



SOUTHWESTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

FOR

SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Judge Lisa C. Jones

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Sumter County Student Attendance Protocol

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Student Attendance Protocol

I. School System Procedures

Sumter 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. A signature of receipt of this notice will be obtained and kept on file for the remainder of the school year. Students age ten (10) and older will also receive a copy of the notice and provide a signature of receipt.

At the Elementary schools, this notice will be received by all students who have reached age ten (10) or above by September 1 of that school year. This notice should also be included in each school's Code of Conduct.

Each school will establish an Attendance Support Team, (hereinafter, AST) which will be chaired by each school's Principal or designee and include as it's members the School Attendance Officer, the School Social Worker, the School Counselor, and faculty having direct contact with the parents/guardians of or providing direct service to the specific student(s) to be discussed. School Resource Officers will also be invited to participate, as appropriate. Each school's AST will meet weekly and

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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.

Reasonable attempts will be made to call the parents/guardians of absent students. In cases known to involve joint or shared custody or guardianship of a student, efforts should be made to contact all individuals with custodial rights. This standard shall also apply to steps mentioned hereinafter.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- ✓ Support the school and your child 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 laws (Georgia Codes) for attendance and understand the penalties/consequences for absences and tardies.
- ✓ Understand and adhere to SCS attendance and procedures.
- ✓ Call the school to inform them that your child is absent. Make arrangements for make-up work and/or missed tests/quizzes at the time of the call.
- ✓ Provide notes/doctor's excuses with dates and reason for absence within three days of your child's return to school.

School Responsibilities

- ✓ In order to be systematic in telephone checks, school personnel will make a conscious effort to call parents/guardians of absentees by 11:30 each morning.
- ✓ Schools will keep on file telephone numbers where parents/guardians can be reached. Parents/guardians will be asked to submit the name of an alternate person should the school be unable to reach them.

Sumter County Board of Education policy delineates excused absences for the following reasons:

- 1. Personal illness**
- 2. Serious illness in student's immediate family**
- 3. Death in family**
- 4. Court Summons**
- 5. Religious holiday**
- 6. One day for registering to vote or voting**
- 7. Serving as a page for the Georgia General Assembly**
- 8. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health/safety**
- 9. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school**

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10. 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, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five (5) 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 (20-2-692.1).

11. Students in foster care attend court proceedings related to their foster care (student will be marked as excused).

If a student is absent for one of these reasons, he/she must bring in either a handwritten note from his/her parent or guardian or a note from a medical office (within five (5) five days upon their return to school) indicating the reason for the absence(s) and the date the absence(s) occurred.

- **Parents are permitted to provide up to three (3) handwritten excuses each semester. It's important to note that a single excuse can cover consecutive days.**
- **Excuses should be submitted within five (5) days of the student returning to school.**

Tardies:

1. Tardies that exceed thirty (30) minutes or more can only be excused following the guidelines noted above in "Excused Absences" items 1-11.

Daily Attendance Overview

Attendance monitoring starts with the school. When a student is absent, the school designee will immediately talk to the parent/guardian (not their answering machine). Staff will make a personal phone call to parent/guardian at work during the day.

The attendance process begins when a student receives three (3) absences (excused or unexcused). The Counselor (Designated by Principal) will print two copies of the three (3) day letter from student information system (Infinite Campus – IC). One copy of the letter will be sent via US mail and/or via Wednesday courier to the parent/guardian and the second copy will be filed in the student's attendance folder.

After five (5) unexcused absences, the Counselor/designee will print two copies of the five (5) day letter from student information system (Infinite Campus – IC). One copy of the letter will be sent via US mail/Wednesday courier to the parent/guardian and the second copy will be filed in the student's attendance folder.

The role of the school district with regard to five (5) unexcused absences:

- The Counselor/designee will retrieve student information relating to attendance, discipline, and academic performance in preparation for the 5 day Attendance Support Team meeting.
- The Counselor/designee will invite the parent to the scheduled 5 day AST meeting at the school.
- The Counselor/designee will facilitate the meeting.
- Student and parent/guardian may be referred to the School Social Worker to determine what community resources can be implemented to address the student's attendance concerns.

Operational Attendance Procedure

Homeroom daily attendance maintenance is to be entered daily within Infinite Campus (IC) by the homeroom teacher, no later than 10:00 am. Using IC, a code of “A” (unexcused absence) is used as the default for an absence until appropriate written documentation is received.

