

Students Policy # 2140 - 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 student age five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four unexcused absences in any one month, or ten 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.

Remediation of Truancy

Lyme/Old Lyme 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 district obligations under the district's truancy policy.

1. Notify parents annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.
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 by telephone and by mail to notify parents or other persons having control of the child when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previously 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.)*

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.

5. Identify a student as "truant" when the student accumulates four unexcused absences in any month or ten in a school year.

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6. Appropriate school staff meet with parents of a child identified as truant, to review and evaluate the situation, within ten days of each designation.

Students so identified may be subject to:

- a) retention in the same grade to acquire necessary skills for promotion or retention.
- b) a requirement to complete a summer school program successfully before being promoted to the next grade.

File a written complaint with the Superior Court, not later than fifteen calendar days after the failure of a parent/guardian to attend the meeting (item #6) or upon the failure to cooperate with the school attempting to solve the truancy problem, alleging that the acts or omissions of a child identified as “truant” are such that the student’s family is a “family with service needs,” if the parent or other person having control of the child fails to attend the required meeting with appropriate school personnel to evaluate why the child is truant or fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the child’s truancy problem.

7. When a petition is filed, an educational evaluation of the truant student shall be done by appropriate school personnel if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
8. Provide coordination of services and refer "truants" to community agencies which provide child and family services.

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, by PA 95-304.

10-202e and 10-202f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.

10-221b 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: January 2013.

Lyme/Old Lyme Board of Education.