

Houston County School District Truancy Intervention



What is GAPSS?
(Great Attendance Produces
Student Success)

GEORGIA ATTENDANCE LAW

- ▶ **Compulsory Attendance Law Ages:** “between 6th and 16th birthdays.” However, “if a child is under 6 and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he/she is then subject to the compulsory attendance law.”
- ▶ Violation of the GA Compulsory Attendance Law can result in a fine of no less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of the courts. Each day’s absence from school can be considered a separate offense.
- ▶ Code Section 20-2-690.1 O.C.G.A. - *States in subsection (a) that every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state having control of any school-age child or children between the age of six (6) and sixteen (16) shall enroll and send such child or children to school. Further, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of Houston County prior to their sixth (6) birthday shall become subject to all provisions of this law. Any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy and Georgia law shall be subject to sanctions imposed by the courts of Houston County.*
- ▶ Subsection (b) of that code section additionally states any parent, guardian or other person residing in the state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this code section shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day’s absence from school after proper notification of absences shall constitute a separate offense.

GAPSS

(Great Attendance Produces Student Success)

- ▶ You are here because your child has 8 or more unexcused absences and is considered truant.
- ▶ HCSD and the Magistrate/Juvenile court system have developed this program as a Pre-Trial Diversion Program in lieu of court proceedings. This is meant to be educational, not punitive. If a parent/child fails to attend this class (GAPSS), they will be submitted and summoned to appear in the appropriate court.
- ▶ If after the parent/student attends GAPSS, and continues to have unexcused absences, they WILL be summoned to the appropriate court.
- ▶ Required days of instructions: 180 days

Attendance Protocol Basics

▶ 3 unexcused days

- ▶ Parent is contacted by the school.

▶ 5 unexcused days

- ▶ An Attendance Contract is provided to the parent and a parent conference is optional.

▶ 8 unexcused days

- ▶ A referral is sent to the school social worker. An automated call-out/email will be sent to the parent/guardian with a link for GAPSS.

Attendance Protocol Basics

▶ 10 unexcused days

- ▶ The school social worker will begin interventions to decrease barriers to school attendance.

▶ 15 unexcused days

- ▶ A Notice of Pending Court Referral will be sent to the parent/guardian.

▶ 15+ unexcused days

- ▶ A case evaluation will be completed to determine the appropriate court referral.

ABSENCES

- ▶ TWO TYPES OF ABSENCES:
 - ▶ EXCUSED
 - ▶ UNEXCUSED

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- ▶ Excused absences are simply absences that are supported by a doctor or parent note.
- ▶ Students may be excused from school for the following reasons:
 - ▶ Personally ill and attendance could endanger their health or the health of others
 - ▶ A serious illness or death in their immediate family
 - ▶ Mandated to be absent by order of the government
 - ▶ Celebrating religious holidays observed by your faith
 - ▶ Military Reasons
- ✱ A maximum of 10 parent notes for illness will be excused. Each day counts as one parent note.