All adjustments and/or corrections are to be entered by 10:30 am by the attendance secretary and/or principal’s designee.

Incarceration/Hospitalization/Other Institutionalization/Foster Care Court Proceedings

A student, who is incarcerated, hospitalized, or receiving services in any institutional setting outside of SCS and receiving academic instruction, should not be coded as absent.

Attendance Procedures for Incarceration

- Incarcerated students **should not be withdrawn** until notice of sentence is received from the Juvenile Justice System or Juvenile Court.
- The attendance should be coded as “YDC/JAIL” until their return to school or until they are withdrawn. (SEE CAROLYN JOHNSON)
- Students who are held in a detention center pending a hearing receive schoolwork, and the work is returned to the school for grading and recording. This code should be used only in short-term situations.
- If a student becomes incarcerated for an extended period (i.e. the Department of Juvenile Justice), he/she can be withdrawn from his/her school’s roster upon notification from the Juvenile Justice System.

Attendance Procedures for Hospital Homebound

A student may be eligible for hospital-homebound instruction as outlined in State Board policy upon receipt of a completed medical referral form signed by a physician, as defined in state law and licensed by the appropriate state agency or board. This referral form must indicate that a student will be absent a minimum of ten (10) consecutive school days or that the student has a chronic health condition causing him or her to be absent for intermittent periods of time.

Students with absences due to pregnancy, related medical conditions, services or treatment; childbirth; and recovery are eligible for hospital homebound services provided that they satisfy the eligibility requirement for hospital homebound service. [The Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services reflects the following Title IX, statement: Pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery shall be treated as any other temporary medical condition/disability.

Hospital Homebound teachers are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records of all visits made in the performance of instructional services.

The attendance records of each student served will be reported to the school in which the student is enrolled, as excused or unexcused. The school's attendance secretary and/or the principal's designee will enter the Hospital Homebound teacher's attendance record into the computer.

- Excused absences are entered when students are too ill to keep scheduled sessions.
- Unexcused absences are entered when scheduled sessions are canceled without valid medical reasons.

Attendance Procedures for Foster Care

Foster students who attend court proceedings related to their foster care will be marked as excused pending appropriate documentation.

Attendance Procedures for Suspensions

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Short Term Suspension – The Superintendent, an assistant superintendent, a principal, an assistant principal, or other officials in charge of a school or related institution, may suspend a student for a period not exceeding ten (10) school days for violation(s) of rules contained in the Sumter County Public Schools discipline procedures, rules and regulations of the Board of Education or school, and any state or federal law. (SEE PRINCIPALS)

Long Term Suspension – A student shall be subject to expulsion for the remainder of the school year or suspension for any period in excess of ten (10) days for conduct that is in violation of rules contained in Sumter County Public Schools discipline procedures, rules and regulations of the Board of Education, and any state or federal laws. Such actions of expulsions and or suspension will be administered by the Board of Education (GBOE Policy JD 160-4-8-.15, O.C.G.A. 20-2-751). The disciplinary tribunal acts on behalf of the Board of Education. Students listed by an administrator as suspended that are placed in a designated area on campus should be coded as in-school suspended. The attendance secretary or the principal’s designee should code the students’ daily attendance with the code “3” (three) to designate In-School Suspension. (SEE PRINCIPALS)

Students listed by an administrator as suspended, which are not allowed on campus during the suspension period, should be coded SUSPENDED to designate Out-of-School Suspension. Students expelled from Sumter County Public Schools through Disciplinary Tribunal should be withdrawn with the code E (Expelled). (SEE CAROLYN JOHNSON)

NOTE: If there are any questions regarding the proper code for attendance, the building level administrator should be consulted.

Attendance Procedures for Field Trips

The Sumter County Board of Education recognizes the desirability of certain field trips and excursions, which provide instructional experiences. The experiences should enrich the instructional program of Sumter County Schools.

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Extended trips, long distance trips, or trips of exceptional nature must be approved by the Superintendent or designee. (Long distance trips are those which exceed 200 miles round trip, or those who are out of state. Extended trips are those which require more than one day to complete.)
(ADD TO BOARD POLICY)

A list of students participating in a school-approved field trip should be provided to the attendance secretary or principal's designee for proper coding of students.

