



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Moody Air Force Base

Home of the Flying Tigers

Military Child Education Program Guide

"Connecting Families, Communities and Schools"

The MAFB School Liaison Officer welcomes personnel and families from all branches of the uniform services. Information and services include local public, private, online, and home schooling options; information about schools at future assignments and consultation on any education issue.

*30 August 2016 Edition**

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Disclaimer: Changes to GA Dept of Education and/or local district procedures may require adjustment to information contained in this Guide. This pamphlet is not intended to be exhaustive, but to serve as a tool for military parents/families assigned to Moody AFB and vicinity. Please contact staff members listed above for most current information. Contents are current as of the date listed. Websites included are provided for convenience of military personnel and/or their families. Inclusion does not imply any official endorsement by the Dept of Defense, Air Force or Moody AFB.

Introduction: School is the second most important source of support and structure in military students' lives beside their families. At times, children react to talk of a new assignment or an upcoming deployment by “misbehaving” in class or performing poorly in their studies. A teacher who is aware of the situation at home is in a better position to be sensitive and encouraging. We encourage personnel and spouses to maintain a professional and respectful relationship with his/her child's teacher (s). Visit and/or get to know your child's teacher. Keep him/her informed of circumstances (e.g., pending separations and reunions; upcoming PCS moves; death in the family and/or of a pet; divorce; birth of another child; adoption, etc) that may distract your child from his/her day-to-day classwork.

If a problem occurs, use the school chain of command beginning with the classroom teacher. Discuss the issue. If it can't be resolved at that level, then speak with **the Lead Teacher for that grade level**. Don't forget to take advantage of **the guidance counselor** (at middle/high school level). Sometimes he/she can help with the issue. If all of that fails, then make **an appointment with the Ass't Principal**, then the **Principal**. From there, go to the district Central Office **to the Assistant Superintendent, then Superintendent**. If the matter is still unresolved, then contact the School Liaison Officer/SLO and/or the Exceptional Family Member Program-Family Specialist/EFMP-FS. You have the right to address your **District Board of Education** at their regularly scheduled meetings.

Finding Information in this Guide:

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3	Overview of Military Child Education Program and Exceptional Family Member Program-Family Services Coordinator services
4	Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Program; K-12 Educational Options in GA public schools (e.g., Valdosta Early College; International Baccalaureate; Project Lead the Way; Move on When Ready, and Charter Schools)
5	Private Schools; for list of local schools, go to page 19
6	Home Schooling ; Online Free Public Schools
7	Traditional Public School: registration documentation requirements ; school zoning; school choice
8	School attendance in Georgia (GA Rule # 160-5-1-.10); sending excuses after child is absent
9.	Georgia Military Family Act; Bus Transportation; School Codes of Conduct
10.	Graduation Requirements
11.	Your Child's Education: Parental involvement, Organizations, Communication with teacher, Title I School, tutoring, preparing for standardized testing, Moody AFB Youth Center “Power Hour” program, attending Boards of Education meetings, Hospital or Homebound Services
12	Federal Impact Aid, High School Senior Assignment Deferral (HSSAD) Program; Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunity for Military Children (outline of impact begins on page 19); Georgia Educational Curriculum K-12
13	Georgia Milestones Assessments/Levels of Performance; Georgia Alternative Assessment; Student Learning Objective; “Op-Out”
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For more info, go to the **GA DoE website** (see left); then scroll down to the middle of the page. There are three headings (e.g., *Parent, Student, Teacher*) and “ABC’s”. Click on this link and scroll down through the topics until you find your topic.

School Report Cards (<http://schoolgrades.georgia.gov/>)

Military families reside on-base (served by Lowndes Co Schools) as well as in local communities. At the present time, the School Liaison Officer (SLO) attends monthly Boards of Education meetings for Lowndes Co, Lanier Co, Berrien Co, Valdosta City and Scintilla Charter School.

The **Military Child Education Program** was established to help provide for a smooth transition of families between duty stations and ensuring that military-affiliated students are successfully integrated into local educational systems. The quality of K-12 education is a major influence in a military member's morale and his/her decision to remain on active duty. On the average, a military-affiliated student moves six to nine times from kindergarten through their senior year. The SLO is the person responsible for day-to-day management of this program. The SLO:

- **Advocates** for the educational needs of military children.
- **Assists** inbound/outbound personnel and family members **with information** and **referrals** regarding local public school districts; home schooling; private schools, and cyber/virtual/online public schools.
- **Works closely** with the **EFMP-FS** to provide information, referral and follow-up to parents of students with special needs.
- **Educates school personnel** (e.g., classroom teachers, guidance counselors and senior school officials) of the unique issues impacting military children (e.g., deployments, frequent and/or lengthy separations from one or both parents, and frequent moves, etc).
- Monitors national trends/events; is connected to the **GA Interstate Education Compact Commission**; stays informed of **Georgia Dept of Education** policy/procedures; attends local **Boards of Education meetings** to stay updated on issues/changes that can impact military students.
- Monitors any **significant changes in dependent school demographics** that may affect federal funding formulas to local school districts.
- Manages the **GA Military Family Act** program established in 2006 (Official Code of GA Title 20-2-692.1)
- **Assists personnel/families resolve problems** not solved after parent exhausts the school "chain of command".
- Manages the administrative and logistical aspects of the **Moody School Board Liaison Committee (MSBLC)**—the joint base and school-based committee established in 2001.

The SLO is not permitted to accompany military personnel and/or family members to meetings and/or IEP meetings per Air Force guidance, but will meet to consult and/or to advise personnel and/or families prior to these meetings. More information is available by visiting www.moodyfss.com; click on "Facilities"; then click on "Family"; then "Military Child Education". Check out the GA Dept of Education homepage (listed on page 2); then scroll down to *Military Families*.

Family members with special needs receive the support they require through the Air Force **Exceptional Family Member Program**. At Moody AFB, the ***Exceptional Family Member Program-Family Services Coordinator*** should be the first stop for military families with an adult member or child with special needs. That individual is housed in the Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC/Bldg 400). Her contact information is provided on the front cover of this guide.

Thirty years have passed since the ***Education for All Handicapped Children Act*** (Public Law 94-142) guaranteed a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in every state and locality across the country. Prior to its enactment, more than one million children with disabilities were excluded entirely from the education system, and at least that many more children had only limited access and were thus denied an appropriate education. Amended and reauthorized numerous times over the years (most recently in 2004), the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act/IDEA*** (<http://idea.ed.gov/>) is the special education legislation that guides school systems today. **IDEA Part B** establishes requirements for education of children with disabilities from age 3 to 21, including those who attend DoDEA schools. All public school systems in the United States and its territories and the Dept of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) must meet the six major principles of IDEA. They must have policies and procedures for implementing each essential component of the special education process required under IDEA. However, there is no standardization between public agencies and DoDEA on the methods used, timelines followed, and documentation required for their implementation.

The ***Special Education Services and Supports*** branch is responsible for supporting the educational needs of children. Go to the home page listed at the bottom of page 2, then scroll down to that branch.

1. **Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) in Georgia:** The Georgia Pre-K Program began as a pilot program in 1995. In 2004, *Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning* (<http://dec.al.ga.gov/>) was created to manage the Georgia PreK program. Georgia's Pre-K Program continues to update policies and standards each year to increase quality services for the children and families of Georgia.

Children four years of age on September 1 of the current school year, whose parents are Georgia residents (to include military personnel stationed in the state of Georgia) are eligible to attend Georgia Pre-K Program during the school year. Georgia Pre-K Program is voluntary for both families and communities.

It is funded through the Georgia Lottery. In 2011, in response to decreased revenues from lottery sales, the number of hours and number of children who could be served was drastically reduced. As a result, school districts turned to a lottery system (e.g., drawing names of children out of a drum) as the only fair way to determine who may attend PreK at sites in local school districts and private daycare providers.

