

## **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 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**

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 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.

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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### Truancy (continued)

6. Appropriate school staff meet with parents of a child identified as truant, to review and evaluate the situation, within ten days of such 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.
7. 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.
  8. 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.
  9. 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 P.A. 11-136)  
10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised, 1995, PA 95-304)  
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: August 15, 2017

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Newtown, Connecticut

## Students

### Truancy

#### Unexcused Absences/Truancy

In accordance with Board policy regarding truancy (unexcused absences), the following regulations pertain:

1. **Absence Limit.** No student may receive course credit for a semester course after having been absent from the course for more than ten (10) class periods and in a full-year course after having been absent from that course more than twenty (20) class periods during the school year. All absences in a class will be counted except those incurred while a student participates in school-sponsored activities and/or essential administrative business.
2. **Waiver of Policy.** A student who has accumulated more absences than allowed by the policy, but who feels that the situation warrants special consideration, may appeal to the Appeals Committee for restoration of credit for that particular course. At the discretion of the Appeals Committee, the parent/student may appear at the hearing to verify the legitimacy of the appeal.

Waivers are to be applied in a systemic manner. The Appeals Committee will consider all approved absences and any extenuating circumstances and render an impartial judgment. The parent or student who is dissatisfied with the outcome has the right to appeal the decision of the Appeals Committee and request a meeting with the Principal. The Principal shall have the final decision regarding restoration of credit.

3. **Student Responsibilities.** Students are responsible for regular attendance in all classes to benefit from continuity of instruction, sequential presentation of material, class interaction, and the attendant self-discipline and responsibility.

It is a student's responsibility to have absences approved and to notify his/her teachers by presenting approval verification at the next class meeting.

4. **Administrative Responsibilities.** Whenever a child enrolled in school, ages five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive, unless such child has either graduated from high school or withdrawn with written parental/guardian permission at ages sixteen or seventeen, fails to report to school on a regularly-scheduled school day with no communication from the child's parent or guardian confirming the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or guardian shall be made by school personnel under the direction of the school Principal.

The school administration will make early concentrated efforts to prevent and remedy truancy in its beginning stages. These efforts will include:

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### Truancy (continued)

The school will have the appropriate staff member(s) arrange a meeting with the parent (or other person having control) of the child who is with multiple unexcused absences in one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in one school year. At this meeting a designated staff shall coordinate services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services.

### 5. Truancy Intervention Model

The District, on or before 8/15/18, will implement a truancy intervention model, identified by the State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as determined by the Commissioner of Education. (Parents shall be notified of such intervention model.)

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. (Revised by PA 95-304 and PA 00-157, PA 11-136 and PA 16-147)  
10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general.  
10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.  
10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)  
45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)  
46b-149 Family with Service Needs.  
PA 15-225 An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism  
*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.*

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