All students in attendance at a school related and approved field trip, which does not interfere with an extended period of daily instructional time, should be considered as present.

The attendance secretary or the principal's designee should enter all students' with code FTP (Field trip) to designate school business, if they are involved in an approved school activity that is going to be for an extended period of time, which will interfere with their instructional time.

Attendance Protocol Chart for Elementary and Middle

By September 1 of each school year or 30 days after enrollment of the student (Students under 16 years of age), the parent(s) will receive a copy of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law.	Issuance of parent notification letter explaining attendance expectation and possible penalties/consequences of unexcused absences. A form requires the signature of parent/guardian and student (ages 10 and up) by September 1 of each school year. (Student Handbook)
2 Absences	A phone call to parents.
3 Absences	Notification letter sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) reminding of possible penalties/ consequences

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	of absences as well as explaining attendance expectations.
5 Unexcused Absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AST meeting will be scheduled to be held. The purpose of the meeting is to identify and implement strategies to deter continued absenteeism. If this meeting is not attended by parents/guardians: ➤ The matter will result in a referral to School Social Worker or representative. The SSW will contact or make a home visit reminding parents of possible penalties/consequences of misdemeanor violation. The school social worker will assess attendance problem, increase the intensity of strategies, and refer to community agencies, but the SSW is not limited to the options listed above.
6 Unexcused Absences	Truancy complaint is completed by the Counselor or designee and delivered to the truancy officer by the attendance officer.
7 Absences	Notification letter sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) reminding of possible penalties/ consequences

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	of absences as well as explaining attendance expectations.
10 Unexcused Absences	Criminal Warrant is filed with the Magistrate Court for violation of Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law

Note:

Prekindergarten students: students in Prekindergarten fall under the Georgia Mandatory attendance law, each AST should monitor their attendance and notify parents of the importance of school attendance. Please see section (c) of the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law.

(c) All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of this state prior to their seventh birthday shall become subject to all of the provisions of this article, the provisions of Code Sections 20-2-690 through 20-2-701, and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance even though they have not attained seven years of age.

Additionally, The AST committee should notify the director of the Pre-K program when a student has reached 10 or more unexcused absences.

Pre-K thru 8th grade

After two (2) absences, the homeroom teacher or administrative designee will call parents and file documentation of the outcome in **Infinite Campus (IC)**.

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At three (3) absences (excused/unexcused). Notification letter sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) reminding of possible penalties/ consequences of absences as well as explaining attendance expectations.

After five (5) unexcused absences: Notification letter sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) inviting them to an Attendance Support Team meeting.

1) The Attendance Support Team, which will assess the student's absences and determine strategies to address attendance, including the possibility of referral to the School Social Worker and/or Truancy Officer(s) for Juvenile Court. Each school will take reasonable steps to ensure that parents/guardians are, in writing, invited to and encouraged to attend these meetings. Students may also participate in AST meetings, as deemed appropriate by the AST.

a) Refer the child and/or parent to the appropriate social services.

b) Request further medical documentation if appropriate.

c) The principal or designee will use their best efforts to notify (via mail) the parent /guardian of any child fourteen (14) years of age or older that they have five (5) absences remaining prior to violating the attendance requirements contained in subsection (a.1) of Code Section 40-5-22. **An attendance non-compliance form will be completed and forwarded by the school to the system director of pupil support services who will submit this form to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS).**

2) In addition to the notice of the AST meeting, **two (2) reasonable attempts will be made by the school to notify parents/guardians, in writing, of attendance to date (absences, tardies, and early check-outs), compulsory attendance law, and potential consequences and penalties for failure to comply.**

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a) **First attempts** to meet this requirement shall be made in conjunction with the notice of an AST meeting and/or during an AST meeting when the parent(s)/guardian(s) are in attendance.

b) **After two (2) unsuccessful reasonable attempts to provide notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and obtain signatures, notice shall 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.

At six (6) unexcused absences, the AST will review the case again and make a referral to the Truancy Officer(s) for Juvenile Court, if a referral has not been made previously. A Truancy Form will be completed by the counselor or designee.

The Truancy Officer(s) will:

1) Review available information from the AST and parent contacts from school staff.

2) Meet with the student(s) and 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
- In-home support facilitated by the School Attendance Officer
- Referral to outside social service or counseling providers for intensive in-home support

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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.