PreK is offered at the Moody AFB Child Development Center/CDC (257-9220) on a first come-first served basis. Information about registration for the on-base program and forms should be made to the CDC. More information about Georgia Pre-K is available by visiting the *Bright from the Start* website listed above.

2. **K-12 Educational Options in Georgia:**

The Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A Title 20, Chapter 2, Article 16) requires mandatory education for all students ages 6 to 16. Children must be five years of age on Sep 1 of the current school year to enter Kindergarten.

Traditional public schools: Each local public school system has a distinct culture or climate based on its history, resources and the population it serves. Before choosing a school system based on comments by neighbors, sponsor or others, take the time to visit and learn about the system. There are four local systems that historically support military-connected students. These are (alphabetically) Berrien Co (Nashville and Ray City), Lanier Co (Ray City and Lakeland), Lowndes Co, and Valdosta City Schools (within the city boundary). A list of public school systems in the area surrounding Moody AFB may be found at Table 2, page 18. Education in the South has been financed through various means, but depends upon state and federal monies and the *Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax* or E-SPLOST collected at the county level.

Some programs offered in local public schools are:

Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA) is a school within the Valdosta City School system in partnership with Valdosta State University. VECA is a small school designed for students to earn both a high school diploma and up to 60 semester hours of college credit by the end of the 12th grade. VECA graduated its first class in May 2015. Students are nominated for admission based on several criteria: standardized tests results, attendance, and recommendations from current teachers, school and community leaders. For more information, please contact VECA at (229) 671-8455.

The **International Baccalaureate/IB:** The International Baccalaureate curriculum may be found in a variety of school settings. It is accredited through the International Baccalaureate Organization (<http://www.ibo.org/>). IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. It has a reputation for **high-quality education and tough academic rigor**. In South Georgia, there are two IB programs available. The *Diploma Programme* is offered at **Valdosta High School**; it is the only high school IB Programme in this area. For more information, call 229-333-8540 (VHS) or visit their website (www.gocats.org). **Thomasville Scholars Academy** is an IB Middle Years Programme, grades 6-10 that began in 2013. For more information, call their principal at (229) 228-3397 or visit the Thomasville City Schools website (www.tcitys.org) and visit the "Schools" link.

Valdosta City Schools Kindergarten-8th grade will adopt the **Project Lead the Way (PLTW) STEM** (science, technology, electronics and math) education program beginning in 2016-2017 school year. **Gateway** is designed for middle grade students while **Launch** will engage younger students.

Move on When Ready/MOWR Program is Georgia's dual enrollment program that allows students in public, private and home study high schools (9-12th grades) to earn college credit while working on their high school diploma. The MOWR covers cost of tuition, mandatory fees and required textbooks. The goal is to increase college access while preparing students to enter the workforce in a career of their choosing with the skills they will

need in order to succeed. Students who accept this challenge will be introduced to college-level coursework; may be able to graduate early from high school with an associate degree, technical diploma or career certificate; may be able to access courses not offered by their school; can demonstrate that they can handle difficult course work, and build self- confidence. To participate, students should contact their guidance counselor; must sign a ***MOWR Program Participation Agreement*** provided by the Georgia Student Finance Commission; meet the admissions requirements/be accepted by the post-secondary institution of their choice, and make satisfactory progress. Students should visit the GA Dept of Education website “ABCs” directory and scroll down to MOWR for program information. Students in 8th-12th grades should have already begun receiving MOWR program information this school year as part of their individual graduation plan. Your SLO strongly encourages military parents with 8th graders and/or high school students to talk over this option with their students.

Charter Schools have become increasingly popular in the state of Georgia. A charter school is a public school that operates according to the terms of a charter or contract that has been approved by a local board of education and the State Board of Education through the **GA Charter Schools Commission**. For more information on charter schools in Georgia, please visit the Georgia Dept of Education website (<http://www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx>); go to “ABCs” and scroll down to *Charter Schools*. A list of local charter schools appears in the table below.

Name of School & Address	Stated Purpose of Charter School:	Contact Information
Berrien Academy PLC (Grades 9-12) 1015 Exum Road Nashville, GA 31639 (Berrien Co)	Berrien Academy is a public charter School operates in partnership between Berrien County Board of Education and the Berrien County Collaborative since Aug 2005. It serves a maximum of 75 students in grades 9-12. The school is SACS accredited; students receive a high school diploma. It partners with Wiregrass GA Technical College. This partnership allows students to become dually enrolled and take college courses during their high school career.	229-686-6576 (Voice) 229-686-6579 (FAX) www.berrien.ga.bca.schoolinsites.com/
Bishop Hall Charter School (Grades 9-12) 1819 E. Clay Street, Thomasville (Thomas County)	Bishop Hall Charter School is a non-traditional charter high school serving Thomas County students in grades 9-12. Bishop Hall is SACS, GAC and AdvancEd Accreditation Commission (NCA) accredited and has been active in the Thomas County Public School System since 1999.	229-227-1397 (Voice) 229-558-9420 (FAX) www.thomas.K12.ga.us/SchoolsList.aspx
Scintilla Charter Academy (Grades K-5) 2171 East Park Avenue Valdosta, GA 31602 (Lowndes Co & Valdosta City)	Public charter began operations for grades K-4th in the 2015-2016 academic year; added 5th grade in 2016-2017. Their mission is to increase student achievement and develop social responsibility through educational innovations in a safe community of involved families and educators.	229-244-5750 (Voice) 229-333-0283 (FAX) www.scintillacharteracademy.com/

Georgia Virtual School (<http://gavirtualschool.org/>): Virtual education is available through the Georgia Dept of Education’s Office of Technology Services program. It is SACS-CASI accredited. It operates in partnership with schools and parents to offer middle school and high school courses across the state. This is teacher-led, virtual classroom environment. In addition, the state offers **GEORGIA Credit Recovery** (teacher-less environment). Check these out (<http://www.gavirtuallearning.org/Programs.aspx>).

3. Other Educational Options/Venues:

Private Schools: Parents may choose to send their child to private, denominational, non-denominational and/or parochial school. A list of the local schools may be found at Table 3, page 19. Before enrolling your child, please check with private school officials to ensure there is proper academic accreditation as the lack of this can negatively impact higher education. Take the time to visit local private schools and ask for references—other families—who can share their experiences. (*NOTE: Information contained in appendix about private schools is*

provided as a courtesy to military personnel and families. It does NOT constitute or imply any endorsement by the Dept of Defense, Dept of the Air Force nor by Moody AFB. Web sites are subject to change without notice).

Unlike public districts that must answer to their State Dept of Education and to the US Dept of Education, there are a variety of organizations that accredit private schools. In Georgia, parents may check out accreditation by visiting the **Georgia Accrediting Commission** (<http://gac.coe.uga.edu/>). Click on “Member Schools” and then click on “Private Schools”. This will bring you to a list of schools and the types of accreditation (e.g., Accredited with Quality/AWQ; Accredited/ACC; Provisionally Accredited/PROV). The **Georgia Private School Accreditation Council** (GAPSAC; <http://www.gapsac.org/>) is an additional resource to check. It is an umbrella for six agencies that accredit private Christian schools. Please note that the *Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunity for Military Children* does not apply military children attending private schools.

Home Schooling More and more families are turning to home schooling. Military personnel and family members that decide to home school their children should review the information found at the GA DoE link (<http://www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx>); go to “ABC’s”, then to *Home Schooling*.

The *Moody Home School Connection* meets twice monthly (first & third Thursdays) at the Moody AFB Youth Center during the school year. This group is open to all active duty and retired military home schoolers. The *Valdosta Innovative Network of Educators/VINE* (www.homeschool-life.com/ga/valdostahomeschool) and *Classical Conversations* (www.classicalconversations.com) welcome military home school families.

