

## Students

### Truancy

The Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees and staff believe in early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for truant students. Referral to legal authorities normally shall be made only when Academy and community resources are exhausted.

#### Definitions

"Truant" shall mean a child up to age eighteen, 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 school, or an activity sponsored by The Academy (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, or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day.

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

"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 Trustees for such school year.

#### Excused Absences

A student's absence shall be considered "excused" if written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

1. For absences one through nine, a student's absences are considered "excused" when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.

Such documentation includes a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official who spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate. Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism.

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

- a. Student illness (must be verified by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence);
  - b. Student's observance of a religious holiday;
  - c. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
  - d. Mandated court appearances (documentation required);
  - e. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required); or
  - f. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration, such as a college visit.
3. A student's absence shall be considered unexcused unless:
- a. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence and meets the documentation requirements; or
  - b. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence, which is the result of disciplinary action.

When The Academy receives no notification from a parent or other person having control of the child, a reasonable effort shall be made by school personnel to notify by telephone and by mail such parent or other person having control of the child.

Responsibility for completion of missed classwork lies with the student, not The Academy personnel.

#### Excused Absences for Children of Service Members

An enrolled student, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten days of excused absences in any school year and, at the discretion of the Head of School, additional excused absences to visit such child's parent or legal guardian with respect to such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of such excused absences such child and parent or legal guardian shall be responsible to obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by such child prior to his or her return to school from such period of excused absence.

#### Remediation of Truancy

The Woodstock Academy personnel shall seek cooperation from parents or other persons having control of such child and assist them in remedying and preventing truancy. The Head of School shall develop regulations which will detail the following obligations under The Woodstock Academy's truancy policy:

1. Notify parents annually via the student handbook and push page of their obligations under the attendance policy.
2. Make a reasonable effort to notify parents and/or other persons having control of the child 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.
3. Identify a student as "truant" when the student accumulates four unexcused absences in any month or ten in a school year.
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. 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. Students so identified may be subject to:

- a. retention in the same grade to acquire necessary skills for promotion or promotion;
  - b. a requirement to complete a summer school program successfully before being promoted to the next grade.
6. File a written complaint with the appropriate state agency, if the parent or other person having control of the child fails to attend the required meeting with appropriate school personnel to evaluate why the child is truant or fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the child's truancy problem.
7. When a petition is filed, an educational evaluation of the truant student may be done by appropriate school personnel if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
8. Provide coordination of services and refer "truants" to community agencies which provide family services, such as the Youth Service Bureau (YSB).
9. Provide notice to the parents/guardians the information concerning the 2-1-1 Infoline and other pediatric mental and behavioral health services.

### Attendance Review Team

The Academy will maintain a team to review the cases of students who display chronic absenteeism ~~students~~.

The membership of the team may consist of the Head of School or his/her designee(s), guidance counselor(s), school social worker(s), and teacher(s). The team will be led by the Head of School or his/her designee. The team should partner with local agencies to provide support as needed.

The 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. The team shall meet at least monthly.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10 184 Duties of parents.

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants.

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

22-47 An Act Concerning Children's Mental Health

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.

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The Woodstock Academy

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