

TRUANCY PROSECUTION AND REPORTING

Western Heights Public Schools encourage all elementary, middle, and high school students to be in attendance each day school is in session so that maximum success in education may be achieved for students. Consistent classroom attendance assists students toward development of strong work habits, responsibility and self-discipline. Since a lack of attendance at school directly affects a student's performance, every effort will be made by the schools to improve poor attendance.

Since Oklahoma law holds the parent/guardian responsible for a child's attendance at school, the schools will strive for early intervention and notification of parent/guardian in an attempt to curtail excessive absences. Communication between parent/guardian and the school is vital.

Western Heights Public Schools will abide by the policies and procedures set forth by the District Attorney's office regarding truancy prosecution when lack of attendance at school becomes chronic and violates the law. The District Attorney's office provides a set of administrative procedures to follow in preparing a student case file for truancy prosecution. Oklahoma Statutes state that "if a child is absent without valid excuse four (4) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period or is absent without valid excuse for ten (10) or more days or parts of days within a semester, the attendance officer shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian of the child and immediately report such absences to the district attorney in the county wherein the school is located for juvenile proceedings pursuant to Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes. (§ 70-10-106) School officials must keep attendance records and promptly notify parents of excessive unexcused absences. A parent may be charged with the misdemeanor offense of "Failure to Comply with the Compulsory Education Law." The parent may be fined up to \$250 per count or up to 15 days in jail for each successive conviction. In addition, the judge may order the parent to complete community service hours or to comply with other conditions, such as transporting the child to school or attending school with the child.

In accordance with state law, students who are absent more than twenty percent (20%) of the time will be referred to the Department of Human Services. At the close of each attendance period of the school term, the board of education of each school district shall notify, in writing, the Department of Human Services of the name of any child who has not been present for instruction at least eighty percent (80%) of the time without valid excuse as defined in Section 10-105 of the Oklahoma Statutes. The Director of the Department of Human Services is authorized to withhold assistance payments to the payee of such child and to instigate an investigation. The district attorney shall file with the Department of Human Services a report identifying any child who has been convicted of truancy within thirty (30) days of such conviction.

This policy will work in conjunction with board policy 4.105, Attendance Policy K-12.

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