The *Home School Association for Military Families* (HSAMF) specializes in bringing community, resources and support to military homeschoolers nationwide. They are not affiliated with the US Armed Services or endorsed by them. They are a 501(c) (3) organization; may also be reached by calling (402) 906-9766 or at www.homeschool-life.com/ks/hsamf. Other resources include the *Georgia Home Education Association* (<http://www.ghea.org/>); *Homeschool Central* (<http://www.homeschoolcentral.com/>); *The Home School Foundation* (<http://www.homeschoolfoundation.org/>), and the *National Home Education Research Institute* (<http://www.nheri.org/>). Families seeking resources for a particular denomination (e.g., Catholic; Jewish; Mormon, etc) might go to the Internet or check with the local church of their denomination. Another resource that appears to cover the basics is <http://homeschooling.about.com/> and for those seeking a non-sectarian approach to homeschooling may wish to visit <http://www.secularhomeschool.com>

Testing is required at set intervals after completion of third grade. The MAFB SLO recommends using the Home School Legal Defense Association (www.hslda.org) search engine for guidance on tests in all 50 states for home schooling families.

Online, FREE Public Schools are an alternative to traditional brick-and-mortar public schools in which all instructions takes place on-line. The Georgia State Charter School Association (www.gacharters.org/) authorizes these schools in this state. If you are enrolling your student into a private or virtual/online school, please contact institutions as to what documentation they require for enrollment. They are an alternative to “brick and mortar” schools. This option provides flexibility which may appeal to military families. As one individual stated, “we are migratory... we can take this schooling with us”.

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AS A COURTESY TO MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES ASSIGNED TO MOODY AFB. INCLUSION OF WEBSITES AND AGENCY INFORMATION DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE NOR OF MOODY AFB.

Name	Brief Description	Contact Information
Georgia Connections Academy Charter School	Grades K-12	http://www.connectionsacademy.com/georgia-virtual-school Telephone: (404) 835-8900; Toll-Free: 800-382-6010 GA Charter School Commission approved Opened 2014-15
Georgia Cyber Academy	Grades K-12 (<i>K12 Curriculum</i>)	http://www.k12.com/gca/ Telephone (Toll-Free): (866-523-3162)

		GA Charter School Commission approved Opened 2014-15
Georgia Graduation Achievement Charter High School	Grades 9-12	http://www.gradgeorgia.com/ Telephone: 1-844-776-8678 GA Charter School Commission approved Opened 2014-15

Your MAFB SLO strongly encourages you to research the various options available to you. No matter what school or curriculum you choose, it is important that it be accredited by a recognized organization (e.g., Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Council on Accreditation and School Improvement or SACS-CASI; AdvancED, etc) especially as your child moves into middle and high school.

4. Attending Traditional Public School (K-12) in the State of Georgia. A list of the local public school systems begins on page 18. Please note that Lowndes Co Schools uses a central registration system (located adjacent to the Central Office at 1592 Norman Drive). Berrien Co, Lanier Co and Valdosta City Schools have registration at student’s school of assignment. Check with district Transportation Departments (page 9) for determination of school district and zone based on your physical address. Registration: the following documentation is required when registering a child (ren) for school:

Official birth certificate is required for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade students. No birth certificate is necessary for 2 nd – 12 th grade students who have a military identification card or previous school documentation showing birth date. Principals may require official certificates in individual cases.
Shot Record – Georgia Certificate of Immunization (GA Form 3231) is required by GA law. PHS-731, International Certificate of Vaccination by World Health Organization or other physician documentation <u>must</u> be transferred to this form by a doctor or designee. Military personnel and/or families may obtain a copy of this form from the Moody AFB Immunization Clinic (call 257-2778 for more information) or their off-base Primary Care Manager. [For more on required immunizations, please visit GA Dept of Public Health website (http://dph.georgia.gov/immunization-section)] NOTE: MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE ASKED TO BRING THEIR CHILDREN’S SHOT RECORDS WITH THEM WHEN THEY VISIT THE IMMUNIZATION CLINIC. THANK YOU
Certificate of Ear, Eye, Dental and Nutrition Examination (Georgia Form 3300/REV 2013). Military personnel and/or families may obtain a copy of this form from the Moody AFB Pediatrics Clinic (if seen on-base) or their off-base civilian provider. Call 257-2778 for more information about completion of this requirement.
Copy of child’s Social Security Card
Withdrawal form and transcript (preferred), report card, all special education records, and name and mailing address of previous school attended.
Proof of residence (e.g., current electric, gas, water, cable or sanitation bill, rental agreement or mortgage documentation, etc. – no phone bills please). If a bill is not in the custodial parent’s name, he/she must complete a Residency Affidavit providing proof of the residence of the person he/she lives with. Some districts may require more than one proof of residence so it is best to contact the specific Board of Education for precise requirements.
NOTE: Lowndes County Schools requires that a student(s) must be registered by their primary custodial parent or legal guardian . Parents will be asked to produce their divorce decree to verify their status. If said decree does not specify who is primary custodial parent or guardian, additional action will need to be taken to correct this. Assistance is available by contacting the MAFB Legal Office (229-257-3414). Required legal documentation may be filed in Lowndes Co Superior Court, 327 North Ashley Street. For further information, please contact their clerk at (229) 333-5127.

School Zoning. In Georgia, children must attend the public school for which they are zoned for (e.g., based on their actual street address).

School Choice is generally **not available** in the local public school systems. From time to time some districts may grant waivers on a **case-by-case** and **space-available basis**. Parents are reminded that forms submitted to school officials are considered legal documents. Districts validate all information provided. Anyone who knowingly lists a false address is subject to arrest by local law enforcement. School systems have the right to charge

tuition to out-of-district residents. Bus transportation will **not** be available to out-of-district students. If approved for a waiver, parents should be prepared to provide transportation to/from school and to reapply annually.

5. School Attendance in the State of Georgia is strictly enforced.

Compulsory school attendance is required of all children between ages of 6 and 16 residing within the State of Georgia. The responsibility for ensuring the regular attendance lies with the member, civilian parent, guardian, or other person with whom the child resides (Official Code of GA 20-2-690.1). All parents are responsible for reading and complying with all requirements as described in the *Student Handbook* for the school district/system his/her child attends. It is recommended that a copy (hardcopy or electronic) be kept handy throughout the school year for easy reference.

Absences are only considered **excused** for the following reasons (*Georgia State Education Rule 160-5-1-.10; Student Attendance; updated 7 May 2015*):

1. Personal illness or attendance at school endangers a student’s health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death in a student’s immediate family necessitating absence from school.
3. A court order or an order by a government agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
4. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
6. Local boards of education may allow a period not to exceed one day for registering to vote or voting in a public election
7. A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or in 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) 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 parent’s or legal guardian’s deployment or during such parent’s or legal guardian’s leave (O.C.G.A. 20-2-692.1) [Georgia Military Family Act]
8. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the local school board of education to have merit based on circumstances.
9. A student who successfully participates in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program shall be counted as present and given full credit for the school day during which he or she served in the STEP program. No student shall be permitted to be absent from school or participate in the STEP program for more than two school days per school year

Parents are reminded that they **MUST provide written excuses for every absence** (with exception of *GA Military Family Act*, see below). These should be notes from physician or similar **documentation NLT than three (3) days of their child returning to school** or as described in their district Student Handbook or the absence will remain “unexcused”. The MAFB SLO recommends **KEEPING COPIES OF ALL EXCUSES** submitted to school officials in case the documents become lost or misplaced.

PLEASE NOTE: AS THE SCHOOL YEAR PROGRESSES, THE NUMBER OF ABSENCES WILL BEGIN TO ADD UP. SCHOOL OFFICIALS WILL NOTIFY FAMILIES ABOUT ABSENCES. THIS BEGINS AT 3 DAYS (IN LOWNDES CO AND VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS) AND CONTINUES AT 5 DAYS, 7 DAYS, 10 DAYS OR GREATER. **ALL ABSENCES ARE COUNTED.** THIS INCLUDES THOSE TAKEN USING THE “GA MILITARY FAMILY ACT”.

