

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 shall normally 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 is also in attendance if the student is participating in statutorily authorized remote learning as determined through a combination of synchronous virtual classes, synchronous virtual meetings, activities on time-logged electronic systems, and/or the completion and submission of assignments, 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 CGS 10-198b.

"Mental health wellness day" means a school day during which a student attends to his/her emotional and psychological well-being in place 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 that will detail the following school district obligations under the district's truancy policy.

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 eight, inclusive, when a child does not arrive at school, and there has been no previous approval or other indication that 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 a 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.
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. Each truant child shall be evaluated to determine if additional behavioral health interventions are necessary for the well-being of the child.

10. Provide coordination of services and refer “truants” to community agencies that provide child and family services.
11. If in existence, refer the child to the children’s probate court truancy clinic.
11. Provide notice to the parents/guardian of 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’s 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.

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.

In the calculation of the District's chronic absenteeism rate and the school chronic absenteeism rate, a student's engagement, in grades 9-12, in remote virtual learning shall be excluded if such engagement accounts for not less than one-half of the school day. In addition, the calculation of chronic absenteeism rates shall exclude absence resulting from a student taking a mental health day pursuant to P.A. 21-46.

The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available. Such a 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 on 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.)

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

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.

Action taken by the State Board of Education on September 7, 2022, to amend the definition of "in attendance."

Policy adopted: 4/20/26

Students**Truancy****Unexcused Absences/Truancy**

In accordance with Board policy regarding truancy (unexcused absences), the following regulations pertain:

1. Twenty Absence Limit. No student may receive course credit for a full-year course after having been absent from that course more than twenty (20) class periods during the school year. These absences will be prorated for other than full-year courses and for courses meeting other than five (5) periods per week. All absences in a class will be counted except those incurred while a student participates in school-sponsored activities and/or essential administrative business.

2. Waiver of Policy. A student who has accumulated more absences than allowed by the policy, but who feels that the situation warrants special consideration, may appeal to the administration for a waiver increasing the number of allowable absences for that particular student. At the discretion of the administration, the parent may be requested to appear at the hearing to verify the legitimacy of the appeal.

Waivers are to be applied in a systematic manner. The administrator will consider all approved absences and any extenuating circumstances and render an impartial judgment.

3. Grade Reduction for Unapproved Absences. Students will be warned by teachers upon the first unexcused absence from a class. For each subsequent unexcused absence from that class, the student's grade for the marking period will be reduced by five (5) points. However, in applying this policy, a student's grade may not be reduced by more than 50 points in any marking period.

At the beginning of each marking period, automatic grade reductions will begin anew, although the accumulation toward the twenty maximum for the full-year course is cumulative for the year.

Upon recommendation of the teacher, the principal may adjust a grade when a student's outstanding performance for the latter portion of a marking period may not otherwise be recognized appropriately because of policy grading restrictions.

4. Student Responsibilities. Students are responsible for regular attendance in all classes to benefit from continuity of instruction, sequential presentation of material, class interaction, and the attendant self-discipline and responsibility.

It is a student's responsibility to have absences approved and notify his/her teachers by presenting approval verification at the next class meeting.

5. Teacher Responsibilities

A. At the first confirmed unexcused absence from a class, as determined by the administration, the teacher will:

- (1) Notify the student that for each unexcused absence after this warning, the student's grade will be reduced by five (5) points.
- (2) Notify the office on the designated form of the unexcused absence as soon as confirmed. The teacher or the office will, in turn, notify the parent of the absence and the consequences.

B. For every subsequent unapproved absence, the teacher will:

- (1) Inform the student that his/her grade for the marking period will be reduced by five (5) points.
- (2) Notify the administrator and guidance counselor or school counselor involved of the designated form of action taken.
- (3) When a student has accumulated either four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in a school year, the teacher will send the designated form to the office notifying the administrator, guidance counselor, school counselor, and parent of the student's attendance problem. Within ten (10) days of the last unexcused absence, the guidance counselor will contact the parent and initiate arrangements for a conference between the parent and school personnel.
- (4) When a student has accumulated half the maximum allowable number of absences (excused and unexcused) in a course, the teacher will send the designated form to the office notifying the administrator, guidance counselor, school counselor, and parent. The guidance counselor will contact the parent and initiate arrangements for a conference between the parent and school personnel.

All absences are to be recorded in the teacher's record book, even though they may be school-approved. Teachers will maintain class attendance records and submit them to the administration on the final day of school.

C. Teachers should, when practical, obtain at least one grade or mark per week for each student. Marks or grades can come from a variety of sources, e.g., homework, class participation, projects, quizzes, etc., and the sources of grades and their weights are at the teacher's discretion.

6. Counselor Responsibilities. The guidance counselor will:

- A. At the first unexcused absence, arrange a conference with the student to provide counseling and make any required program adjustments.
- B. When notified that the student's grade has been reduced for the second time because of unexcused absences, arrange a conference between the student and the guidance counselor.
- C. Arrange a meeting within ten (10) days of the fourth unexcused absence in a month or the tenth unexcused absence during the school year.

7. Administrative Responsibilities. Whenever a child enrolled in school, ages five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive, unless such child has either graduated from high school or withdrawn with written parental/guardian permission at ages sixteen or seventeen fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent, (or other person having control of the child), is aware of the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or such other person shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of the school Principal.

The school administration will make early concentrated efforts to prevent and remedy truancy in its beginning stages. These efforts will include

A. For the student's first unexcused absence from a course, which results in grade reduction, the administrator will:

- (1) Confer with the student.
- (2) Inform the parent by phone and by mail.
- (3) Arrange for the student to meet with his/her guidance counselor if the situation warrants.

B. For the second and third unexcused absence and for the third unapproved absence thereafter, the administrator will:

- (1) Notify the parent by phone and by mail.
- (2) Confer with the student.
- (3) Enforce disciplinary measures or arrange for referral services as appropriate. This may include referral to the student assistance team (SAT) or other student assistance programs.

C. The school will have the appropriate staff member(s) arrange a meeting with the parent (or other person having control) of the child who is truant within ten (10)

school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in one month or tenth unexcused absence in one school year. At this meeting, a designated staff member shall coordinate services with referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services.

The Superintendent of Schools shall bring the child's case to Superior Court under the Families with Service Needs law if the parent (or other person having control fails to:)

- 1) attend the required meeting to evaluate why the child is truant, or
- 2) cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem.

E. When a student's outstanding performance for the latter portion of a marking period may not fully be acknowledged because of the grading restrictions of this policy, and upon teacher recommendation, the principal may review the circumstances and adjust the student's grade.

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

8. Method of Reporting. Four basic forms will be utilized to implement this policy:

A. Excused Absence Form — for students to verify an excused absence upon confirmation.

B. Unexcused Absence Notice — for teachers to inform the office of each unexcused absence.

C. Midpoint Warning Notice — for teachers, this four-part form notifies the office when students reach half the maximum specified number of absences.

D. Final Notice — completed by teacher when student reaches 20 absences in a full-year course or 10 absences in a semester course.

9. Truancy Intervention Model

The District, on or before 8/15/18, will implement a truancy intervention model, identified by the State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as determined by the Commissioner of Education. (Parents shall be notified of such intervention model.) Such models shall also address the needs of students with disabilities.

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Tardiness to School or Class

Continued tardiness by a student is a serious problem. Students are expected to be in their places, ready for work, at the bell.

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."

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10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.

10-22(c) Duties of boards of education

45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report.

46b-149 Family with Service Needs.

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Regulation approved: 4/20/26