

TRUANCY

In order to support students in attaining their highest levels of success, the Board recognizes the importance of attendance at school. The Superintendent is expected to develop procedures that describe how schools will identify, monitor and make plans to resolve cases of truancy.

TRUANCY DEFINED

A student is truant if they are required to attend school or alternative instruction under Maine compulsory attendance law (20-A MRSA § 5001-A) and they:

- A. Have completed grade 6 and has the equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year; or
- B. Are at least 6 years of age and have not completed grade 6 and have the equivalent of 7 full days of unexcused absences or 5 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year. Truancy under this paragraph is considered “child abuse and neglect” under Maine law and is reportable to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) when the truancy is the result of neglect by a person responsible for the child; or
- C. Are a child 5 years of age or older who have been voluntarily enrolled in school; have not completed grade 6; and have the equivalent of 7 full days of unexcused absences or 5 consecutive days of unexcused absences during a school year. Such a child will be considered truant if they have the equivalent of 7 full days of unexcused absences or 5 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year. Truancy under this paragraph is considered “child abuse and neglect” under Maine law and is reportable to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) when the truancy is the result of neglect by a person responsible for the child

ATTENDANCE COORDINATORS

In accordance with Maine law, the Superintendent shall appoint one or more attendance coordinators. An attendance coordinator must be a professionally certified or registered person in the mental health, social welfare or educational system who is qualified to carry out the duties of an attendance coordinator in accordance with such rules as may be developed by the State Board of Education.

The duties of the attendance coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- A. Interviewing a student whose attendance is irregular and meeting with the student and the parents to determine the cause of the irregular attendance and filing a written report with the principal;
- B. Filing an annual report with the Superintendent summarizing school year activities, findings and recommendations regarding truants;
- C. Serving as a member of the dropout prevention committee; and
- D. Serving as the liaison between the school and the local law enforcement agency in matters pertaining to student absenteeism under Maine law.

ANNUAL REPORT TO COMMISSIONER

The Superintendent shall submit an annual report regarding truancy to the Commissioner by the required date. The report must identify the number of truants in the school administrative unit in the preceding school year; describe the school unit’s efforts to deal with truancy; account for actions brought to enforce the truancy law; and include any other information on truancy requested by the Commissioner.

LEGAL REFERENCE: 20-A MRSA §§ 5001-A; 5051-A-5054-A
22 MRSA § 4002(1); (6)(B-2)

CROSS REFERENCE: JEA – Compulsory Attendance
JFC – Dropout Prevention — Student Withdrawal from School
JLF – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

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