GA Military Family Act: GA Dept of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, *Student Attendance*, was amended by the Georgia General Assembly in 2007. The maximum number of days permitted is 5 per school year. The form letter

must be completed as requested. It must be signed by either the spouse or the member and countersigned by the member's First Sergeant or Commander.

Personnel and families are reminded that the request must be reviewed before a student is taken out of school. Parents are further reminded that a Superintendent is under no obligation to approve a *GA Military Family Act* request if the child was already absent. Moody personnel should be aware that a *GA Military Family Act* will be denied by the Superintendent if (a) the student already has too many absences or (b) the days requested by the family conflict with mandatory state testing periods (e.g., Georgia Milestones Assessment at the end of December and during the month of April).

For those **attending public school systems**, this signed form is then taken or emailed to the School Liaison Officer or Airman & Family Readiness Center staff member assigned this duty. The letter will be sent to the Superintendent of the district that the child attends classes. The Superintendent will review and either approve or disapprove the request. This letter will then be returned to the SLO or A&FRC who will notify the family.

For those **attending private schools** or **Scintilla Charter Academy**, the GA Military Family Act form request is delivered by the parent directly to the principal or headmaster.

Copies of current school district attendance protocols may be found on Table 1, page 16.

6. Bus Transportation

Each local public school system offers this service so that children are not required to walk to/from school on streets that do not have adequate sidewalks. Once you have determined where you will live (actual street address), call the appropriate Transportation Dept (**Lowndes Co = 229-245-2257; Valdosta City = 229-245-5640; Lanier Co = 229-482-3966; Berrien Co = 229-686-2527**) to get bus route information and to arrange for your child to ride the bus. NOTE: Scintilla Charter Academy does not offer transportation.

If you wish to live in a specific school district, the SLO strongly advises that you call the appropriate Transportation Office to ensure that your future residence will be in the desired district. Please do not rely upon real estate agents, neighbors or others for this information as he/she may be incorrect or not aware of the most current school district boundaries.

If you have a complaint about an incident that has occurred on the bus, contact the Transportation Director for the district your child attends. Gather your facts before talking to bus officials. Check the portion of the code of conduct pertaining to bus transportation. Be firm and professional when dealing with these school officials. If you feel that you are not being heard, then ask to speak with the next higher supervisor. Some of the local school districts are quite large with a fleet of buses moving children from home to school and back again. This may require a child to be at a bus stop earlier than was required at your last assignment. It may also require a child to be on a bus longer due to the distances covered. If this is a concern, then discuss it with Transportation Dept officials.

GA DoE Rule 160-5-3-.13, Student Safety, directs that the loading limit for any school bus shall not exceed 120 percent of the manufacturer's rated seating capacity. For example, a 66 passenger bus may hold up to 76 students. This can mean up to 3 students in a seat, but there should be **no** students standing or sitting in the aisle or on top of another student already sitting in a seat.

If you decide to change your child's mode of transportation—that is—if you decide you will pick up your child instead of him/her traveling by bus (e.g., he/she has a medical appointment), **then ensure that you notify your child's teacher and the front office staff so they can make the necessary adjustments**. The last thing you, your child or school officials want to see happen is your child getting "lost" by not being in the right line or location at dismissal time.

7. School Codes of Conduct: Public schools are tasked to educate all children that come to them. To provide a structure, each district has developed a **Code of Conduct** that governs day-to-day activities. Those codes of conduct clearly list prohibited activities that become "distractions from a favorable teaching and learning environment". The SLO **strongly advises that all military parents take the time to print and/or download an electronic copy of their child's School or District Handbook or Code of Conduct**. Read it/keep it handy in case you need to refer to it again during the school year.

As your child’s primary advocate, if something occurs to disrupt your child’s education, you need to bring it to the attention of school personnel **immediately**. If your child is a victim, follow the procedures as listed in your specific code of conduct. Use the school chain of command. Please contact the SLO as soon as it becomes apparent to you that there is a problem that is not being addressed so we can address the issue together, and—if need be—consult with base resources.

8. **Graduation Requirements** in the State of Georgia may be found in GA Dept of Education Rule 160-4-2-.48 (go to www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx; go to *State Board & Policy* at top of page; scroll down to *Board of Education Rules*). The State of Georgia uses *Carnegie units* when determining credit for high school students. Each Carnegie unit represents 120 hours of seat time. Not all states use Carnegie units—therefore it is imperative that parents of high school students should attempt to obtain a course description book for the school system(s) his/her student attended previously. Most local high schools are on “block scheduling” meaning that students have fewer subjects per day, but spend longer periods on the subjects they take.

The following table provides guidance on courses to be taken while in high school in Georgia.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units of English/Language Arts required for all students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units of Mathematics required for all students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units of Science required for all students (the 4th science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirement)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 units of Social Studies required for all students; all courses are specifically identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 unit of Health and Physical Education required for all students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 3 units required from CTAE (Career, Technical & Agricultural Education) and/or Foreign Language and/or Fine Arts for all students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 additional Electives for all students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 Total Units minimum to obtain a regular high school diploma. Local school systems require additional credits. Check with your student’s guidance counselor.

Guidance counselors do not work on a year-round basis. They return to work in late July before classes begin. Military parents are strongly encouraged to meet their student’s guidance counselor upon arrival and registration into their local high school.

Local high schools have different requirements to graduate. Lowndes High School, Lanier High School and Valdosta High School require **28 credits** to graduate; Berrien High School requires **26 credits**. If any question arises about eligibility to graduate on-time, contact that guidance counselor immediately. See the following information.

In accordance with the **Interstate Compact**, Article VII/Part C (signed into law on 25 Apr 2012), special attention is paid to transfers made during a student’s senior year. Should a military student transferring at the beginning or during his or her senior year be ineligible to graduate from the receiving local education agency after all alternatives have been considered, the sending and receiving local education agencies shall ensure the receipt of a diploma from the sending local education agency if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending local education agency. In the event that one of the states in question is not a member of this compact, the member state shall use best efforts to facilitate the on-time graduation of the student in accordance with Sections A and B of Article VII.

Cohort Graduation Rate: The State of Georgia began implementation of the *Cohort Graduation Rate* in 2011 IAW the National Governors Association (NGA) “Graduation Counts Compact” and US Dept of Education guidance. In Georgia, the “four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate” defines the cohort (group of students) based on when a student first became a freshman. This rate is calculated using the number of students who graduate within four years—it also includes adjustments for student transfers. Graduation rates are part of the *College & Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)*.

9. **Your Child’s Education:**

Parental Involvement: Parental support and involvement is the single most important key to a child’s educational success. As your child’s primary advocate, you need to understand the local school system and be involved in what is going on in his/her education. There is no substitute for this commitment. At the beginning of each school year, take the time to meet the principal and your child’s teachers (guidance counselors for middle and high school students).

Organizations: Attend Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or Parent Involvement Team (PIT) events, Title I meetings and/or announced public meetings conducted by the schools or school district. Get involved. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

Communication: Find out the best way to communicate with your child’s teacher—make sure he/she knows how to contact you. Keep information up-to-date with the front office staff at your child’s school. If you don’t understand something, then contact the teacher. Give him or her one to two days to get back to you. With older students, it may be easier to email/call the school guidance counselor. **Keep copies of all correspondence with school officials in case a question may arise in the future.**

The term **Title I School** refers to a section of the federal law that is aimed at helping low-income students who are at risk of failing in school. The money goes to school districts, which distribute it to individual schools based on their low-income enrollment (e.g., 40% or greater of students are eligible for free/reduced meals). Title I is one of the largest areas of federal education spending, and districts spend much time and effort administering these funds.

Tutoring: If your child is struggling with a subject, talk to the teacher and ask her/him for extra help for your child. Most will be glad to spend the time helping a student. If these requests go unanswered, then contact assistant principal to discuss the issue. Military children have access to FREE online tutoring through *Tutor.com for Military Families* (www.tutor.com/military/eligibility); provides contact with a live tutor for one-to-one help. There is even an application for homework help available after you set up an account—very popular with students.

