EASTCONN
Where Learning Comes to Life

STUDENTS
Series 5000
Policy #5002.1.1

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 pro rated 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 systemic 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 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 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 involved on the designated form of the action taken.

(3) When a student has accumulated either four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absence in a school year, the teacher will send the designated form to the office notifying the administrator, guidance 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, 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 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.

(4) The required mailed notice shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in one month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs.

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.

(4) The required mailed notice shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in one month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs.

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 shall coordinate services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services. Documentation of the meeting will be necessary to make adequate any referral to the Superior Court, Juvenile Matters Division.

The Executive Director 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.

Such filing shall take place not later than 15 calendar days after such failure to attend such meeting or such failure to cooperate with the student attempting to solve the truancy problem.

D. Prior to the filing of a petition with the Superior Court, an educational evaluation of the student shall be performed if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year. Such an evaluation would assess, as appropriate, the areas of health, vision, hearing, social and emotional states, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities and shall be administered by appropriate school personnel. The PPT process may be utilized to fulfill this responsibility.

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.

Chronic Absenteeism

An attendance review team shall be established when chronic absenteeism rates in the Agency or at individual schools in the Agency meet the following circumstances:

1. A Agency team must be established when the Agency 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 Agency or each school must be established when (a) more than one Agency school has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher or (b) the Agency's chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher and one or more Agency schools 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 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.

The Agency shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available. (SDE to develop by 1/1/16.)

The Agency will include in information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the Agency that is submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

For Alliance Agencys:

The principal or his/her designee of any elementary or middle school Agency 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.)

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.

10-198 a Policies and procedures concerning truants. (Revised by PA 95-304 and PA 00-157 and PA 11-136)

10-199 through 10 202 Attendance, truancy in general.

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

10-22(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)

45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)

46b-149 Family with Service Needs.

PA 15-25 An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism

Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984)

Action taken by the State Board of Directors on January 2, 2008, to define "attendance."

Action taken by the State Board of Directors on June 27, 2012, to define "excused" and "unexcused" absences.

Approved:5/23/23
Revised:
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