

Students

Truancy

Introduction and Definitions

The district's policy on student truancy shall stress early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for students. Referral to legal authorities normally shall be made only when local resources are exhausted. For purposes of implementing this policy and for reporting purposes regarding truancy, the District will utilize the State Board of Education approved definitions of "excused," "unexcused," and "disciplinary" absences.

"Truant" shall mean a student age five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four unexcused absences in any one month, or ten unexcused absences in one school year.

"In attendance" shall mean a student if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

"Chronically absent child" is an enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

"Absence" means an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day.

"District chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year.

"School chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

Remediation of Truancy

School personnel shall seek cooperation from parents or guardians of such child and assist them in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations which will detail the following school district obligations under the district's truancy policy.

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Remediation of Truancy (continued)

1. Notify parents/guardians annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.
2. Obtain telephone numbers for emergency records or other means of contacting parents or guardians of the child during the school day.
3. Establish a system to monitor student attendance.
4. Make a reasonable effort by telephone and by mail to notify parents or guardians of the child when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previous approval or other indication which indicates parents or guardians are aware of the absence.
5. Identify a student as “truant” when the student accumulates four unexcused absences in any month or ten in a school year.
6. Identify a student as “chronically absent” when the student accumulates a total number of absences at any time during a school year that is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at the school during the school year.
7. Appropriate school staff meet with parents of a child identified as truant or chronically absent to review and evaluate the situation, within ten days of such designation. Such meeting may involve the school or District Attendance Team.

Students so identified may be subject to:

- (a) retention in the same grade to acquire necessary skills for promotion or retention.
- (b) a requirement to complete a summer school program successfully before being promoted to the next grade.

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Truancy (continued)

Remediation of Truancy (continued)

8. When a petition is filed, an educational evaluation of the truant student shall be done by appropriate school personnel if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
9. Provide coordination of services and refer “truants” to community agencies which provide child and family services.
10. If in existence, refer the child to the children’s probate court truancy clinic.

Chronic Absenteeism

The Board of Education, in compliance with statute, requires the establishment of attendance review teams when chronic absenteeism rates in the District or at individual schools in the District meet the following circumstances:

1. A District team must be established when the District’s chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher.
2. A school team must be established when the school chronic absenteeism rate is 15 percent or higher.
3. A team for either the District or each school must be established when (a) more than one school in the District has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher or (b) a District has a District chronic absenteeism rate of 10 percent or higher and one or more schools in the District have a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher.

The membership of attendance review teams may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, chronically absent children, parents or guardians of chronically absent children, and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants.

Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available.

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Chronic Absenteeism (continued)

The District shall annually include in information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the District that submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

The School Principal or his/her designee of any elementary or middle school located in a town/city designated as an alliance district may refer to the children's truancy clinic established by the Probate Court serving the town/city, a parent/guardian with a child defined as a truant or who is at risk of becoming a truant. (A police officer shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent/guardian.)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-184 Duties of parents. (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157)
- 10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA 00-157, PA 11-136 and PA 16-147)
- 10-198b State Board of Education to define "excused absence", "unexcused absence", and "disciplinary absences"
- 10-198c Attendance review teams (as amended by PA 17-14)
- 10-198d Chronic absenteeism
- 10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised, 1995, PA 95-304)
- 45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)
- 10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)
- 10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.
- 10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.

Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984).

Action taken by the State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define "attendance."

Action taken by the State Board of Education on June 27, 2012, to define "excused and "unexcused" absences.

Policy adopted: February 12, 2018

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Thomaston, Connecticut

Students

Truancy

Unexcused Absences/Truancy

In accordance with Board policy regarding truancy (unexcused absences), the following regulations pertain:

1. **Twenty Absence Limit.** No student may receive course credit for a full-year course after having been absent from that course more than twenty (20) class periods during the school year. These absences will be pro-rated for other than full-year courses and for courses meeting other than five (5) periods per week. All absences in a class will be counted except those incurred while a student participates in school-sponsored activities and/or essential administrative business.
2. **Waiver of Policy.** A student who has accumulated more absences than allowed by the policy, but who feels that the situation warrants special consideration, may appeal to the administration for a waiver increasing the number of allowable absences for that particular student. At the discretion of the administration, the parent may be requested to appear at the hearing to verify the legitimacy of the appeal.

Waivers are to be applied in a systemic manner. The administrator will consider all approved absences and any extenuating circumstances and render an impartial judgment.

3. **Student Responsibilities.** Students are responsible for regular attendance in all classes to benefit from continuity of instruction, sequential presentation of material, class interaction, and the attendant self-discipline and responsibility.