5) 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 excess of ten (10) unexcused absences, fifteen (15) total absences or any combination of tardies and early checkouts totaling twenty (20) will be referred to the School Attendance Officer or monitored for attendance concerns on a monthly basis the next school year.

At 7 absences – A notification letter is sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) reminding of possible penalties/ consequences of absences as well as explaining attendance expectations.

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At 10 unexcused absences – A Criminal Warrant is filed with the Magistrate Court for violation of Georgia’s Compulsory Attendance Law

Attendance Protocol Chart for High School

2 Absences	A phone call to parents.
3 Absences	Notification letter sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) reminding of possible penalties/ consequences of absences as well as explaining attendance expectations.
First 4 Unexcused Absences from a block class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ AST meeting held. The purpose of the meeting is to identify and implement strategies to deter continued absenteeism ➤ Referral to School Social Worker. The SSW will contact or make a home visit reminding parents of possible penalties for absences. The school social worker will assess attendance problem, increase the intensity of strategies, and refer to community agencies including, but the SSW is not limited to the options listed above.
6 Unexcused Absences (whole day)	Truancy complaint is completed the Counselor or designee and

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Students sixteen (16) and younger.	delivered to the truancy officer by the attendance officer.
7 Absences (in a block class)	Student has to appeal for credit
10 Unexcused Absences (students sixteen (16) and younger).	Criminal Warrant is file with the Magistrate Court for violation of Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law

Students in grades 9 through 12 ONLY

- After two (2) absences from a class period, the teacher will call parents and file documentation of the outcome in Infinite Campus (IC).
- If a student accumulates four (4) unexcused absences in a period, an AST meeting will be convened. The committee will explain in detail to the student and his/her parent/guardian (should the parent/guardian chose to attend) the attendance protocol and the attendance appeals process. Both the parent/guardian and the student will indicate their understanding by signing the minutes. However, if the student or parent are absent from the meeting, the committee will proceed with the AST meeting, and the minutes will be mailed to the parent.

*****An AST meeting WILL NOT be held for each class period in which a student accumulates four (4) unexcused absences. ONLY ONE (1) AST MEETING WILL BE HELD. *****

- If a student is sixteen (16) or younger and misses more than six (6) unexcused whole day absences in a semester, truancy will be filed with the truancy officer. If the student refusal to attend school is the sole reason for his/her absences, a Form 90 will be completed.

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- If a student sixteen (16) and younger accumulates more than (10) ten whole day unexcused absences (in a semester), a warrant will be filed with Magistrate Court.

Tardies

- When a student is twenty (20) minutes late for a class period, he/she will be counted absent for that class period (in fulfillment of seat time requirement).
- Parents are allowed to write three (3) handwritten excuses per semester ONLY.

Academic Credit

For the purpose of granting academic credit, students in grades 9 through 12 who accumulate seven (7) absences in the first semester or eight (8) absences in the second semester on a block schedule will not receive course credit for that semester unless the student appeals for credit. Those not on a block schedule will not receive course credit if they accumulate 15 absences for the academic year.

II. 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 for attending school and is subject to adjudication in Sumter 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.

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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 (Form 90) should be filed in the Juvenile Court of Sumter County by the School Resource Officer (SRO) 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 DJJ, to which the parent will be invited to attend.

B. Juvenile Justice Procedures

At eight (8) 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, Principal or school designee.)

1. Intake Process for Juvenile Complaints:

a. Once received, the complaint (Form 90) will be entered into the Juvenile Tracking System, and any past history will be assessed.

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b. The complaint will be staffed with the Truancy Officer(s) or referring entity for a brief summary of their involvement.

c. The DJJ Intake Officer may contact the School Attendance Clerk or designee for any further pertinent information.

d. At this review the following options will be discussed:

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

e. 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

*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

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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.

The Truancy Officers will hold judicial truancy reviews 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.

The Juvenile Court Judge prior to the two-year expiration date may terminate a Probation Order if youth's attendance and/or progress has reached a level satisfactory to all parties involved.

C. Prosecution in Magistrate/Superior and State 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.

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- The parent has not actively sought assistance from community social services and resources to assist in getting the child to school.
- The parent is absent from the home or neglectful to the 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 ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any school year, the School Attendance Officer will file a complaint (with the Magistrate Court) and/or apply, via the School Resource Officer (Replace with Attendance Officer), 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 the signature of receipt, notification should be sent via certified mail, with 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

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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.”

