriate
- File an unruly child complaint with the Juvenile Court of Webster County
- Seek a criminal warrant for the parent from the appropriate Court.
- Seek an action for Deprivation against the parent in Juvenile Court

The Administrative Designee will be responsible for obtaining and monitoring compliance with the recommendations of the AST.

### **B. Juvenile Justice Procedures**

At **six (6)** unexcused absences, the Truancy Officer(s) for Juvenile Court will make a referral to the Department of Juvenile Justice by filing a juvenile complaint (Form 90). If the Truancy Program/Officers are not available in the county, the referral will come from the School Resource Officer, Designated Law Enforcement Officer, School Social Worker or school designee.

#### 1. Intake Process for Juvenile Complaints:

- Once received, the complaint (Form 90) will be entered into the Juvenile Tracking System and any past history will be assessed.
- The complaint will be staffed with the Truancy Officer(s) or referring entity for a brief summary of their involvement.
- The DJJ Intake Officer may contact the School Attendance Clerk or designee for any further pertinent information.
- The complaint will be staffed with the District Attorney's Office, accompanied by the current referral summary, any legal history and a brief summary of involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice, if any. This may include placement history, a summary of any past or current interventions, and Probation Officer information.
- At this staffing, the following options will be discussed:  
Mediation, Informal Adjustment, Diversion, Dismissal and/or Petition for Adjudication & Disposition.

#### 2. 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 District Attorney and/or the Department of Juvenile Justice 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. The Truancy Officer and/or Probation Officer will monitor the youth'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 has reached a level satisfactory to all parties involved.

### **C. Prosecution in Superior Court**

When it is clear that the parent is the direct cause of the child's absence, a warrant for violation of OCGA 20-2-690.1 should be sought against the parent. In other circumstances, the AST may, but is not required to, take into account the following considerations when recommending a criminal warrant be 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.
- The parent has not actively sought assistance from community social services and resources to assist in getting 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.
- The child is a deprived child.



The child and parent must comply with the AST's recommendations. Failure of the child or parent to comply with the recommendation, including further unexcused absences from school, will result in juvenile adjudication of the child and/or criminal prosecution of the parent. In any event, if the child accumulates **six (6)** or more unexcused absences in any school year, the Superintendent will file a juvenile complaint and/or apply, via the Webster County Sheriff's Office, for a criminal warrant for violation of mandatory school attendance laws. When a parent is prosecuted, regular school attendance will be assigned as a condition of bond.

#### **D. Notification of Parent(s)**

Notification to the parent of a truant child shall include notice of an AST review and information about attendance law and the penalties that may occur as a result of the child's continued absence. After two unsuccessful attempts to serve such notice and obtain signature of receipt, notification should be sent via certified mail, which return receipt requested, to the parent and should contain the following language:

“Decisions as to appropriate action recommendations will be made at an AST review that could include recommendations for criminal prosecution of you or your child. Parent(s) may be charged with a misdemeanor if they are causing the child's absence from school. The penalty can be up to \$100.00 fine and up to 30 days in jail for each day the child has an unexcused absence from school.”

### **VIII. COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

#### **A. Law Enforcement**

Each school in Webster County has access to an employee of the **Webster County Sheriff's Office**. In support of improved school attendance, the designated person from the Sheriff's office shall:

- Attend AST meetings, as appropriate.
- Forward complaints against parents directly to the Sheriff's Office regarding compliance with mandatory attendance law.
- Honor any applicable school-related transportation orders issued by a court.
- With parental permission and on an intermittent basis, transport truant students to school.

#### **B. Public Health**

The **Webster County Health Department** is an integral partner in community health related to school readiness, attendance, and success. Webster County Health Department shall:

- Provide immunization evaluations, immunizations, and immunization records required for school enrollment.
- Provide Scoliosis screens for students.
- Provide various medical, dental, and prescription services, referrals, and education to students and families in Webster County to promote personal and community health.

#### **C. Webster County Family Connection**

**Webster County Family Connections** recognizes the potential of every youth and the importance of strong families and has the mission of strengthening youth, families, and our communities through prevention and intervention services, advocacy, and collaboration. Webster County Family Connection shall monitor and evaluate compliance with the School Attendance 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.

#### **D. Mental Health**

**Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care** provides crucial support for the mental, physical, and emotional well being of students and their families, including individual and group sessions on-site at the schools for student clients of **Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care**. In support of this Protocol, **Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care** 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.
- 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 Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care and Webster County School shall, as appropriate, obtain releases of information to allow communication as outlined above.*

#### **E. Department of Family and Children Services**

The **Webster County Department of Family and Children Services** often provides social services to the families of truant students. In support of this Protocol, the **Webster County Department of Family and Children Services** shall:

- Accept and consider information related to school attendance, behavior, and performance in reports and investigations of other 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 guardianship arranged by the Department, or foster care.
- Verify involvement of the School Counselor when available attendance information indicates more than ten (10) unexcused absences.
- 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.*

#### **IX. MONITORING THE PROTOCOL**

In addition, each organization will designate a representative to serve on the Student Attendance Protocol Committee. The Committee's goal will be to improve communication between agencies, encourage inter-agency 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.

