STUDENTS

TRUANCY

Connecticut state law requires children living in the school district to regularly attend public school or show that they are elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. The Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is essential to the academic success of its students. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to monitor school attendance so as to identify students who are truant, and to enlist the cooperation of parents and, when necessary, the juvenile justice system, in order to address the problem of truancy when it arises.

I. Definitions:
“Truant student” – any enrolled 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.

“Unexcused absence” – the non-appearance of an enrolled student on a regularly scheduled school day that the building principal (or designee) has determined is not excused.

“Excused absence” – the non-appearance of an enrolled student on a regularly scheduled school day for any of the following reasons:
1. Student’s health, including medical appointments. (The school administration may require medical certification for frequent health-related absences.)
2. Religious holidays
3. Funeral, death or serious illness in the family
4. Court appearance
5. Documented college visits
6. Approved school activities, including field trips and sporting events
7. Suspension or expulsion
8. Failure of the school district to provide required transportation
9. An extraordinary circumstance with the approval of the building principal

“Parent” - a parent, guardian or other person having control of an enrolled student.

II. Notification:
A. Annually, at the beginning of the school year, the parents of every student under the age of 18 will be notified in writing of their legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school. Parents of children enrolling during the school year will be similarly notified.

B. In the notification regarding compulsory attendance, parents will be requested to provide the school in which their child is enrolled with a telephone number or some other means of contacting them during the school day.

C. Parents will also be informed that it is their responsibility to contact the school office when their child is absent from school and provide a reason for the absence if they want the absence to be excused.
III. Monitoring attendance:
A. Whenever a student is absent from school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel or volunteers under the direction of the building principal shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent of the student’s absence. If the school does not receive any explanation for the absence, the absence will be considered unexcused.

B. The Superintendent of Schools may develop and implement regulations regarding the academic consequences for repeated absences from school. Parents will be notified in writing when a student’s number of absences (excused and unexcused) becomes a serious academic problem that could impact grades or result in loss of credit or retention.

IV. Meeting with parent of a truant student:
A. When a student is identified as a truant, the Superintendent (or designee) will hold a meeting with the parent and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student’s truancy.

B. This meeting will occur not later than ten (10) school days after the child’s fourth (4th) unexcused absence in a month or tenth (10th) unexcused absence in a school year.

C. In reviewing and evaluating the reasons for the student’s truancy, the participants of the meeting should consider the appropriateness of referring the student to the school’s [Student Assistance Team] or planning and placement team.

D. At the meeting, school personnel shall be designated to coordinate services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services if appropriate.

V. Superior Court complaint:
If the parent of a child who is truant fails to attend the meeting or fails to otherwise cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent will file a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §46b-149, alleging that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-184 Duties of parents. School attendance age requirements
10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants
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.