III. Community Support

A. Law Enforcement

Each school in Sumter County has access to an employee of the Sumter County Sheriff’s Department or Americus Police Department (**School Resource Officers – SROs**). These individuals are certified peace officers designated as “deputy of the Sumter County Sheriff’s Department or officer of the Americus Police Department.” In support of improved school attendance, the law enforcement officer shall:

- Attend AST meetings, as appropriate.
- **Forward complaints against parents directly to the Sheriff’s Department regarding compliance with mandatory attendance law.**
- Honor any applicable school-related transportation orders issued by a court.
- On an intermittent basis, transport truant students to school.

B. Public Health

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

- Provide immunization evaluations, immunizations, and immunization records required for school enrollment. *

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- Provide Scoliosis screens for students.
- Provide various medical, dental, and prescription services, referrals, and education to students and families in Sumter County to promote personal and community health.

** fees associated*

C. Mental Health: Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care

Middle Flint 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 Sumter. In support of this Protocol, Middle Flint Behavioral Health Care shall:

- Notify and/or refer student clients to the School Counselor or School Attendance Officer 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.
- Exclusions apply.

In accordance with state and federal laws related to confidentiality Middle Flint and Sumter County Schools shall, as appropriate, obtain releases of information to allow communication as outlined above.

D. Department of Family and Children Services

The Sumter County Department of Family and Children Services often provides social services to the families of truant students. In support of this Protocol, the Sumter County Department of Family and Children's Service 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 Attendance Officer when available attendance information indicates more than ten (10) unexcused absences. Attend court proceedings, when necessary, for active 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.

IV. Monitoring the Protocol

To ensure that these written protocol procedures are followed, the Protocol Committee will meet quarterly for a year, which will begin on the date of the protocol's adoption (**May 2005**).

The Protocol Committee will then meet **bi-annually**, as required by law.

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The Committee's goal will be to improve communication between agencies, encourage interagency 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.

Appendix A

Glossary

Attendance – Attend – a student’s physical or virtual presence in the educational programs for which he or she is enrolled.(160-5-1.-28)

Attendance Support Team (AST) - a school level committee generally consisting of a counselor, the school social worker, the attendance officer, but may include other school staff as designated by student needs and/or the school principal’s designee. Each attendance committee will be facilitated by a designee of the Principal who is responsible for conducting meetings and overseeing the activities of the committee. This committee should meet weekly. The committee meets with the parent(s) and/or the student (based upon maturity level) once the student reaches at least five (5) unexcused absences.

UPDATE BOARD POLICY

Excused Absence – Sumter County Board of Education policy delineates excused absences for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious illness in student’s immediate family
3. Death in family
4. Court Summons
5. Religious holiday
6. One day for registering to vote or voting
7. Serving as a page for the Georgia General Assembly
8. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health/safety
9. A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
10. 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

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deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of (5) 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 (20-2-692.1).

11. Students in foster care attend court proceedings related to their foster care (student will be marked as excused).

If a student is absent for one of these reasons, he/she must bring in either a handwritten note from his/her parent or guardian or a note from a medical office (within (5) five days upon their return to school) indicating the reason for the absence(s) and the date the absence(s) occurred.

Immediate Family – parents, step-parents, legal guardians, spouse, siblings, children, grandparents, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, aunts, and uncles.

School Resource Officers - Certified law enforcement officers serve as School Resource Officers in Sumter County middle and high schools. The presence of law enforcement within the school community provides a consistent approach to community public safety. Through the school-based community policing model officers are involved in proactive areas of crisis planning, school planning, and the important areas of prevention, intervention, and enforcement.

Student Attendance Protocol – procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with parents and guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for policies relating to tardiness.

Student Attendance Protocol Committee – a committee established by the chief judge of the superior court of each county for the purpose of ensuring coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies and

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programs involved in compulsory attendance issues, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school, and to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this state.

