

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 pursuant to C.G.S. 10-198b.

"Mental health wellness day" means a school day during which a student attends to his/her emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. Such days must be nonconsecutive.

"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 other persons having control 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 annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.
2. Obtain telephone numbers for emergency record cards or other means of contacting parents or other persons having control 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 other persons having control of the child, enrolled in grades one through six, inclusive, when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previous approval or other indication which indicates parents are aware of the absence. *(Note: Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.)*
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.
11. Provide notice to the parents/guardian the information concerning the 2-1-1 Infoline and other pediatric mental and behavioral health screening sources and tools provided by the State Department of Education.

The Board shall implement a truancy intervention model identified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as identified by the Commissioner of Education. The intervention models must also address the needs of students with disabilities. Parents or other persons having control of each child shall be notified of such truancy model.

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 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.

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Truancy

Chronic Absenteeism (continued)

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. Such plan must include the means for collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance, truancy and chronic absenteeism. The data must be disaggregated by school district, school grades and subgroups such as race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free and reduced priced lunches, students whose primary language is not English, and students with disabilities.

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 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. (An attendance officer or a police officer shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent/guardian.)

(cf. 5113 – Attendance)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-184 Duties of parents.
 10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants.
 10-198b State Board of Education to define “excused absence”,
 “unexcused absence”, and “disciplinary absences.”
 10-198c Attendance review teams.
 10-198d Chronic absenteeism.
 10-198e Identification of truancy identification models.

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Chronic Absenteeism

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)
10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general.
45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report.
10-220(c) Duties of boards of education.
10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.
10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.
PA 22-47 An Act Concerning Children’s Mental Health.
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: March 22, 2001
Policy revised: November 16, 2001
Policy revised: June 20, 2013
Policy revised: April 23, 2015
Policy revised: December 17, 2015
Policy revised: March 23, 2017
Policy revised: December 21, 2017
Policy revised: November 18, 2021
Policy revised: October 27, 2022

MARLBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Marlborough, Connecticut

Students

Attendance, Absences and Truancy

The administration has established an attendance regulation which reflects that time lost from class is essentially irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional exchange; that excessive absences rob teachers and students of teaching time that could be better spent on programs and activities; and that a student has an obligation to give, as well as receive, in the context of the classroom setting.

Definitions

The following is a listing of definitions pursuant to this regulation.

1. **“Absence”** - is when a student in grades pre-kindergarten through 6 is absent from an entire day or class or school with or without parental permission.
2. **“Excused Absence”** include absences from school, for absences one through nine when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate written documentation to school officials within ten days (10) school days of the student’s return to school.

For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student’s absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness (must be verified by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence);
2. Student’s observance of a religious holiday;
3. Death in the student’s family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family;
4. Mandated court appearances (documentation required);
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required);
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

The administration will determine whether absences are excused or unexcused. The school does not consider all absences from class or school which have been explained by parents/guardians to be excused. However, for purposes of the reporting of truancy to the SDE, the state approved definitions of “excused” and “unexcused” absences will be used. The District is not precluded from using separate definitions on such absences for its internal uses.

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Attendance, Absences and Truancy

Definitions (continued)

3. **“Unexcused Absence”**

A student’s absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless:

1. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence and meets the documentation requirements; or
2. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence, which is the result of school or District disciplinary action and are excluded from these State Board of Education approved definitions.

A student may not accumulate more than four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.

4. **“Class Cut”** is when a student misses a class and has no legitimate reason for doing so or is tardy to or dismissed from school and does not have a legitimate excuse.
5. **“Tardiness”** is when students arrive at school later than the beginning of school. Tardiness may be explained by a parent/guardian but any absence from class that results will be considered as an accumulated absence and the student may lose credit. Students tardy to school are responsible for work done in classes missed as well as assignments made or due.
6. **“Truant”** is any student ages five (5) through sixteen (16) (to age 18 effective 7/01/01) inclusive who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.
7. **“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.
8. **“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.
9. **“Mental health wellness day”** means a school day during which a student attends to his/her emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. Such days must be nonconsecutive.
10. **“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.
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Attendance, Absences and Truancy (continued)

Attendance Procedure

1. If a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian will contact the school by 11:00 a.m.
2. If no contact is received, the school will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or such person by telephone of the student's absence. Such efforts shall include at least three attempts. A written record of these attempts shall be kept in the school office.
3. The Building Principal will determine if the absence is unexcused. When the student has four (4) unexcused absences, or identified as chronically absent, a referral will be made to the appropriate staff. The appropriate staff will arrange a meeting with the parent or other person having control of the student to review and evaluate the reason for the student being a truant or chronically absent. Such meeting may involve the school or District Attendance Team. This meeting shall be held not later than ten (10) days after the child is identified as a truant. If the parent/guardian declines to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting will be held. The appropriate staff will develop a plan to help improve the student's attendance.
4. 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.
5. If the student has ten (10) unexcused absences, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting shall be held. The PPT will review the student's academic achievement and previous evaluations to determine if additional testing for special education is necessary.
6. The appropriate staff shall coordinate services and refer truants to community agencies providing child and family services.
7. Family trips and vacations will not generally be regarded as reasons for exceeding the absence limitation. Parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from scheduling vacations during times when school is in session. Any parents/guardians contemplating family vacations during school should contact the school at least two weeks prior to the vacation to ascertain its probable impact on their child's absence and credit situation.

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Attendance Procedure (continued)

At the beginning of each new school year, any student who has had ten or more unexcused absences during the previous year will be identified as an “at risk student” and will be monitored by the appropriate staff. A letter will be sent to parents and the appropriate staff will meet with the student to discuss the importance of regular attendance.

1. Explanation of Student Absences

- a. All class absences, including those for tardiness and early dismissal, other than for a reason listed above will count toward the absence limitation even when explained by a parent/guardian.
- b. Procedure for Explanation of Absences:

(1) Absence from School

If a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian shall call the school that morning to report the absence. If a parent is unable to call the school, the student will be required to bring a note from the parent to the office upon returning to school.

(2) Tardiness to School

If a student will be late to school, parents/guardians shall call the school office prior to 9 a.m. to inform the school.

A student is tardy when he/she arrives at school later than the beginning of the school day. Tardiness may be explained by a parent/guardian but any absence from class that results will be considered as an accumulated absence. Tardiness will be considered excused for reasons listed above.

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Chronic Absenteeism (continued)

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Administrative Discretion

The administration will reject any explanation which it finds is inappropriate. The administration reserves the right to excuse any absence which it concludes has occurred because of mitigating circumstances.

Waiver of Policy/Regulation

A student may request a waiver. All waivers are to be applied in a systemic manner. The administrator will consider all approved absences and any extenuating circumstances and attempt to render an impartial judgment. At the discretion of the administration, a parent/guardian may be requested to appear at the meeting to verify legitimacy of the waiver.

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-184 Duties of parents. (as amended by PA 98-243)
 10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA 00-157, P.A. 11-136, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes and P.A. 14-198, An Act Concerning Excused Absences from School for Children of Service Members and P.A. 16-147.)
 10-198b State Board of Education to define “excused absence”, “unexcused absence”, and “disciplinary absences” (as amended by PA 21-46)
 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)
 PA 15-225, An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism.
 10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.
 46-149 Family with Service Needs.
Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984).
Action taken by State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define “attendance.”
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