

Frequently Asked Questions

How Does a School Social Worker differ from a Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) Social Worker?

*School Social Workers are employed by the County Board of Education and are trained to provide preventative and intervention services within a school, hence, they are school employees. **School Social Workers do not work for DFCS** and are not involved in the investigation of child maltreatment cases and are never involved in the removal of children from their homes. However, School Social Workers sometimes work with DFCS Social Workers in order to obtain assistance for students and their families.*

How is a School Social Work referral made?

School Social Work referrals are typically made by school personnel such as School Counselors, Principals, Assistant Principals and Teachers. At times, parents, community stakeholders and students also request services by their School Social Worker. Referral forms are provided at each school.

What is McKinney-Vento (Homeless Act)?

McKinney-Vento is a federal law which provides rights and services to "homeless" students. "Homelessness" within the school system refers to students who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Such residences can include shelters, motels, and vehicles, on the street, foster care placements and doubled-up with family or friends.

How will I know if a Student Qualifies as "Homeless?"

School Social Workers will talk with the student's parent and/or caregiver to determine if they meet criteria for homelessness. Once a determination has been made that a student qualifies as homeless, School Social Workers will set up needed services and notify school enrollment personnel.

What is Truancy?

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690-1) defines a student as truant when they have accumulated five unexcused absences during the course of the school year. The Georgia Compulsory School Attendance law requires that all children between the ages 6 and 16 attend school unless there is legal justification. The legal penalties and consequences of truancy may include a referral to State or Juvenile Court for prosecution. Furthermore, each subsequent absence constitutes a separate offense.

What is the School Social Worker's Role in the Truancy Process?

School Social Workers assess the causes of students referred for chronic non-attendance/truancy and assist in developing interventions to improve school attendance. If efforts to improve attendance at the school level are not successful, School Social Workers may file a complaint with State Court for elementary students and Juvenile Court for middle and high students.