Tutoring Resources after Retirement or Separation. Eligibility to use this no-cost service is based upon program funding. Tutor.com/military is currently funded by the DoD to provide service to Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard families. Unfortunately, they are not funded for retirees or veterans at this time. Tutor.com does offer a slight price break of 10% off of their consumer tutoring price to military veterans and retirees who are no longer eligible for the DoD funded program. If any family would like to take advantage of this discount, they should send an email to militarysupport@tutor.com and they will assist them to get an account set up with the discounted rate.

Preparing for Standardized Testing: Parents of high school students may wish to take advantage of SAT/ACT software offers available periodically through <http://eknowledge.com/military.asp> for less than retail costs or by visiting the College Board website (www.collegeboard.com/) and checking out the “SAT question of the day” under *Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test* link.

Moody AFB Youth Programs Power Hour Program is part of their daily schedule during the regular school year. While primarily intended for high school students or teens, this is an opportunity for all children to get some help with their homework before going home. For more information about this feature, call their staff at 257-3067.

To stay informed about school issues or events take the time to attend monthly **Boards of Education** (BoE) meetings for the district your child attends. The monthly *SLO-EFMP Tidbits Newsletter* lists the monthly meetings on the calendar. This publication can be found by visiting the SLO/EFMP link listed on the front page of this Guide or contact the SLO to request a copy of the most current edition.

Hospital or Homebound/HHB Services: The Georgia Dept of Education (www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/CTAE/Pages/Hospital-Homebound-Services.aspx) provides services designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., receiving dialysis; radiation/chemotherapy, etc). Students must be enrolled in public school in Georgia in order to receive HHB services. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days. The inability to attend school must be certified by a licensed physician or licensed psychologist who

is currently treating the child. If a military parent has this situation, he/she contact the school principal immediately and begin gathering whatever documentation is needed.

Federal Impact Aid: Military parents have a unique way to ensure additional funding comes to the school system/district that their child (ren) attends. This is done through completing the annual *US Dept of Education Federal Impact Aid Survey*. Federal impact aid is crucial to ensuring that the appropriate level of funds actually gets to the public school districts charged with educating military students. Surveys are conducted each school year to determine the total number of military-connected students attending local schools. Military personnel and families are **strongly encouraged** to complete these surveys and return them promptly IAW individual school district deadlines. Information on the surveys (e.g., rank, home address, etc) is covered under the Privacy Act and will be safe-guarded by school personnel. Failure to return the forms means less federal impact aid coming to the district that your child (ren) attends—fewer resources for all children.

Additional facts about Impact Aid: Local school boards deposit Impact Aid funds into their general operating accounts. Districts may use these funds in accordance with local and state requirements (e.g., teacher salaries; purchase of textbooks, computers and similar equipment; after-school programs; remedial tutoring and special enrichment programs).

High School Senior Assignment Deferral (HSSAD) Program. The HSSAD program increases stability for military family members entering their senior year of high school. Active duty officers in pay grade of O5 (Lt Col) and below and enlisted members in pay grade E8 (SMSgt) and below stationed in the continental US (CONUS) locations can apply. Military members who meet eligibility criteria can defer an assignment for up to one year. Approval is not automatic. Air Force needs will still dictate approval or disapproval of individual requests. Individuals can complete the application on the Virtual Military Personnel flight website. For more information about HSSAD, visit the AFPC website (www.afpc.af.mil/) or call Total Force Service Center at 1-800-525-0102 or DSN 665-5000.

10. **Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunity for Military Children** (page 20):

Military families must move as part of their duty obligation—that means the children move as well. The education of children in grades K-12 is the responsibility of each state. Rules, requirements and quality of education vary from state to state and even within states from district to district. In order to provide for uniform treatment of military students, the Council of State Governors National Center for Interstate Compacts, the Dept of Defense, national associations, state Departments of Education and others drafted what is now known as the *Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunity for Military Children*. On 25 Apr 2012, Georgia became the 42nd state to join the Interstate Compact; it became law on 1 Jul 2012. As of August 2014, all 50 states are now members. For more information visit the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission website (<http://www.mic3.net/>).

11. **Georgia Educational Curriculum K-12:**

State of Georgia College and Career Ready Index/CCRPI (Single Statewide Accountability System or “report card”). In Feb 2012, Georgia was granted an *ESEA Flexibility Waiver* to No Child Left Behind requirements. In order to secure approval from the US Dept of Education, the GA Dept of Education had to develop an accountability system to replace the test-driven standards used in No Child Left behind/Annual Yearly Progress. This system is known as the CCRPI. The testing instrument is the *GA Milestones Assessment*.

The Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM) is a metric that is part of the CCRPI. Historically, state assessments have answered questions such as, “what percentage of students met the state standard?” or, “did more students meet the state standard this year compared to last year?” This metric will help educators, parents and other stakeholders better understand and compare the progress students will make from year to year. GSGM will reportedly help answer questions like, “did this student grow more or less than academically-similar students?” or, “are students growing as much in math as in reading?” or “are students on track to reach or exceed proficiency?” The GSGM will become part of the “Progress Determination” in the CCRPI and will eventually become an indicator of educator effectiveness in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and the Leader (e.g., principal) Keys Effectiveness System (LKES). For more information on the GSGM, visit their link (www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Student-Growth-Model.aspx)

Testing is a part of all education. Visit the GA Dept of Education website (www.gadoe.org/pages/home.aspx); scroll down to *Assessment*. The **Georgia Milestones Assessment** was launched during the 2014-2015 school year. This is a comprehensive assessment spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 will take an **End-of-Grade (EOG)** assessment in each content area, while high school students will take an **End-of-Course (EOC)** assessment for each of the eight courses designated by the State Board of Education. There are four levels of performance. These are

Beginning Learners do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level or course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students need substantial academic support to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness (grade conversion equals from “0” to “67”).

Developing Learners demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified by Georgia’s content standards. The students need additional academic support to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness (grade conversion is “68” to “79”).

Proficient Learners demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are prepared for the next grade level or course and are on track for college and career readiness (grade conversion is “80” to “91”).

Distinguished Learners demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level or course of learning, as specified in Georgia’s content standards. The students are well prepared for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for college and career readiness (grade conversion is “92” to “100”).

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) is an essential component of both Elementary & Secondary Education Act/ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education/IDEA. It is a portfolio of work that shows how the student is progressing relative to the skills found in the Georgia curriculum.

Student Learning Objective (SLO): As noted above in the discussion of GA Student Growth Model, student achievement will become a component of the new "Teacher Keys Effectiveness System" (teacher evaluation system). To measure teacher effectiveness in non-tested subjects (e.g., music, PE, etc) that don’t have a traditional exam, this component consists of the Georgia Department of Education (DoE) approved Student Learning Objectives (SLO) created by their local school system that identifies student growth. As approximately 70-75% of all teachers teach non-tested subjects for at least some portion of the instructional day, it was important to ensure effectiveness for these teaching periods as well. The school district (or local education agency) develops the SLO using specific criteria. For more information on the SLO, please visit their website (www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Pages/Student-Learning-Objectives.aspx)

GA Dept of Education and the “Opt-Out” Requests: Neither the GA Dept of Education nor the local district or school has the authority to waive the student assessment requirement mandated by state law (Official Code of Georgia 20-2-281). For specific grades in elementary and middle school (e.g., 3rd, 5th and 8th), taking assessments relate to requirements for promotion to the next grade. Specifically, GA Dept of Education Rule 160-4-2-.11 contains the language that applies when students do not test in a state-designated promotion/retention grade.

Class Sizes in Georgia: GA Dept of Education Rule # 160-5-1-.08 dictates the maximum number of students allowed in a classroom. As your child’s primary advocate, if you feel that the size of a class is impacting the quality

of your child's education, then you must make school officials aware. Use that school chain-of-command which may ultimately require you to speak to the elected Board of Education members for your child's district during the public participation portion of a monthly Board of Education meeting.

