

Students

**Student Attendance and Truancy**

It has been well demonstrated that regular attendance is a key factor in the success a student achieves in school. Thus, absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. Therefore, this policy and set of procedures are designed to minimize student absenteeism, while providing students an opportunity to make up school work missed due to absences that reasonably can be considered to be unavoidable.

**A. Definitions:**

1. **"Absence"** – any non-attendance of an enrolled student. A student is considered to be in attendance 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.
2. **"Class Cut"** – an absence from class without any reasonable explanation for the absence.
3. **"Disciplinary Absence"**- an absence that is the result of school or district disciplinary action such as an out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Disciplinary absences are neither excused nor unexcused.
4. **"Documentation of absence"** – a written explanation of the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence. This includes a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that 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. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism. Non-English speaking parents/guardians may submit documentation in their native language.
5. **"Excused absence"** -a student's non-attendance from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten school days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (when the school medical advisor provides notice to a parent or guardian that a student has symptoms of a communicable disease) and meets the following criteria:
  - A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation; and
  - B. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
    - i. student illness (all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence);
    - ii. student's observance of a religious holiday;

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- iii. death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
  - iv. mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
  - v. the lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
  - vi. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance;
  - vii. Up to ten absences will be considered excused for students to visit with parents or legal guardians who are active members of the armed forces and have been called to duty for, are on leave from or have immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. The Board of Education may grant additional excused absences for such purposes.
6. **"Habitual truant"**- a child age five to eighteen who is enrolled in a public or private school and has twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year. Habitual truants may be subject to penalties established by city or town ordinances
7. **"Student"** – a student enrolled in the Regional School District #10 public schools.
8. **"Truant"** -any student five to eighteen years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.
- a. A student five or six years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five or six years of age.
  - b. A student seventeen years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents to such student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent.
  - c. **If** a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in an alternative program, the student shall not be considered "truant."
9. **"Unexcused absence"** -Any absence that does not meet the criteria for an excused absence (including proper documentation) or a disciplinary absence.

**Procedures for students in grades K-12**

Responsibility for assuring that students attend school rests by statute with the parent or other person having control over the child. To assist parents/guardians and others in meeting this responsibility, the Region #10 Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to notify, monitor and intervene when necessary in student attendance issues.

**A. Notification**

- 1. Annually, at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment of a child during the school year, the administration will notify parents and other persons having control of school age children enrolled in Region #10 schools in grades kindergarten through twelve (under the age

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of eighteen) of their obligation to assure that such children attend school or show that they are elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction.

2. Annually, the administration shall obtain from each parent or other person having control of an enrolled child in grades kindergarten through twelve, a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school day.

**B. Monitoring**

1. Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of student in grades K-12. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, and there is no indication that the parent/guardian is aware of the absence, school personnel, under the direction of the building principal (or his/her designee), must make a reasonable effort to notify such parent/guardian by telephone and also by mail. The mailed notice shall include the warning that two unexcused absences from school in a month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court alleging the belief that the child's family is a family with service needs. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.

**C. Intervention for Grades K-8**

1. If a student in grades K-8 has been absent for 12 days, parents will be notified in writing that attendance may become a serious academic problem. If a student in grades K-8 is absent for 24 days, it is possible that he//she will be retained. Appeals must be in writing to the principal.
2. Identify an enrolled student in grades kindergarten through eight as "truant" when he or she has four unexcused absences in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.
3. Identify an enrolled student in grades kindergarten through eight as a "habitual truant" when he or she has twenty unexcused absences from school in any school year;
4. Hold a meeting with a parent or other person having control of a child who is truant and appropriate school personnel within ten school days of designation as a truant to review and "evaluate" the reasons for the child being truant. (If the parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.)
5. If the parent or other person having control of a student who is truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subsection a, above, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent shall file for such truant a written complaint with the Superior Court not later than 15 calendar days after such failure to attend or failure to cooperate pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §46b -149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

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6. Require that a designated staff member work with the appropriate school administrator in order to coordinate services within and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services.
7. In addition to the procedures specified above, a regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems shall be referred to the building Student Assistance Team (or other appropriate body) for program review and assistance. The Team will review the student's need for referral for a planning and placement team ("PPT") meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems shall be referred for a PPT meeting for program review.

**D. Intervention for Grades 9-12**

- I. Identify an enrolled student in grades nine through twelve (under the age of 18) as "truant" when he or she has four unexcused absences in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.
2. Identify an enrolled student in grades nine through twelve (under the age of 18) as a "habitual truant" when he or she has twenty unexcused absences from school in any school year.
3. Hold a meeting with a parent or other person having control of a child who is truant and appropriate school personnel within ten school days of designation as a truant to review and "evaluate" the reasons for the child being truant. (If the parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.)
4. If the parent or other person having control of a student who is truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subsection a, above, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent shall file for such truant a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §46b -149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.
5. Require that a designated staff member work with the appropriate school administrator in order to coordinate services within and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services;
6. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate.
7. A regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems shall be referred to the building Student Assistance Team (or other appropriate body) for program review and assistance. The Team will review the student's need for referral for a planning and placement team ("PPT") meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems shall be referred for a PPT meeting for program review.
8. In addition to the procedures regarding truancy, the granting of course credit at the high school level is dependent on attendance in class, as well as grades. See Policy 6115 and Regulations 6115A for further regulations regarding the granting or denial of course credit.

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The attendance policy and punctuality requirements are based upon legal requirements and legal authority pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes 19 181

- 10-184 Duties of parents. School attendance age requirements
- 10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants
- 10-198b State Board of Education to define "excused absence" and "unexcused absence" for purpose of reporting truancy
- 10-199 Attendance officers. Duties
- 10-200 Habitual truants
- 10-220 Duties of boards of Education
- 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures
- 46b-149 Child from family with service needs.

Connecticut State Board of Education Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences  
Adopted June 27, 2012

Connecticut State Board of Education Statewide Definition of Attendance for Public  
School Districts in Connecticut, Adopted January 2, 2008.

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