#### **X. COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The following organizations have agreed to work collaboratively to support the Protocol and comprise the Webster County Schools Student Attendance Protocol Committee:

- Webster County Magistrate Judge- Judge Jimmy Bankston, projudge@hotmail.com
- Sheriff of Webster County- Randy Dely, sheriff@webstercosheriff.org
- CHINS Coordinator- LaToya Ross, latoya@sowegachildren.org
- Family Connections- Elaine Neely, ecnealy@yahoo.com
- Truancy Officer- Stephen Woodson, truancyintake@hotmail.com
- Webster County Health Department- Michelle Stone, RN, mlstone@dhr.state.ga.us
- Webster County DFCS- Laurie Sheffield, lasheffield@dhr.state.ga.us
- Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care- Contassa Tanner-Jones, ContassaJ@MFBHC.org
- Department of Juvenile Justice- Loretta Kitchens, lorettakitchens@djj.state.ga.us

#### **XI. APPENDICES - Letters included here are examples and may be modified, as needed.**

- A. Attendance Law Requirement
- B. Parent Notification Letter for Absences
- C. Parent Notification Letter for Tardies and/or Early Check-Outs
- D. Invitation to Attendance Support Team Meeting
- E. Invitation to Attendance Support Team/Truancy Intervention Meeting
- F. Webster County Schools School Truancy Summary / Attendance Support Team Checklist



## APPENDIX B

## Webster County Schools



7168 Washington Street  
 Preston, GA 31824  
 Phone: 229-828-3365

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents/Guardians of \_\_\_\_\_ :

Attendance is an essential component to a student's academic success. Often, the number of days students are absent accumulate without parents realizing how many days have been missed.

Your child has \_\_\_\_\_ excused absences and \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused absence.

Truancy is defined as being absent from school without appropriate documentation or permission.

**Truancy referrals are made to the Webster County Truancy Officer at 5 unexcused absences and Truancy Complaints are filed with appropriate Court at 6 unexcused absences.** Please refer to the Webster County Student Handbook for details regarding absences being classified as "excused" or "unexcused".

Additionally, the Webster County Schools Handbook reads, "**Absences over six (6) days may result in the student failing his/her grade for the school year.**" In addition, "**Only 3 handwritten excuses from a parent per semester will be accepted. All other excuses must be legal documentation.**"

Webster County School District is required by law to notify parents/ guardians and students of the possible consequences and penalties for violation of attendance policies if a student has had excessive absences from school. Parents/ Guardians may be charged with a misdemeanor if they are causing the child's absences from school. The penalty can be up to \$100.00 fine and up to 30 days in jail for each day the child has an unexcused absence from school.

Please provide us with a written excuse / medical excuse each time your child is absent. We look forward to working with you to improve your child's attendance. Please contact us if there is any way we can assist in this process. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Insert Name  
 Webster County Schools  
 School Counselor

## APPENDIX C

# Webster County Schools

7168 Washington Street

Preston, GA 31824

Phone: 229-828-3365

Date

Dear Parents/Guardians of \_\_\_\_\_

We are concerned at the excessive number of tardies/early check-outs your child has accumulated. Attendance is essential to a student's academic success. Tardiness to school and checking out early from school takes away from instructional time and disrupts the routine of your child's school day, lessening his/her chance for success in school.

**Parents must make sure their children are in class by 7:30 a.m.**

Your child has been tardy \_\_\_\_ days or checked-out early \_\_\_\_ days.  
 \_\_\_\_ of these are UNEXCUSED.

This is equivalent to an additional \_\_\_\_ days absent (unexcused).

The Webster County School Handbook states that **students in grades 6-12 will be assigned silent lunch or ISS during their lunch time beginning with their 5<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy and will continue the penalty for each subsequent tardy. Students who drive on campus and have 5 unexcused tardies will have their driving privileges revoked for 1 week.** This penalty will continue and/or be increased with any subsequent tardies.

Additionally, the Webster County School Handbook states that **five unexcused tardies/early check-outs may result in an additional absence (generally one absence per every 5 unexcused tardies). However, TEN or more unexcused tardies/early check-outs during the school year may result in immediate referral to support agencies outside the school system, as the principal deems necessary; among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, or other external agencies.**

Webster County School District is required by law to notify parents/ guardians and students of the possible consequences and penalties for violation of attendance policies if a student has had excessive absences from school. Parents/ Guardians may be charged with a misdemeanor if they are causing the child's absences from school. The penalty can be up to \$100.00 fine and up to 30 days in jail for each day the child has an unexcused absence from school.