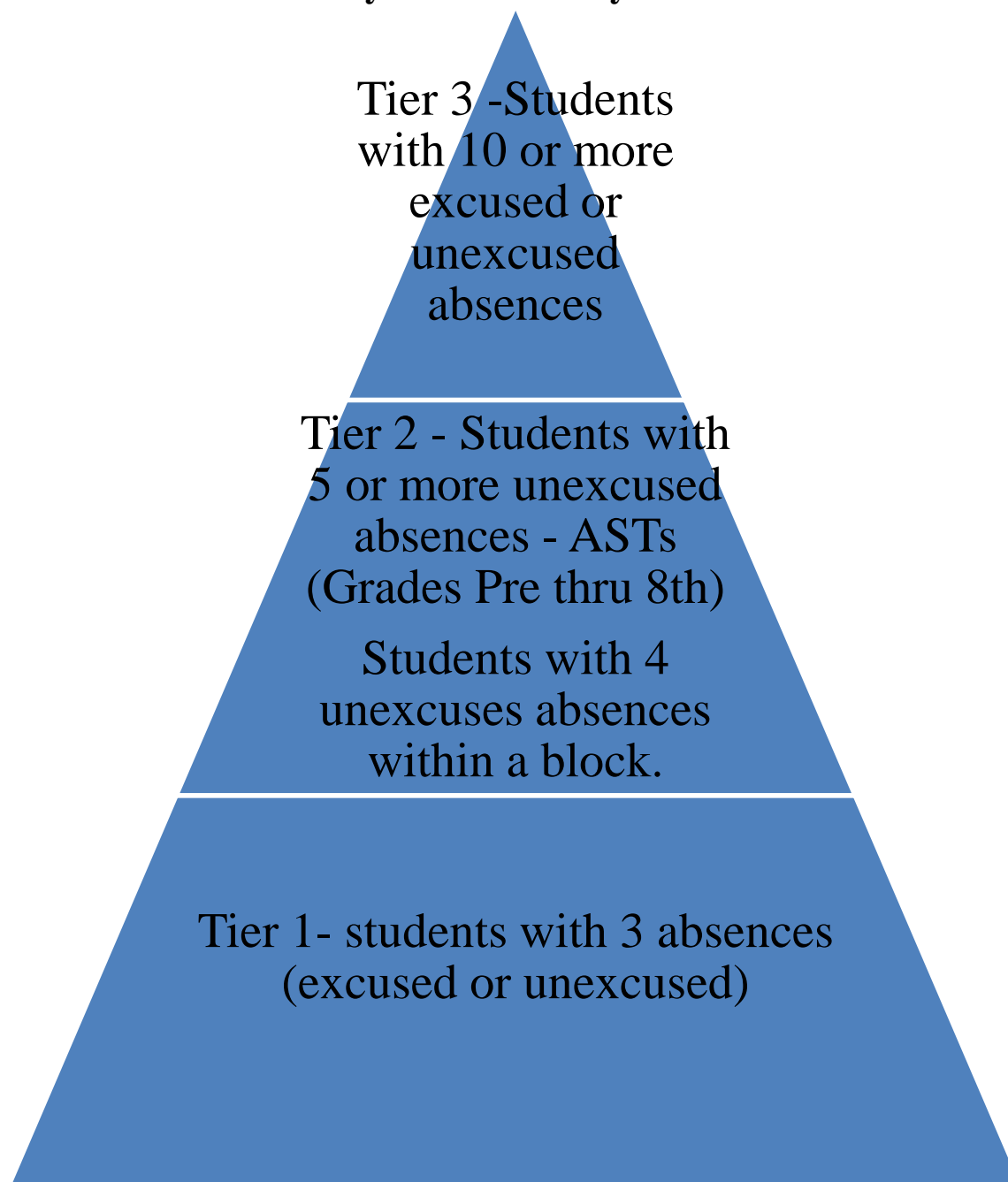
Tardy – a student is late when he/she arrives at school after the morning bell (elementary – 7:45 AM; middle – 8:50 AM; high- 8:05 AM; or whatever time is designated by the school). Excused Tardy – includes the same reasons for an excused absence (see definition of excused absence).

Truancy – (for a student under age 16) an absence during a portion of the school day or the entire school day without valid excuse.

Truant – any child, age 6-16, subject to compulsory attendance, who during the school calendar year, has five (5) or more days of unexcused absences.

Source: This information was taken from the Georgia Board of Education Rule: JB 160-5-1-.10 Student Attendance and Georgia State Codes 20-2-150, 20-2-690.1, 20-2-690.2, 40-5-22.