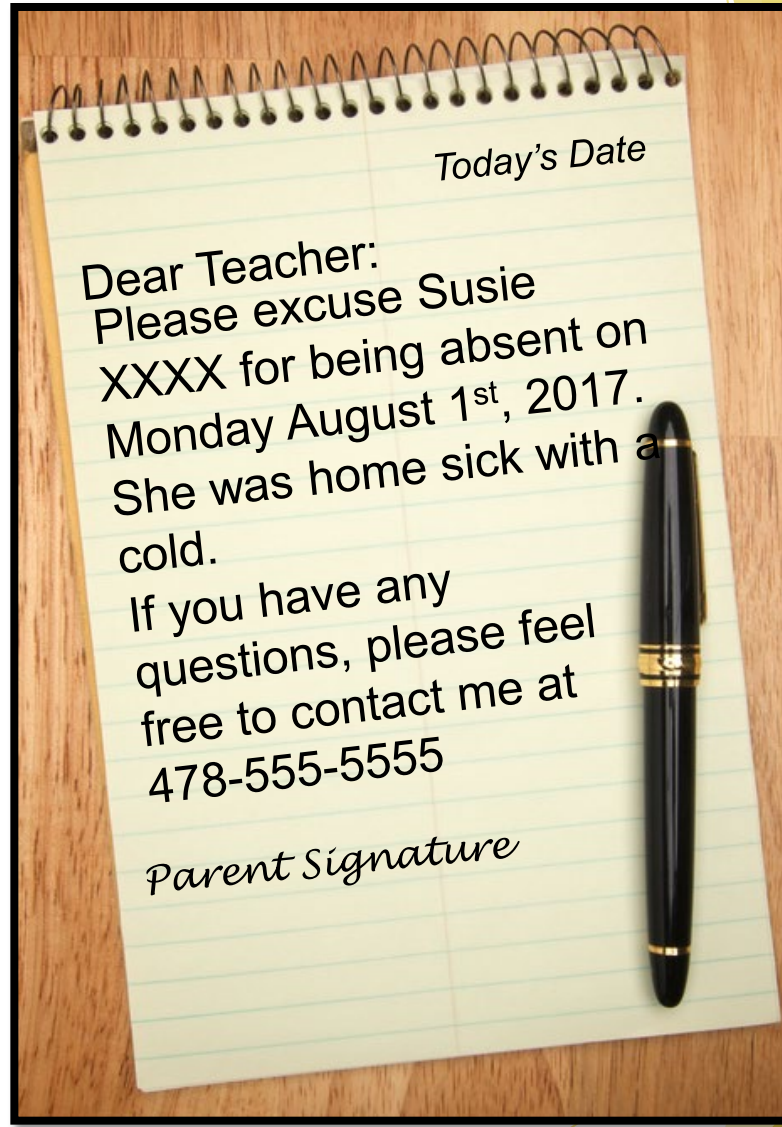
UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- ▶ Unexcused absences are absences that are **NOT** supported by:
 - ▶ Doctor's note
 - ▶ Parent note
 - ▶ Court order
 - ▶ Military Approval
 - ▶ Religious

NOTES FOR ABSENCES

- ▶ The doctor or parent note for the absences should be sent to the school on the first day, and no later than the fifth day the student returns to school.
- ▶ The note should have the name of student, date, and the reason the student was absent. If note is not turned in within the five-day window, the absence will be unexcused.
- ▶ Make sure the note is an excusable reason.
 - ▶ Not Disney World or Family Reunions/Vacations
- ▶ Notes may be emailed to the school's clerical staff, and/or school messenger.

More Tips.....



What if.....????

- ▶ *“I gave my child the note, he said he gave it to the teacher...”*
 - ▶ Double check with the teacher by phone or email every time you send a note to school (primarily for elementary students). They are known to forget about notes in their backpack. Call the school office, they can check for you.
 - ▶ Check your child’s book bag when he/she returns home
 - ▶ Check with Infinite Campus!! It is constantly being updated. A green “A” means the day was excused. A red “AU” means it was unexcused.
 - ▶ Problems can be taken care of before it gets to court level.
- ▶ *“Well, the doctor’s office was supposed to fax a note to the school for me...”*
 - ▶ Check with the doctor’s office to make sure they faxed the note.
 - ▶ Check with the school to make sure they received it.

Facts to consider..

- ▶ Attendance in grades 4th-7th is the 2nd highest predictor to determine if a student will be at an elevated risk of being off track in high school.
- ▶ Students with 80% or lower attendance in middle school had a greater than 75% chance of dropping out of school.
- ▶ Students who have an attendance rate of less than 85% in middle grades were very likely to fail classes in high school and are likely to fall off track for graduation.
- ▶ Missing 10% (about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/>

TARDY OR UNEXCUSED EARLY DISMISSALS

- ▶ How do tardies and unexcused early dismissal affect students of all ages?
 - ▶ Tardiness affects your child's ability to be successful in his/her schoolwork.
 - ▶ Tardiness has a negative impact on your child. The teacher does not have time to stop scheduled activities to get him/her "caught up" on what your child missed.
 - ▶ Tardiness has a huge negative impact on other students who arrive on time, and who are then distracted while your child gets settled upon his/her arrival.
 - ▶ Tardiness can be considered defiance of the school attendance policy and can result in assigning the student consequences, such as detention, etc., (especially true for students in grades 7 through 12.)
 - ▶ Being on time teaches lifelong skills and appropriate work ethic (jobs, appointments, etc.)

