Big Spring Independent School District

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Truancy Prevention Measures

Why Does Attendance Matter?

A missed school day is a lost opportunity for students to learn. The primary rationale for high-quality attendance data is the relationship between student attendance and student achievement. Teacher effectiveness is the strongest school-related determinant of student success, but chronic student absence reduces even the best teacher's ability to provide learning opportunities. Students who attend school regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not have regular attendance. This relationship between attendance and achievement may appear early in a child's school career. A recent study looking at young children found that absenteeism in kindergarten was associated with negative first grade outcomes such as greater absenteeism in subsequent years and lower achievement in reading, math, and general knowledge.

Poor attendance has serious implications for later outcomes as well. High school dropouts have been found to exhibit a history of negative behaviors, including high levels of absenteeism throughout their childhood, at higher rates than high school graduates. These differences in absentee rates were observed as early as kindergarten, and students who eventually dropped out of high school missed significantly more days of school in first grade than their peers who graduated from high school. In eighth grade, this pattern was even more apparent and, by ninth grade, attendance was shown to be a key indicator significantly correlated with high school graduation.

The following plan outlines Big Spring Independent School District's efforts to prevent truancy:

1. Daily calls are made to parents when students are absent from school.
2. When a student reaches 3 or more unexcused absences, a warning letter will be mailed home, and a call will be made by school personnel to the parent. This contract is to address the unexcused absences. Truancy Behavior Intervention Plan is created and signed by the student and the parent.
3. When a student reaches 6 unexcused absences, a warning letter will be mailed home and a Truancy/Behavior Plan will be enacted during a conference and signed by the student, parent, and campus administrator. At the secondary level, a letter called *Preliminary Hearing Discussion Meeting* will be sent home to assign the parent and student to a bulk meeting with the County Judge prior to a truancy court filing.
4. When a student reaches 9 unexcused absences, a warning letter will be mailed home, and a copy will be delivered by the BSISD Truancy Officer during a home visit.
5. If the student reaches 10 unexcused absences within a six-month period, a warning letter will be sent home advising parents that a truancy referral has been issued to the court. The court system will send a letter indicating the court date. Please be present and on time on your court date to avoid further action and/or fines.