The **General Educational Development (GED)** program in the state of Georgia, is administered by the Technical College System of Georgia as a part of the Adult Education Program. Our local source for GED assistance is **Wiregrass Georgia Technical College** available on the web (www.wiregrass.edu/adulted/ged-testing.php) or by calling (229) 219-1235 or call the Adult Education Center at (229) 333-2123. To be eligible, individuals age 16 and 17 must be granted approval from the state and meet other criteria.

12. Bullying: It's what happens when someone repeatedly hurts or threatens another person on purpose. Bullying comes in many forms—name—calling, leaving people out, spreading rumors or physically hurting someone. And it can happen in person, in writing, online, on cell phones, in school, on the bus, at home, or anywhere. It is not a normal rite of passage, it has serious consequences and it's NOT acceptable

In the State of Georgia, the term “bullying” means an act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school functions or activities, or by use of data processing software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. Check out the GA DoE Bullying Prevention Toolkit on their website.

Working with your child's school: (1) know the school policy; download or print a copy of the current student handbook and review this policy. (2) Open the line of communication by calling to set up an appointment to talk with your child's teacher or school counselor to establish a partnership to stop the bullying. (3) Get help for your child from school-based guidance counselors or other health professionals. Take advantage of the *Child & Youth Behavior Specialist* assigned to Moody AFB by calling them at (229) 561-7924—this service is free and anonymous. (4) Commit to making the bullying stop by talking regularly with your child and with school staff to see if the bullying behavior has stopped. You may need to seek guidance from the Base Legal Office or contact local law enforcement officials if the bullying persists or escalates. Please use the school “chain of command”—that is, if you are unable to get a satisfactory response from a classroom teacher, then go to the guidance counselor, assistant principal, principal (in this order). Be respectful and professional. From there, the chain of command goes to the district central office and the Assistant Superintendent. If you are unable to get a response at the district office then consider contacting the SLO.

13. Transition - When it is Time to PCS:

Youth Sponsorship: If possible consider asking for a sponsor at the new school. At some bases this is arranged through the local Youth Center (257-3067) or by contacting the school directly.

Please contact the MAFB SLO as he/she can find out the name and contact information of your new SLO as well as general information about schooling options at your new duty location. Those who attend the *Smooth Move* seminar offered by the Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) will receive a Military Child Education Program briefing as well as a reminder that this opportunity is available to you.

Military children moving from one school system to another face much the same challenge as their parents do. We recommend that you do not pack school records, copies of IEPs or similar documents in hold baggage. If these items are lost or damaged, it will cause delays in enrolling your students into classes.

For the students in the family... the SLO recommends visiting the **Military Youth on the Move** website. Go to www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/military-youth-on-the-move and/or visit **Military Kids Connect** (<http://militarykidsconnect.dcoe.mil>). One of the toughest challenges for families during a PCS move is to maintain some of the routines (e.g., having dinner together as a family; taking a walk with your children, etc) that help provide stability during the transition. Military students move as often as 6 to 9 times so family routines provide stability. Children who know that they can depend on certain rituals and the support of their parents as they learn to personally cope with change tend to be more resilient than those in families that don't plan how to make their PCS move.

will provide a military parent with an unofficial copy of school records for students in grades K-8. The local high schools may provide some documentation, but will not provide all records. Due to use of the *Cohort Graduation Rate*, every high school student must be accounted for by school officials. Having the official request for high school transcript/records assists school officials in Georgia to properly account for students entering/leaving local high schools. We suggest that students in middle and high school get into the habit of downloading and keeping copies of School Handbook & Course Description (if separate item) for reference. (See checklist on page 22)

Dept of Defense Education Activity/DoDEA (<http://dodea.edu/>): Education for military students overseas is the responsibility of DoDEA. They operate in distinct regions (e.g., Europe, Pacific, and on installations in seven states/DDESS). DoDEA functions as the overseas school district for military families. The DoDEA operates a virtual high school (www.dodea.edu/virtualhs/DV/HS/dvhs/index.cfm) which may be a better option for your student. **Non-DoD Schools Programs** (www.dodea.edu/nonDoD/index.cfm). The NDSP provides support and funding for the education of authorized command-sponsored dependents of military members and Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees assigned to overseas areas where no DoDEA school is available within the commuting area. At these locations, DoDEA supports a variety of options for children ranging from home school programs to public or private schools. Approval for the enrollment of an eligible minor dependent of a DoD sponsor must be obtained from DoDEA NDSP office prior to enrolling a child in a non-DoD school.

Table 1: Attendance Protocols:

Attendance is mandatory for all children between ages 6 and 16 (Source: Official Code of Georgia or O.C.G.A. 20-2-690-1 (2013). A copy of this law to include the consequences for violation of said code is available upon request.

The School Liaison Officer maintains copies of all “GA Military Family Act” documentation processed through her office for no less than one year. Any military parent who has been contacted by the school officials and/or School Resource Officers may request a copy of this documentation.

Military parents should keep copies of all excuses or documentation sent to their child’s school regarding absences and/or late arrival/early departures in case a question arises later in the school year.

SLO recommends that parents make every effort to schedule medical and other appointments during non-school hours.

Lowndes Juvenile Court Protocol Agreement for Truancy in Schools (applies to **Lowndes Co and Valdosta City Schools only**; effective 9 Sep 2014).

Action:	Consequence:
After <u>Three</u> (3) <u>Unexcused Absences</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Letter will be sent home. This is a system approved letter to the student’s parent/guardian regarding the student’s unexcused absences. b. The letter will require the parent or guardian to contact the school designee regarding their child’s unexcused absences for documentation. c. The school district social worker or their designee may also make contact with the student and the parent or guardian at home.
At the <u>Fifth</u> (5th) <u>Unexcused Absence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A conference will be held to determine whether a Truancy Intervention is needed. The school system records custodian shall maintain documentation of this conference. b. The school district social worker or their designee may also make contact with the student and the parent or guardian at home. c. A referral may be made to the Truancy Intervention Program (“TIP”) d. A referral may be made to the <i>Children in Need of Services</i> (CHINS) Committee. Failure to comply with requirements imposed by the committee may result in a referral to Juvenile Court for a truancy hearing.
At <u>Seventh</u> (7th) <u>Unexcused Absence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Referral may be made to the Truancy Intervention Program (TIP).
At the <u>Eighth</u> (8th) <u>Unexcused Absence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A referral may be made to the CHINS Committee and a possible Dept of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) referral will be made for middle and high school students. An automatic DFCS referral will be made for all elementary school students. Failure to comply with requirements imposed by the CHINS Committee may result in a referral to Juvenile Court for a truancy hearing.
At the <u>Tenth</u> (10th) or more <u>Unexcused Absence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Procedures listed above for 8th unexcused absence may be repeated. b. For students who hold a GA Learners’ Permit or Drivers’ License, the school district may request the GA Dept of Driver Services (DDS) suspend that permit or license as provided in the Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) 40-5-22(a)(2). This suspension will remain in effect for one year or until the student reaches the age of 18, whichever comes first. The signees understand that this code section guarantees a student whose permit or license is suspended the right to an administrative hearing IAW GA Administrative Procedure Act. Notice of the suspension and information on the process of requesting a hearing will be sent by DDS; any requested hearings will be conducted by DDS.
<u>Seven</u> (7) <u>Excused Absences</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A letter will be sent home. This must be a school district approved letter to the student’s parent or guardian regarding the student’s excused absences.

