



NICKAJACK ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL 2024-2025

I. Attendance Referral Process

This attendance protocol's main goal is to address excused absences, frequent unexcused absences, and excessive tardiness for students who are actively enrolled at Nickajack Elementary School.

- **Three (3) unexcused absences:** Teachers will communicate with parents regarding student attendance via CTLS message, phone, parent conference, or mailed letter. Documentation should be kept by teachers throughout the school year. Teachers will use International Welcome Center translators to help communicate with parents who do not speak their primary language.
- **Five (5) unexcused absences:** Each school will utilize a CTLS (Cobb Teaching and Learning System) generated letter to communicate with parents. This must be adhered to as the Georgia Law referencing attendance states that the school is required to contact parents by two reasonable attempts. (There is a 14-day grace period which allows time for parents to provide notes and for the attendance clerks to code the absences accordingly).
- **Seven (7) consecutive unexcused absences:** The Attendance Clerk or designee may contact the school social worker to investigate the reason for absences, so the appropriate follow-up or resource referrals may be completed prior to the withdrawal at 10 consecutive unexcused absences.
- **Seven (7) unexcused absences:** A School Social Work referral will be generated by principal or principal designee (Attendance Clerk), listing specific school-based interventions (telephone calls, letters, conferences, etc.) that have occurred prior to making the referral. Each intervention should be documented thoroughly.
- **Excessive Absences (excused or unexcused):** At the discretion of local school administration, a referral to the School Social Worker can be made at any time it is deemed appropriate for excessive excused/unexcused absences. A student's previous years' attendance records may be considered when making a referral. * The principal may ask for additional documentation to verify that absences are excused, particularly when more than three (3) absences have accumulated during the semester.
- **Ten (10) or more unexcused absences:** Students and/or parents will be subject to referral(s) to juvenile court, magistrate court and/or Department of Family and Children Services for truancy and/or educational neglect. Detailed information pertaining to the student, local school and school social work interventions will be necessary when filing a Complaint with DFCS, Juvenile and/or Magistrate Court. Prior to any action to commence judicial proceedings to impose a penalty on a parent, guardian or other person residing in the state who has control or charge of the child, notification shall be provided.

Nickajack has an Attendance Core Team that meets monthly. The school personnel included in the attendance meetings are:

Attendance Administrator (Katie Harmon)
School Social Worker (Darline Alvarez)
School Counselors (Rachel Botkin, Dr. Lelia Weathers, & Tiffany Olayiwola)
Attendance Clerk (Katherine Alexander)
Truancy Coordinator (Sabra Dunn)
Any other staff deemed appropriate.

II. Nickajack Morning Tardy Protocol

Students arriving at school after 7:50 am will be required for an adult to sign them into school. If students do not have an adult with them their parent/guardian will be notified that their student was tardy.

The following steps will be followed by the school staff once a student reaches the following tardy thresholds:

- After Ten (10) tardy days- Letter from Principal
- After Fifteen (15) tardy days- Call from Administration
- After Twenty (20) tardy days- Social Work Referral
- If the checkouts persist, the Grade Level Administrator will send a letter to parent/guardian to identify the reason for early check outs and explore workable solutions.

A Truancy Intervention Panel (T.I.P)-will be utilized as an intervention to explore the underlying reasons for student excessive/chronic absenteeism. Truancy Intervention Panels/Virtual Truancy Intervention Panel:

Truancy intervention panels/ Virtual Truancy Intervention Panel address student attendance and academic concerns. These panels are designed to foster an environment in which families and students are empowered to create their own solutions. The scheduling of truancy intervention panel/ Virtual Truancy Intervention Panel reviews will be accomplished through consultation between the key stakeholders among local schools. Among these stakeholders are school administration, school social work, truancy coordinator, school counselors, teachers, and community volunteers.

- Truant: In accordance with the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law 20-2-690.1 a student is considered truant when he or she has accrued five or more unexcused absences.

- Unexcused absence: It does not meet the established criteria set forth by the school board policy for consideration for excused absences.

As required by Georgia law, the Cobb County School District will address excessive absences as discussed in the Student Attendance Protocol (Form JB-5, incorporated by reference here), which contains 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.

IV. Referral to Juvenile Court

The School Social Worker or Truancy Coordinator will complete the Truancy Complaint and attach all pertinent school information/documents, i.e., contact information, attendance records, discipline, transcripts etc. (Truancy or Educational Neglect Complaints).

- Principal approval will be required.
- To fully complete the Truancy Petition/Complaint – the information must include that the school has sought to resolve the expressed concern through available educational approaches (i.e. RTI (Response to Intervention), parent conferences, truancy intervention panels or other interventions). The information provided must reflect if the parent or legal guardian has been informed and has complied with the identified strategies to resolve the expressed problem.
- Notification must be provided to the parent/guardian(s) by the school.