

Students

Truancy

Introduction and Definitions

The district's policy on student truancy shall stress early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for students. Referral to legal authorities normally shall be made only when local resources are exhausted. For purposes of implementing this policy and for reporting purposes regarding truancy, the District will utilize the State Board of Education approved definitions of "excused" and "unexcused" absences.

"Truant" shall mean a child five to eighteen, inclusive who has four unexcused absences in any one month, or ten unexcused absences in one school year.

"Habitual truant" shall mean a child five to eighteen, inclusive who has 20 or more unexcused absences in one school year.

"In attendance" shall mean a student 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.

"Chronically absent child" is an enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

"Absence" means an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-198b.

"District chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year.

"School chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

Remediation of Truancy. School personnel shall seek cooperation from parents or other persons having control of such child and assist them in remedying and preventing truancy. The superintendent of schools shall develop regulations which will detail the following school obligations under the district's truancy policy:

1. Notify parents annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.

Students

Truancy (continued)

2. Obtain telephone numbers for emergency record cards or other means of contacting parents or other persons having control of the child during the school day.
3. Establish a system to monitor student attendance.
4. Make a reasonable effort to notify parents or other persons having control of the child, enrolled in Middletown Public Schools, when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previous approval or other indication which indicates parents are aware of the absence. *(Note: Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.)*
5. Identify a student as “truant” when the student accumulates four unexcused absences in any month or ten in a school year.
6. Identify a student as “habitual truant” when the student accumulates 20 or more unexcused absences in a school year.
7. Identify a student as “chronically absent” when the student accumulates a total number of absences at any time during a school year that is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at the school during the school year.
8. Appropriate school staff meet with parents of a child identified as truant or chronically absent to review and evaluate the situation, within ten days of such designation. Such meeting may involve the school or District Attendance Team.

Students so identified may be subject to:

- (a) retention in the same grade to acquire necessary skills for promotion, or retention.
9. When a student is identified as truant a referral will be made to the appropriate team (including but not limited to: Climate Team, Student Assistance Team, School Attendance Team, Scientific Research Based Intervention Team, 504 Team, Planning and Placement Team, Middletown Youth Diversion Team) for consideration of further evaluation, intervention or assessment.
10. Provide coordination of services and refer “truants” to community agencies which provide family services.

Students

Truancy (continued)

The Board, on or before 8/15/18, shall implement a truancy intervention model identified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as identified by the Commissioner of Education. Parents or other persons having control of each child shall be notified of such truancy model. (Note: The SDE is required to identify these effective truancy intervention models by 8/15/17.)

Chronic Absenteeism

The Board of Education, in compliance with statute, requires the establishment of attendance review teams when chronic absenteeism rates in the District or at individual schools in the District meet the following circumstances:

1. A District team must be established when the District's chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher.
2. A school team must be established when the school chronic absenteeism rate is 15 percent or higher.
3. A team for either the District or each school must be established when (a) more than one school in the District has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher or (b) a District has a District chronic absenteeism rate of 10 percent or higher and one or more schools in the District 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 District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available.

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

Students

Truancy

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 P.A. 11-136 and PA 16-147)
- 10-198b State Board of Education to define “excused absence”, “unexcused absence”, and “disciplinary absences”
- 10-198c Attendance review teams (as amended by PA 17-14)
- 10-198d Chronic absenteeism
- 10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised, 1995, PA 95-304)
- 45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)
- 10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)
- 10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.
- 10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.
Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984).
Action taken by the 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.

Policy adopted: April 16, 1996
Policy revised: June 12, 2001
Policy readopted: June 7, 2005
Policy revised: January 8, 2013
Policy revised: June 28, 2016
Policy revised: June 27, 2017
Policy revised: February 13, 2018

MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Middletown, Connecticut