

STUDENTS**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY****5110**Statement

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential if students can properly benefit from teaching and learning. Connecticut state law places the responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other persons having legal control of the student. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain administrative procedures to implement this policy.

Legal and Other References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184
 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186 (as amended by Public Act 09-6)
 Connecticut General Statutes §10-198a Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)
 Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences (Connecticut State Department of Education June 27, 2012)
 Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, Utilizing Local Support Resources Prior to Referral of Students for Family with Service Needs (August 4, 2009)
 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)
 (Old Truancy) Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)
 Public Act 09-143: An Act Concerning the Reporting of Truancy Data and the Reduction of Duplicative

Adopted: 9/24/1973
 Revised: 5/28/1985
 Revised: 11/12/1991
 Revised: 10/2002
 Revised: 3/8/2004
 Revised: 10/22/12
 Revised: 1/27/14

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A. Definitions

1. “Absence” – any day during which a student is not considered in attendance or on a school sponsored activity for a least one half of the school day.
2. “Chronic absenteeism” – the attendance rate schools use for state reports and federal accountability reports. Chronic absenteeism means missing 10 percent of a school year for any reason.
3. “Excused Absence” – A student’s absence is considered excused if documentation of the reason for the absence is received within ten school days of the student’s return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes 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 or guardian approves such absences and provides proper documentation including the reason for the absence. Such documentation could include a signed note from the parent or guardian, a voice mail message regarding the absence, or a telephone call confirming the absence.
 - b. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student’s absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
 - (1) Student illness or other reasons of health. (Note: The administration reserves the right to require physician or other appropriate certification for health-related absences);
 - (2) Student’s observance of a religious holiday;
 - (3) Mandated court appearance (additional documentation required);
 - (4) The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends; and
 - (5) Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the principal. (Family vacations do not qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity); and
 - (6) Funeral or death in the family, or other emergency out of the control of the family.
4. “Unexcused Absence” – An absence will be considered unexcused unless it meets the following criteria:
 - a. the absence meets the definition of an excused absence as defined above in 2a. and/or 3b.
 - b. the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.
5. “Disciplinary Absences” – Absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are defined as excused absences.
6. “Truant” – A student age five to eighteen inclusive who has four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in one year.

7. “Habitual Truant” – A student who has 20 unexcused absences within a school year.
8. “School Attendance Review Board” – The SARB is composed of representatives from various community agencies that will help support chronically absent and truant students and their families. The SARB works together with the schools and the community to solve school attendance and behavior problems through the use of available resources and creative intervention strategies. The board looks at alternative interventions and approaches to assist students and their families. If students and families are unable to improve, the SARB has the authority to refer the student to the courts, Department of Children and Families and/or any other governing agency.
9. “Education Evaluation”: Tests and other assessment procedures, including a review of information that are used to assess present levels of performance. The following areas could be assessed: health, social and emotional, motor skills, achievement, and ability.

B. Determination of Whether a Student is “In Attendance”

1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion will be reported as absent unless he or she receives an alternative educational program for at least one half of the regular school day.
2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours in order to be considered “in attendance.”
3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being “in attendance” for every day that they receive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher for an amount of time deemed adequate by the administration so as to ensure that the student is able to successfully return to the regular classroom setting.

C. Procedures for students in Grades K-12

1. Notification
 - a. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any student during the school year, the administration will notify the parent or other person having control of the student enrolled in grades K-12 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-184 to assure that such student attends school regularly or to show that the student is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the Manchester Public Schools.
 - b. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any student during the school year, the administration will obtain from the parent or other person having control of the student a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school day.
2. Monitoring

- a. Each school will implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused and excused absences of students. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or other person having control of such student by telephone of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence.
- b. Reasonable efforts shall include two (2) attempts to reach the parent or other person at the telephone number provided by the parent or other person. Such attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the Superintendent. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice will be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and will have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.
- c. Each school will monitor chronic absenteeism and make necessary adjustments to educate students and families, intervene when absences effect student achievement, and follow district guidelines to support chronically absent students and their families.