IF YOUR CHILD MISSES...	THAT EQUALS...	WHICH IS...	AND OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT'S...
1 DAY EVERY 2 WEEKS	20 DAYS PER YEAR	4 WEEKS PER YEAR	NEARLY 1 ½ YEARS
1 DAY PER WEEK	40 DAYS PER YEAR	8 WEEKS PER YEAR	OVER 2 ½ YEARS
2 DAYS PER WEEK	80 DAYS PER YEAR	16 WEEKS PER YEAR	OVER 5 YEARS
3 DAYS PER WEEK	120 DAYS PER YEAR	24 WEEKS PER YEAR	NEARLY 8 YEARS

HE/SHE IS ONLY MISSING JUST...	THAT'S EQUALS...	WHICH IS...	AND OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT'S...
10 MINS PER DAY	50 MINS PER WEEK	NEARLY 1 ½ WEEKS PER YEAR	NEARLY ½ YEAR
20 MINS PER DAY	1 HR, 40 MINS PER WEEK	OVER 2 ½ WEEKS PER YEAR	NEARLY 1 YEAR
30 MINS PER DAY	HALF DAY PER WEEK	4 WEEKS PER YEAR	NEARLY 1 ½ YEARS
1 HOUR PER DAY	1 DAY PER WEEK	8 WEEKS PER YEAR	OVER 2 ½ YEARS

What can I do to prevent truancy?

- Make sure your child brings a note or you can email a note for each absence. Notes are accepted up to five days after the student returns to school. The student handbook lists what is considered an acceptable excuse.
- Double check with the teacher/staff to make sure the child has turned in the note, or the parent can bring the note to the office on the day the child returns.
- If your child has a chronic medical condition that causes him or her to be absent, make sure the school is aware of these medical issues. Hospital Homebound can be an option.

What can I do to prevent truancy?

- ▶ Establish and communicate expectations; Be consistent! Parents who are inconsistent with routines, discipline, and expectations have a tougher time with their children.
- ▶ Help your child form a positive peer group.
- ▶ Encourage your child to participate in school activities.
- ▶ Get involved in your child's school as best as you can (Open House, Meet & Greet, Teacher Conferences, etc).
- ▶ Get to know your child's teachers and school administrators.
- ▶ Update your contact information with school personnel.

What can I do to prevent truancy?

- ▶ Set a regular bedtime & morning routine.
- ▶ Layout clothes & backpacks the night before.
- ▶ Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school if something comes up. (family members, friends, neighbors, etc)
- ▶ Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends may feel isolated.
- ▶ Ask for help from school officials, juvenile sheriff's office, community & faith-based agencies, if you are having trouble getting your child to school.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/>

WHEN PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE INVOLVED

- ▶ Test scores improve
- ▶ Students earn higher grades and graduate
- ▶ Attendance improves
- ▶ Student is motivated, better self-esteem
- ▶ Less student behavior problems

Helpful School District Resources

- ▶ Infinite Campus App
- ▶ A great tool for parents concerning attendance and grades.
- ▶ Here Comes The Bus
- ▶ A bus-tracking app which enables parents to view real-time location of their child's school bus via a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Both can be found at www.hcbe.net under the Parent Information Center in the Parents tab.

Helpful School District Resources

- ▶ **McKinney Vento (Homeless)-** The definition of homeless can be broad and unique under this program (i.e.-doubled up with a relative). The main advantage is school transportation services to schools outside the zone. **POC-Patricia Lane- 478-210-8600; Homeless Social Worker- James Eustis- 478-312-4205**
- ▶ **Hospital Homebound Program-** This program is designed for those students who will miss a significant amount of school due to a chronic medical/MH condition. This is meant to be a temporary program and expires after an approved time frame. You must reapply after every expiration. HH application must be signed by an MD. For MH issues, only a **Licensed Practitioner's** signature on the HH form will be accepted. **Contact School counselors**

Helpful School District Resources

- ▶ **HCCA-** This is a part time program in which students are bussed from their main schools. Some of the programs include culinary, nursing, cosmetology, computers, automotive, etc. <http://hcca.hcbe.net/> **Contact School counselors**
- ▶ **Online academics (Credit Recovery)-** This program is at the schools and the HCCA. It is meant for students who have fallen behind and allows them to make up the work with on-line classes. **Contact School counselors**
- ▶ **WIN Academy at the HCCA -** This program will provide full time alternative options for a student to graduate with greater flexibility. This includes offering evening on-line academic classes (3-7PM) for those who work. A Specialist at the Career Academy will support students who have stopped attending school or choose to work. They will reconnect with students to establish a path to graduation. **Contact School counselors**