Appendix B

Sumter County Attendance Pyramid of Intervention**Tier 1**

Sumter County Student Attendance Protocol

- School level personnel facilitate communication with the parent/guardian
- Teachers communicate with students about absences
- Attendance Protocol
- Examine student's medical documentation (located in permanent record) to determine chronic health conditions that impact attendance
- Excuses turned in within three (3) days of student's return
- Issuance of Parent Notification Letter explaining attendance expectations

Tier 2

- Attendance meeting is held.
- Referral to School Social Worker
- Home visits

Tier 3

- Criminal warrant for violation of the compulsory attendance law (for students with 10 or more unexcused absences)
- Students missing more than (15) fifteen days excused or unexcused in grades K-8th will be scheduled for promotion/retention meetings.

Appendix C

Sumter County Student Attendance Protocol

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150

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***** Current Through the 2013 Regular Session *****

TITLE 20. EDUCATION CHAPTER 2. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ARTICLE 6. QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION PART 3. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150 (2012)

§ 20-2-150. Eligibility for enrollment (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, all children and youth who have attained the age of five years by September 1 shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education programs authorized in this part unless they attain the age of 20 by September 1 or they have received high school diplomas or the equivalent. This shall specifically include students who have reenrolled after dropping out and who are married, parents, or pregnant. Special education students shall also be eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs through age 21 or until they receive high school or special education diplomas or the equivalent; provided, however, they were enrolled during the preceding school year and had an approved Individualized Education Program (IEP) which indicated that a successive year of enrollment was needed. Other students who have not yet attained age 21 by September 1 or received high school diplomas or the equivalent shall be eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs, provided they have not dropped out of school for one-quarter or more. Each local unit of administration shall have the authority to assign students who are married, parents, or pregnant or who have reenrolled after dropping out one quarter or more to programs of instruction within its regular daytime educational program, provided that a local unit of administration may develop and implement special programs of instruction limited to such students within the regular daytime educational program or, at the option of the student, in an alternative program beyond the regular daytime program; provided, further, that such programs of instruction are designed to enable such students to earn course credit toward receiving high school diplomas. These programs may include instruction in

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prenatal care and child care. Each local unit of administration shall have the authority to provide alternative programs beyond the regular daytime educational program. Unless otherwise provided by law, the State Board of Education shall have the authority to determine the eligibility of students for enrollment. It is declared to be the policy of this state that general and occupational education be integrated into a comprehensive educational program which will contribute to the total development of the individual. (b) A child who was a legal resident of one or more other states or countries for a period of two years immediately prior to moving to this state and who was legally enrolled in a public kindergarten or first grade, or a kindergarten or first grade accredited by a state or regional association or the equivalent thereof, shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general or special education programs authorized in this part if such child will attain the age of five for kindergarten or six for first grade by December 31 and is otherwise qualified. (c) All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of this state prior to their seventh birthday shall become subject to all of the provisions of this article, the provisions of Code Sections 20-2-690 through 20-2-701, and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance even though they have not attained seven years of age. (d) No child or youth shall be admitted to any public school of the state until the parent or guardian provides to the proper school authorities an official copy of that child's social security number which shall be incorporated into the official school records pertaining to that child or youth. Each local unit of administration shall establish and implement a plan for providing the public appropriate notice of the information required of every student under its jurisdiction prior to the beginning of each school year. School authorities may provisionally admit a child for whom an official social security number has not been provided if the parent or guardian completes a postage-paid application for a social security number at the time of enrollment. A parent or guardian who objects to the incorporation of the social security number into the school records of a child may have the requirement waived by signing a statement objecting to the requirement. HISTORY: Code 1981, § 20-2-150, enacted by Ga.

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L. 1985, p. 1657, § 1; Ga. L. 1987, p. 1169, § 1; Ga. L. 1990, p. 1354, § 1; Ga. L. 1992, p. 2200, § 1; Ga. L. 1993, p. 1279, § 12.1; Ga. L. 2012, p. 358, § 7/HB 706.

Note: Pre-K Students: (Excerpt from above)

(c) All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of this state prior to their seventh birthday shall become subject to all of the provisions of this article, the provisions of Code Sections 20-2-690 through 20-2-701, and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance even though they have not attained seven years of age.

Appendix D

Attendance Notification Letters

SEE INFINITE CAMPUS