**Please provide us with a written excuse / medical excuse each time your child is tardy or leaves school early.** We look forward to working with you to improve your child's attendance. Please contact us if there is any way we can assist in this process. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

INSERT NAME

Webster County Schools

School Counselor

APPENDIX D

**Invitation to Attendance Support Team (AST) Meeting**

Date

To the Parents/Guardians of \_\_\_\_\_:

You are invited to a meeting of the Attendance Support Team to discuss your child’s absences.

The number of absences and tardies is listed on the attached attendance summary page.

The meeting is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ at Webster County Schools.

**Per the Webster County Handbook:**

**Absences over 6 days may result in the student failing his/her grade for the school year. Truancy referrals are made to the Webster County Truancy Officer at 5 unexcused absences and Truancy Complaints are filed with appropriate Court at 6 unexcused absences.**

If you have information that you would like the team to consider or if you have any documentation for excused absences, please e-mail it to the school counselor or bring it with you to the meeting.

If you have questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_, the school counselor, at INSERT e-mail or 229-942-8742.

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Please sign and return the bottom portion of this invitation to the school.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I plan to attend the AST meeting on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ No, I am unable to attend, but would like to reschedule for one of the following dates/times:

Option 1 \_\_\_\_\_ or Option 2 \_\_\_\_\_.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent Signature

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Date

**Notice of Receipt**

**APPENDIX E****Notification of Attendance Support Team (AST)/Truancy Intervention Meeting**

Date

To the Parents/Guardians of \_\_\_\_\_

Your presence is requested for a required meeting of the Attendance Support Team.

**Truancy Intervention Officer, \_\_\_\_\_, will be in attendance at this meeting.**

Per the Webster County Handbook:

Absences over 6 days may result in the student failing his/her grade for the school year. Truancy referrals are made to the Webster County Truancy Officer at 5 unexcused absences and Truancy Complaints are filed with appropriate court at 6 unexcused absences.

The meeting is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ at Webster County Schools.

A summary of your child's attendance is attached to this letter.

If you have information that you would like the team to consider or if you have any documentation for excused absences, please e-mail it to the school counselor or bring it with you to the meeting.

If you have questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_, the school counselor, INSERT E-MAIL or 229-942-8742.

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**Please sign and return the bottom portion of this notification to the schools front office, indicating that you will be in attendance of this AST meeting for \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.**

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 Parent Signature

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 Date
**Notice of Receipt**

**APPENDIX F**

**Webster County Schools  
Attendance Support Team / Truancy Summary Checklist**

Date



**Step 1**

Student is absent & contact is made by phone with parent/guardian. A home visit will be made if necessary

**Step 2**

At 3 TOTAL absences – An attendance letter is sent to parent/guardian stating the number of days absent and outlining the penalty/consequences for excessive absences. Parent/Guardian may also be invited to attend AST meeting to discuss absences and how the absences are impacting school performance/progress.

OR

At 3 UNEXCUSED absences – an Attendance Support Team Meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for the absences, outline the penalty and consequences for future absences, and that each subsequent absence shall constitute a separate offense. Parents/Guardians will be notified at the AST meeting that a referral to the Truancy Officer will be made at five (5) unexcused absences. A home visit may be made if the parent/guardian does not attend the AST meeting.

If no response from parent OR no improvement in attendance, additional parent contact via phone or mail may be made.

**Step 3**

At 5 TOTAL absences – An attendance letter is sent to parent/guardian stating the number of days absent and outlining the penalty/consequences for excessive absences. Parent/Guardian may also be invited to attend AST meeting to discuss absences and how the absences are impacting school performance/progress.

OR

At 5 UNEXCUSED absences – a 2<sup>nd</sup> AST meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian and a referral will be made to the Truancy Officer. The parent/guardian will also be informed that in the event of one (1) additional unexcused absence, a total of 6 unexcused days, they will proceed to STEP 4 as outlined below.

If no response from parent OR no improvement in attendance, additional parent contact via phone or mail may be made.

If no response from parent OR no improvement in attendance, an attendance letter may be mailed “Certified” to the parent/guardian.

**Step 4**

At 6 UNEXCUSED absences, a truancy complaint will be filed with the local Magistrate Court under the advisement of the local Truancy Officer. Parents/Guardians will be referred to appropriate Court for Deprivation of Violating the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1)

**FINAL STEP @ YEAR END**

Attendance Support Team Meetings may be scheduled for ALL students who EXCEED **six (6)** days of absence (regardless if the absences are classified as excused or unexcused). The purpose of the meeting is to determine year end promotion/retention status and determine if the student will be placed on “Attendance Probation” for the following school year.

Promoted: \_\_\_\_\_ Retained: \_\_\_\_\_ Probation Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Truancy: \_\_\_\_\_