



Truancy Law Update

As of September 1, 2015, House Bill 2398 made several changes to the truancy law. Little Elm ISD wants both parents and students to be aware of the changes and how these changes could affect them.

TRUANCY CASES WILL STILL BE FILED AGAINST PARENTS AND STUDENTS

For **students**, truancy was changed from a **CRIMINAL** offense to a **CIVIL** offense. Consequently, truancy cases will no longer carry a jail sentence. Instead, student consequences will include court costs, community service, loss of driving privileges, attending campus tutorials and/or seat time. Students are considered truant when they accrue 10 or more unexcused absences in a 6-month period of time.

For **parents**, when your student reaches 10 unexcused absences, a **CRIMINAL** case will be filed for Parent Contributing to Nonattendance. Fines begin at \$100 for the first offense and increase incrementally for each additional offense.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

A student can be filed on for truant conduct as early as 12 years of age. Students who have not graduated are now required by law to attend school until 19 years of age. (TEC 25.085)

CAMPUS INTERVENTIONS

Parents are notified of student absences via phone calls and letters. Parents also have access to view student attendance through the Parent Portal. Students are called into their house offices to discuss reasons for absenteeism, develop a truancy intervention plan to improve attendance, and discuss the seat time required such that they do not lose credits toward graduation due to chronic absenteeism.

LEHS only makes a “good faith effort” to contact parents. A case is not dismissed because a parent neglected to provide the school correct/updated information or refused to cooperate in the intervention process.

ABSENCES DEFINED

An unexcused absence could result from being late to school or class, missing a single class period, missing multiple classes during the school day or missing the whole day. Whether the absences are a partial day or a full day, 10 unexcused absences could lead to a court case.

AVOID TRUANCY

Students should attend every class, every day. If your student must be absent, a phone call alone is not enough to excuse an absence.

- Students should turn in to their house office, parent notes that include the student’s information (name, grade, ID#), parent’s information (name and contact information), the date(s) of the absence and the reason for the absence. Parent notes should be turned in within 3 days of the absence. Parent notes are limited to 6 per semester.
- Doctor’s notes should also be turned in to the house office within 3 days of the absence. Doctor’s notes should include student name, date(s) of absence, date student may return to school.
- Parents must maintain correct and updated contact information with their student’s house office.