	<p>b. The letter will require the parent/guardian to contact the school's designee regarding the student's excused absences.</p> <p>c. The school district's social worker or their designee may also make contact with the student and the parent or guardian at home</p>
Ten (10th) Excused Absences	<p>a. A conference will be held with the student's parent or guardian and a school administrator (or the administrator's designee) regarding the student's excused absences and to determine whether a Truancy Intervention is needed. The schools record custodian shall maintain documentation of this conference.</p> <p>b. If a Truancy Intervention is needed, a referral will be made to Lowndes Drug Action Council Truancy Intervention Program (TIP).</p>
At Fifteen (15th) Excused Absences	<p>a. Unless extenuating medical conditions exist, a referral will be made to the TIP program.</p>
Ten (10) Tardies/Early Checkouts	<p>The parent or guardian will be contacted and possibly visited by the district's Truancy Officer.</p>
At 15 Tardies or Early Checkouts	<p>A meeting with the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a school administrator (or the administrator's designee) will be held.</p>
At 16 Tardies or Early Checkouts	<p>A referral to the TIP program will be made, unless extenuating medical conditions exist.</p>

CHANGE: Underage Drivers (15-18) in the State of Georgia are subject to the **Teenage & Adult Driver Responsibility Act/TAADRA**. Effective 1 July 2015, students will no longer have their driver's license or learner's permit suspended for excessive unexcused absences or discipline infractions. They must simply be enrolled and not under expulsion.

Lanier County Schools Attendance Protocol (Source: 2015-2016 School Year Handbook)

Number of Absences:	Unexcused Absences/Consequences	Unexcused Tardies/Consequences
3 Days	Parent contacted by a school administrator	Same
5 Days	Letter sent to parent with Board Policy attached	Same
7 Days	Visit by School System Social Worker	Same
10 days	Truancy charges filed against parent/guardian	Referral to Dept Family & Children Services

Table 2: School District:	Public School Districts: Website and Bus Transportation Information:	Address:	Telephone #: Area Code: 229
Lowndes County Schools	http://www.lowndes.k12.ga.us/ Bus Transportation... If living in Magnolia Grove, Quiet Pines or Mission Point (or in billeting): children will attend Pine Grove Elementary (K-5), Pine Grove Middle Schools (6-8) and Lowndes High School (9-12). Bus route and bus # information is available by calling the Dept of Transportation (245-2257). If you are assigned to Azalea Commons, it is Dewar Elementary (K-5), Hahira Middle (6-8) and Lowndes High School. If living off-base in the county: call Dept of Transportation (245-2257) and give staff your street address. They will tell you what school(s) you are zoned for as well as route and bus # information. Registration: Is done at the Central Office Annex (next to Central Office) 0800-1400 (Mon-Thurs) and 0800-1300 (Fri). This function closes annually for 4 th of July and remains closed until middle of August. Call the Main Office or consult the website for current hours of availability and to download registration forms.	1592 Norman Drive P.O. Box 1227 Valdosta GA 31603-1227	245-2250 (Voice) 245-2255 (FAX)
Valdosta City Schools	http://www.gocats.org/ Bus Transportation: call Dept of Transportation (245-5640) and give staff your street address. They will tell you what school(s) you are zoned for, route and bus number. If student is already registered, he/she will receive postcard by mail informing them of route details.) --Valdosta High School has an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme . Call VHS 229-333-8540 for more info. --The Valdosta Early College Academy is an independent school within the system. Call (229) 671-8455 for more information. --To view YouTube videos about VCS schools, please visit https://www.youtube.com/user/GoVCSCats Registration: Contact the Central Office for info, but registration is done at the assigned school.	1204 Williams Street P.O. Box 5407 Valdosta GA 31603-5407	333-8500 (Voice) 247-7757 (FAX)
Lanier County Schools	http://www.lanier.k12.ga.us/ Call District office for bus route and registration information	247 South Highway 221 Lakeland GA 31635	482-3966 (Voice) 482-3020 (FAX)
Berrien County Schools	http://www.berrien.k12.ga.us/ Bus Transportation: Call 229-686-2527 Registration Information: Call the district office 229-686-2081 NOTE: Berrien Academy PLC (charter school)	810 South Dogwood Nashville GA 31639	686-2081 (Voice) 686-9002 (FAX)
Cook County Schools	http://www.cook.k12.ga.us/ Call District office for bus route and registration information	1109 N. Parrish Avenue Adel GA 31620-0152	896-2294 (Voice) 896-3443 (FAX)

Tift County Public Schools	http://www.tiftschools.com Call District office for bus route information	207 North Ridge Avenue Tifton GA 31794	387-2400 (Voice) 386-1020 (FAX)
Brooks County Schools	http://www.brookscountyschools.com Call District office for bus route and registration information	1081 Barwick Road Quitman GA 31643	263-7531 (Voice) 263-5206 (FAX)
Thomas County Schools	http://www.thomas.k12.ga.us/ Call District office for bus route and registration information NOTE: Bishop Hall Charter School (charter school)	200 Pinetree Blvd Thomasville GA 31792	225-4380 (Voice) 225-5012 (FAX)
Thomasville City Schools	http://www.tcitys.org/ Call District office for bus route and registration information Thomasville Scholars Academy is an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme . Contact their principal at (229) 228-3397.	404 N. Broad Street (3 rd Floor) Thomasville GA 31792	225-2600 (Voice) 225-2696 (FAX)
Echols Co Schools	http://www.echols.k12.ga.us/ Call District office for bus route and registration information	216 US Highway 129 N Statenville GA 31648	559-5734 (Voice) 559-0484 (FAX)

Table 3: Local Private Schools. Not all schools have working websites; may wish to contact by phone.

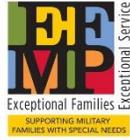
School Name/Address & Website (if available)	Telephone Number	Grades Taught	Denomination Affiliation
Brookwood School 301 Cardinal Ridge Road, Thomasville GA 31792-7160 http://www.brookwoodschoool.org/	(229) 226-8070 <i>Thomas County</i>	PK-12 th Grade/Coed	Non-denominational
Crossroads Baptist School 3001 Country Club Road, Valdosta GA 31602 http://www.crossroadsbaptist.com	(229) 241-1430 <i>Lowndes County</i>	K3-5 th Grade/Coed	Baptist
Faith Christian Academy 2700 North Forrest Street, Valdosta GA 31602 http://www.faithbaptistchurchvaldosta.com	(229) 244-6160 <i>Lowndes County</i>	PK-8 th Grade/Coed	Baptist
Genesis Christian School 305 North Ann Street, Nashville GA 31639 http://genesischristianschool.org/	(229) 599-0086 <i>Berrien County</i>	K4-8 th Grade/Coed	Non-denominational
Georgia Christian School 4359 Dasher Road, Valdosta GA 31601 www.georgiachristian.org	(229) 559-5131 <i>Lowndes County</i>	K3-12 th Grade/Coed	Church of Christ
Highland Christian Academy 4023 Pine Grove Road, Valdosta GA 31605 http://hca Valdosta.org/joomla30/	(229) 245-8111 <i>Lowndes County</i>	K-12 th Grade/Coed	Christian-No specific denomination
Lighthouse Christian School 4565 Bemiss Road, Valdosta GA 31605 http://www.lbcministry.org/	(229) 244-8436 <i>Lowndes County</i>	K5-12 th Grade/Coed	Baptist

Open Bible Christian School 3992 North Oak Street Extension, Valdosta GA 31605 http://openbiblechristianschool.org/	(229) 244-6694 <i>Lowndes County</i>	K3-12 th Grade/Coed	Baptist
Perimeter Christian School 4091 Perimeter Road, Valdosta GA 31602 http://perimeterroad.com	(229) 316-2880 333-0746 <i>Lowndes County</i>	Birth thru K4	Baptist
St John Catholic School 800 Gornto Road, Valdosta GA 31602 http://www.stjohnschl.org/	(229) 244-2556 <i>Lowndes County</i>	PK3-8 th Grade/Coed	Catholic
Valwood School 4380 Old US 41 N (PO Box 4930), Hahira, GA 31632 http://www.valwood.org/	(229) 242-8491 <i>Lowndes County</i>	PK-12 th Grade/ Coed	Non-denominational
Valdosta Christian Academy 2285 E. Park Avenue, Valdosta, GA 31602-4424	(229) 244-2042 <i>Lowndes Co</i>	Grades 1-8	Seventh Day Adventist (School formerly located in Lakeland, GA; now located inside church facility)
Victory Christian School 3229 Madison Highway, Valdosta GA 31602	(229) 263-2478 <i>Lowndes County</i>	K4-12 th Grade/Coed	Christian

Table 4: The Georgia Interstate Compact Rules at a Glance – What Does It Mean for Military Families? It addresses key transition issues to include enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation. The table below summarizes the Rules of the GA Interstate Compact. To review the entire document, visit the **Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission and State Council Information** at <http://www.mic3.net/> or if you still have questions, please contact the SLO.