D. Truancy Exceptions:

1. A student **five (5) or six (6) 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 (5) or six (6) years of age.
2. A student **seventeen (17) 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. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the district provided the parent (or person having control of the child) with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.
3. 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 to be "truant."

E. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal

1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) and subsequently seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student's withdrawal from school.
2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of his/her withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests readmission.
3. If a student reaches an 18th birthday and is absent for at least 10 consecutive school days,

the school must make reasonable attempts to re-engage the student into an educational program. If the student is not responsive, a certified letter will be sent notifying the student of voluntary withdrawal. The letter will include with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.

F. Educational Evaluation and Special Education Guidelines

1. A student who is experiencing attendance problems should be referred to the school’s Student Assistance Team (SAT) to consider the need for additional interventions and/or educational evaluation. The SAT should also consider whether the student should be referred to a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) to review the student’s needs and considerations for special education and or related services.

2. If a Family with Service Needs (FWSN) petition is filed by the School Attendance Review Board and the court orders an educational evaluation of the student, the district shall conduct an appropriate educational evaluation if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.

F. INTERVENTIONS

The school administration will make a concentrated effort to prevent and remedy truancy and chronic absenteeism in its early stages for students who are found to be truant or chronically absent. This will include:

Attendance Interventions	
Any unexcused absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to parent/guardian via phone and/or electronic notification system.
3 unexcused absences or student is identified on the school’s chronic absenteeism report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to parent/guardian via phone and/or electronic notification system. • Letter sent home from school informing parents/guardian of attendance issues and policy.
5 unexcused absences or student is identified for a 2 nd time on the school’s chronic absenteeism report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration or PPS staff designee phone contact with parent/guardian. • Second letter sent home from school informing parents/guardian of continued attendance issues. • Parent/guardian and school team meeting-community resources should be discussed and an attendance plan should be developed. • If deemed appropriate, a home visit may be attempted by appropriate school staff. (If parent/guardian contact was made during a home visit this may take the place of above meeting)
7 unexcused absences or student is identified for a 3 rd time on the school’s chronic absenteeism report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration or PPS staff designee phone contact with parent/guardian. • Third letter sent home informing parent/guardian that a referral to the School Attendance Review Board will be made. • Home Visit conducted by appropriate school staff. • Student referred to Student Assistance Team or equivalent school team for possible educational evaluation, school based interventions and/or supports.

<p>10 unexcused absences or student is identified for a 4th time on the school's chronic absenteeism report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory School Attendance Review Board Hearing • Family and student will be assigned an attendance case manager through the Board. • School Attendance Review Board will coordinate services and referrals to community agencies and family services. • School Attendance Review Board Coordinator may review all cases, when little to no progress is being made, and adjust intervention strategies as needed. • The School Attendance Review Board <u>may</u> make the recommendation to the Superintendent who shall file a written complaint pursuant to CSG Section 46b-149 (Family with service needs complaint) . • The School Attendance Review Board <u>may</u> recommend that a referral be made to the Department of Children and Families where the parent/guardian fails to reasonably cooperate to solve the truancy problem.
<p>Over 18 absences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Attendance Review Board (if age and case appropriate) <u>will</u> make the recommendation to the Superintendent who shall file a written complaint pursuant to CSG Section 46b-149 (Family with service needs complaint) or Youth in Crisis complaint JD-JM-142 – CT for each habitual truant enrolled in the schools under his/her jurisdiction and/or in situations where the parent fails to cooperate to solve the truancy problem. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Attendance Review Board (if age and case appropriate) <u>will</u> make a referral to the Department of Children and Families. • A meeting may be called by the SARB coordinator with community coordinating agencies to assess interventions and increase wrap around services. • School administration will review loss of learning academically, socially and emotional to assess if retention is appropriate.