

Students

Attendance, Excused Absences and Truancy

The administration has established an attendance regulation which reflects that time lost from class is essentially irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional exchange; that excessive absences rob teachers and students of teaching time that could be better spent on programs and activities; and that a student has an obligation to give, as well as receive, in the context of the classroom setting.

Definitions

The following is a listing of definitions pursuant to this regulation.

1. "Absence" - is when a student in grades kindergarten through 12 is absent from an entire day or class or school with or without parental permission.

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. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

2. "Excused Absence" include absences from school, for absences one through nine, and appropriate documentation is provided by the student's parent/guardian approving the absence, due to:
 - A. Illness or injury (with doctor's verification after the tenth absence and all absences thereafter.)
 - B. Death in the family
 - C. Religious holidays
 - D. Court appearances
 - E. School sponsored activities
 - F. Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the students attends, (This reason does not require documentation.)
 - G. An emergency, or
 - H. Limited absence from school for special activities or extraordinary educational opportunities with parental consent, subject to the advance approval of the Principal or his/her designee, in accordance with SDE guidelines.

For the tenth absence and all others thereafter, the same reasons cited above shall constitute "excused" absences. Documentation by a medical professional is required for illness, regardless of the length of the absence.

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Attendance, Excused Absences and Truancy

Definitions (continued)

The administration will determine whether absences are excused or unexcused. The school does not consider all absences from class or school which have been explained by parents to be excused. However, for purposes of the reporting of truancy to the SDE, the state approved definitions of “excused” and “unexcused” absences will be used. The District is not precluded from using separate definitions on such absences for its internal uses.

3. “Unexcused Absence” is an absence from any entire regularly scheduled school day for which the absence is not excused as defined above. A student’s absence shall be considered unexcused unless the absence meets the definition of an excused absence, listed above, including the fulfillment of the documentation requirements, or if an absence is the result of school or District disciplinary action.

A student may not accumulate more than four (4) unexcused absences from a given class each marking period without a parent conference and/or reduction in grade.

4. “Class Cut” is when a student misses a class and has no legitimate reason for doing so or is tardy to or dismissed from school and does not have a legitimate excuse.
5. “Tardiness” is when students arrive at school later than the beginning of school. Tardiness may be explained by a parent but any absence from class that results will be considered as an accumulated absence and the student may lose credit. Students tardy to school are responsible for work done in classes missed as well as assignments made or due.
6. “Truant” is any student ages five (5) through eighteen (18) inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.
7. “Habitual Truant” is any student who has twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year.
8. “Loss of Credit” will take place upon the fifth unexcused absence from class for that marking period.

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Attendance, Excused Absences and Truancy (continued)

Attendance Procedures (K-8)

1. If a student is absent from school, the parent or other person having control of the student, will contact the school nurse by 9:00 a.m.
2. If no contact is received, the school will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or such person by telephone and by mail of the student's absence. A written record of these attempts shall be kept in the nurse's office. When the student returns to school, he/she must turn in a note from a parent or guardian explaining the student's absence.

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.

3. The Building Principal will determine if the absence is unexcused. When the student has four (4) unexcused absences, a referral will be made to the appropriate staff. The appropriate staff will arrange a meeting with the parent or other person having control of the student to review and evaluate the reason for the student being a truant. This meeting shall be held not later than ten (10) days after the child is identified as a truant. If the parent or other such person declines to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting will be held. The appropriate staff will develop a plan to help improve the student's attendance.
4. If the parent or other person having control of a child identified as "truant" fails to attend the required meeting or fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem, the Building Principal or designee shall notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall, within 15 calendar days, file a written complaint with the Superior Court under the Family with Service Needs law.
5. If the student has ten (10) unexcused absences, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting shall be held. The PPT will review the student's academic achievement and previous evaluations to determine if additional testing for special education is necessary.
6. After twenty (20) unexcused absences, the student will be identified as an habitual truant.
7. The appropriate staff shall coordinate services and refer truants and habitual truants to community agencies providing child and family services.

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

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents. (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157)

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA 00-157 and PA 11-136)

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised 1995 - PA 95-304)

10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.

46-149 Family with Service Needs.

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

Action taken by 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.

Regulation proposed:

3/14

Regulation adopted:

6/14