The Georgia Dept of Education established a link for military families containing information about the GA Interstate Compact. Visit it at the “ABC’s”, scroll down to “**Military Families**”.

Article	What Is Included	What Is NOT Included
IV: Enrollment – Educational Records	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parents can receive a copy of unofficial records Receiving school must accept the unofficial records to enroll and place the student pending reception of official records Sending school must send official records within 10 business days of receiving a request from the receiving school 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Giving parents the right to request a copy of every paper in the student file Receiving unofficial records free-of-charge
IV: Enrollment – Immunizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Child is given 30 days from enrollment to obtain required immunizations A series of immunizations must be started within 30 days of enrollment 	TB Testing: Since it is a test rather than an immunization, the test may be required before enrollment
IV: Enrollment – Kindergarten & First Grade Entrance Age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Student shall be allowed to continue their enrollment at grade level in receiving state commensurate with grade level in the sending state regardless of age. Kindergarten student must have been enrolled and attended in sending state 	A student who has not been enrolled in kindergarten even though they are of eligible age to have started

	2. Student satisfactorily completed prerequisite in sending state is eligible for enrollment at next higher grade regardless of age	
V: Placement & Attendance – Course & Educational Program Placement	1. Receiving state will initially honor placement in courses or programs based on student’s enrollment in the sending state 2. Receiving state may subsequently perform an evaluation to ensure the appropriate placement and continued enrollment	1. Guarantee of continued enrollment if not qualified 2. Although the receiving school must demonstrate reasonable accommodation, there is no requirement to create a course or additional space
V: Placement & Attendance – Special Education Services  For assistance, call (229) 257-3335	1. Receiving state will initially provide the same <u>services</u> identified in the student’s Individual Education Plan from the sending state 2. Receiving state may subsequently perform an evaluation to ensure the appropriate placement of the student	1. A requirement to provide the exact programs as sending state 2. Anything above the requirements in the IDEA
V: Placement & Attendance – Placement Flexibility	Allowing flexibility to the Local Education Agency (LEA) to waive course or program prerequisites or other preconditions if similar course work has been completed in sending state	Mandatory waivers of prerequisites or preconditions
V: Placement & Attendance – Absence Related to Deployment Activities NOTE: GA Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 provides for up to five (5) days per school year as excused absences for children who have a parent or guardian deploying to or from the war zone.	Flexibility for additional excused absences to visit the parent or legal guardian due to deployment NOTE: Deployment window is defined as one month before the member’s departure from his/her home station through six months after return to his/her home station	Requiring more than “reasonable” accommodation NOTE: This provision provides discretion to the local LEA and school superintendent <u>flexibility during state testing periods or if the student has already missed so much school that additional absences will be detrimental</u>
VI: Eligibility – Eligibility for Enrollment	1. LEA cannot charge tuition to military children placed in care of a non-custodial parent or person serving “in loco parentis” 2. A student can continue to attend his/her current school even if living with a non-custodial parent or person serving “in loco parentis” 3. A power of attorney for guardianship which is compliant with state law and does not contradict any existing custody orders (*)	Situations other than during deployment (e.g., when the parent has a permanent change of station and has left the child behind)
VI: Eligibility – For Extracurricular Activities	State and local education agencies shall facilitate the opportunity for inclusion in extracurricular activities regardless of deadlines as long as the child is otherwise qualified	1.State student athletic associations, some of which are not affiliated with state or LEAs 2. Although the receiving school must demonstrate reasonable

		accommodation, there is no requirement to hold open or create additional spaces
VII: Graduation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waiving courses required for graduation if similar course work was completed in sending state 2. Flexibility in accepting sending state exit or end-of-course exams, national achievement tests, or alternative testing in lieu of testing requirements for graduation in receiving state 3. Allow student to receive diploma from sending school as an alternative to accommodations for exit exams/graduation requirements student doesn't have time to complete 4. Should a waiver not be granted to student who would qualify to graduate from sending LEA, the receiving LEA shall provide alternative means for acquiring course work so student may graduate on time 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandatory waivers; although LEA must show good cause for a denial of waiver 2. Mandatory waiver of the exam or acceptance of alternative results 3. The right of parents to request a change of graduation requirements in the receiving LEA

Table 5: Military Child Education Coalition Checklist (Revised for Use in Georgia Schools)

1	Course Description Book: absolutely vital for inbound middle/high school students. Most local schools are on block schedule; may be reluctant to accept courses taken elsewhere	14	Current Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan or Gifted Program Record plus any written feedback from teachers at losing school.
2	Attendance & Tardy Records	15	JROTC records (if applicable)
3	Report Card: For grades 6-8; 9-12) please ensure that you have numeric grades as letter grade scales are different from state to state and even within a state from one district to another.	16	Guardianship or custody documentation (Note: In GA only parent with <i>primary custodial authority</i> may enroll students)
4	Current schedule	17	Record of Fees
5	Withdrawal Grades or Grades to Date (from DoDEA)	18	Alternative School Records (if applicable)
6	Transcripts/Course History (with grading system from losing school); copy of Student Handbook that contains grading system from losing school	19	Letters of Recommendation
7	Class Rank document	20	Writing Samples (if applicable)
8	Cumulative Folder	21	At-Risk or Action Plans
9	Testing information to include standardized test scores	22	Portfolio (especially if enrolled in CTAE program at losing school)
10	School Health Records including immunization info	23	Accelerated Reading (AR) Points
11	Birth Certificate	24	Service Learning Hours
12	Social Security Number	25	School Profile
13	Extracurricular Activities Record	26	Name, Address, Telephone and FAX numbers for previous school attended

Some Items to Consider When Bringing a High School student to This Community:

1. Determination of Salutatorian and Valedictorian (Lowndes Co Schools/LHS): These titles are awarded to students who achieve the highest GPAs in their senior class. The following conditions apply: (1) student must be enrolled in Lowndes HS by the 10th day of the Fall semester of senior year; (2) determination of valedictorian and salutatorian will be based on the cumulative GPA from ninth grade through the 31.5th week of the senior year; (3) students will be considered tied for the rank of salutatorian or valedictorian if the cumulative grade is equal when rounded to the thousandth place; (4) in case of a tie for salutatorian, there will be two salutatorian, and (5) in case of a tie for the valedictorian, co-valedictorians will be declared with no salutatorian, and a committee will be appointed by the principal to determine the recipients of Governor's Scholarship awards.

2. Determination of Grade Point Average (Lowndes Co Schools/LHS): For the purpose of determining class rank, students taking courses at Lowndes High School designated as Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and/or Advanced Placement (AP) will receive 'merit points' calculated into the total GPA. These points, which are not reflected in individual course grades, are automatically assigned by the school's student information system at a rate of 5 points per unit for Pre-AP classes and 10 points for AP classes. Students taking courses at LHS denoted Pre-AP and/or AP can earn additional merit points toward their cumulative GPA. Points are added to the final average at the end of the semester by the teacher at a rate of 2 points per unit of Pre-AP and 5 points per unit of AP courses, not to exceed a maximum grade of 100. No merit points will be added to grades below 70 or for credits earned online or at other sites, including grades earned at post-secondary institutions.

3. Transfer Grades (Lowndes Co Schools/LHS): Numerical transfer grades from accredited schools will be accepted at face value. Letter grades will be translated to numerical grades by the student's counselor and an administrator according to the scale provided by the school that assigned the grade. Advanced Placement (AP) courses verified thru College Board's AP Ledger will receive 10 class rank points.