Helpful School District Resources

- ▶ Middle GA Consortium (ages 16-24)- Free program- Assists with obtaining GED, post-secondary education, or job training. 478-953-4771
- ▶ Job Corps (ages 16-24 low income)- Free education and career training. 800-733-JOBS(5627)
- ▶ Youth Challenge Academy (ages 16-18)- Free boot camp program where students can earn their diploma or GED. Students must volunteer for this program. <https://www.georgiayouthchallenge.org/>
- ▶ CGTC Academy (ages 16-21)- Alternative Diploma Program- 478-988-6800 or email: info@centralgatech.edu
- ▶ For information purposes only

Helpful School District Resources

▶ Virtual Schools in Georgia

- ▶ Houston Virtual-
<https://www.hcbe.net/>
- ▶ Georgia Cyber Academy-
<https://www.georgiacyber.org/>
- ▶ Georgia Connections-
<https://www.connectionsacademy.com/georgia-virtual-school/>

Helpful School District Resources

- ▶ Home School- You have that option. If interested, you must contact the Georgia Dept. of Education in Atlanta. Don't forget to withdraw your student.
<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx>

- ▶ For information purposes only

Helpful School District Resources

▶ Mental Health Services

- ▶ **PROJECT AWARE**-(All Schools) Federally funded grant program with a focus on mental health. Speak with the school counselor if interested.
- ▶ **APEX program**-(Middle & High Schools) Mental Health counseling in the schools. Speak with the school counselor if interested.

Helpful School District Resources

▶ Discounted Internet Service

- ▶ Affordable Connectivity Program-
<https://www.hcbe.net/affordableconnectivity>
- ▶ Cox Connect2Compete-
https://www.cox.com/residential/internet/connect2compete.html?sc_id=cr_dm_camp_z_LowCostInternet_vanity

Helpful School District Resources

- ▶ Lindsey Student Support Center (LSSC)-
<https://www.hcbe.net/lindseycenter>

[https://www.facebook.com/LindseySupport
Center/](https://www.facebook.com/LindseySupportCenter/)

- ▶ Lindsey Student Support Center Clinic
Day-
<https://www.hcbe.net/lindseycalendar>

What is expected of students...?

- ▶ Be on time for school everyday.
 - ▶ Elementary starts at 8:30
 - ▶ Middle starts at 7:30
 - ▶ High starts at 8:00
- ▶ Be prepared for class.
- ▶ Complete all assignments and homework.
- ▶ Follow school rules, including dress code.
- ▶ Be respectful, responsible and well mannered at school and on the bus.
- ▶ No unexcused absences.
- ▶ No school or bus suspensions for any reason.



Social Worker School Assignments

Amy Hutto
Amy.hutto@hcbe.net
478-988-6200 x3556
Kings Chapel Elementary
Morningside Elementary
Parkwood Elementary
Mossy Creek Middle
Houston County High

April Nelson
April.nelson@hcbe.net
478-988-6200 x3557
Bonaire Elementary
Bonaire Primary
Northside Elementary
Tucker Elementary
Northside Middle
Bonaire Middle

Latonya Blasingame
Latonya.Blasingame@hcbe.net
478-988-6200 x3560
CB Watson Primary
Hilltop Elementary
Pearl Stephens Elementary
Warner Robins Middle
WIN Academy

Maria Josey
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478-988-6200 x3558
Matt Arthur Elementary
Matt Arthur Primary
Miller Elementary
Perry Middle
Perry High

Shante Hendrick
Shante.Hendrick@hcbe.net
478-988-6200 x 3561
Eagle Springs Elementary
Shirley Hills Elementary
Thomson Middle
Warner Robins High

Stephanie Canion
Stephanie.canion@hcbe.net
478-988-6200 x3562
Centerville Elementary
Russell Elementary
Westside Elementary
Feagin Mill Middle
Veterans High

Kali McCalvin
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478-988-6200 x3563
David Perdue Elementary
David Perdue Primary
Lake Joy Elementary
Lake Joy Primary
Huntington Middle

Linda Walker
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478-988-6200 x3560
CB Watson Primary
Hilltop Elementary
Pearl Stephens Elementary
Warner Robins Middle
WIN Academy

Taylor Poole
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Centerville Elementary
Lake Joy Elementary
Lake Joy Primary
Northside Elementary
Feagin Mill Middle

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Tangela Brice
Coordinator of Student Services
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Needs Assessment & Survey

- ▶ To complete the GAPSS Needs Assessment & Survey, please click the link [here](#):
- ▶ You will not get credit for this course unless the assessment and survey are completed in their entirety.