It is a student responsibility to have absences approved and notify his/her teachers by presenting approval verification at the next class meeting.

4. **Counselor Responsibilities. The guidance counselor will:**
 - A. At the first unexcused absence, arrange a conference with the student to provide counseling and make any required program adjustments.
 - B. When notified that the student's grade has been reduced for the second time because of unexcused absences, arrange a conference between the student and guidance counselor.
 - C. Arrange a meeting within ten (10) days of the fourth unexcused absence in a month or the tenth unexcused absence during the school year.

Students

Truancy (continued)

5. **Administrative Responsibilities.** Whenever a child enrolled in school, ages five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive, unless such child has either graduated from high school or withdrawn with written parental/guardian permission at ages sixteen or seventeen fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent/guardian is aware of the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or such other person shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of the School Principal.

The school administration will make early concentrated efforts to prevent and remedy truancy in its beginning stages. These efforts will include

- A. For the student's first unexcused absence from a course which results in grade reduction, the administrator will:
- (1) Confer with the student.
 - (2) Inform the parent by phone and by mail.
 - (3) Arrange for the student to meet with his/her guidance counselor if the situation warrants.
- B. For the second and third unexcused absence and for the third unapproved absence thereafter, the administrator will:
- (1) Notify the parent by phone and by mail.
 - (2) Confer with the student.
 - (3) Enforce disciplinary measures or arrange for referral services as appropriate. This may include referral to the student assistance team (SAT) or other student assistance programs.
- C. The school will have the appropriate staff member(s) arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian of the child who is truant within ten (10) school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in one month or tenth unexcused absence in one school year. At this meeting a designated staff shall coordinate services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services. Documentation of the meeting will be necessary to make adequate any referral to the Superior Court, Juvenile Matters Division.

The Superintendent of Schools shall bring the child's case to Superior Court under the Families with Service Needs law if the parent/guardian fails to:

- 1) attend the required meeting to evaluate why the child is truant, or
- 2) cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem.

Such filing shall take place not later than 15 calendar days after such failure to attend such meeting or such failure to cooperate with the school attempting to solve the truancy problem.

Students

Truancy (continued)

- D. Prior to the filing of a petition with the Superior Court, an educational evaluation of the student shall be performed if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year. Such an evaluation would assess, as appropriate, the areas of health, vision, hearing, social and emotional states, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities and shall be administered by appropriate school personnel. The PPT process may be utilized to fulfill this responsibility.
- E. At the beginning of each new school year, any student who has had ten or more unexcused absences will be identified as an "at risk student" and monitored by appropriate staff. A letter will be sent to parents, and the attendance officer and school social worker will meet with the student to discuss the importance of regular attendance.

6. Method of Reporting. Four basic forms will be utilized to implement this policy:

- A. **Excused Absence Form** - for students to verify an excused absence upon confirmation.
- B. **Unexcused Absence Notice** - for teachers to inform the office of each unexcused absence.
- C. **Midpoint Warning Notice** - for teachers, this four-part form notifies the office when students reach half the maximum specified number of absences.
- D. **Final Notice** - completed by teacher when student reaches 20 absences in a full-year course or 10 absences in a semester course.

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Chronic Absenteeism (continued)

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The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available.

The District will include in information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the District that is submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

Tardiness to School or Class

Continued tardiness by a student is a serious problem. Students are expected to be in their places, ready for work, at the bell.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)
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ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER C.G.S. 10-184

Dear _____,

Connecticut law requires that the _____ Public Schools provide you with this written notice of your obligations under Connecticut General Statute 10-184. This law provides that each parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and older and under eighteen years of age is obligated to cause the child to attend school regularly during the hours and terms school is in session, unless such parent or other person shows that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction, or that the child has graduated from high school or that the child ages sixteen or seventeen has withdrawn from school with the written permission of the parent or person having control of such child. Connecticut General Statute 10-185 provides that each day's failure to comply with these requirements is a separate offense, punishable by a \$25.00 fine.

Regular student attendance is essential to the educational process. So that we may seek to inform you if your child is absent without explanation, the law also requires that we obtain from you a telephone number or other means of contacting you during the school day. Please meet this obligation by filling out and promptly returning the form below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

(Principal)

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| | FATHER | MOTHER |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| _____ Mother's Name (please print) | _____ Address | _____ Address |
| _____ | _____ Home Phone | _____ Home Phone |
| _____ Father's Name (please print) | _____ Work Address | _____ Work Address |
| _____ Name(s) of student(s): | _____ Work Phone | _____ Work Phone |
| _____ _____ _____ | _____ Emergency Phone #1 (Relative, Friend, Neighbor) | _____ Emergency Phone #2 |