

Students

Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal

Attendance

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children, ages five through eighteen inclusive, to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Parents or persons having control of a child five years of age have the option of not sending the child to school until ages six or seven. Mandatory attendance terminates upon graduation or withdrawal with written parent/guardian consent at age seventeen.

A student is considered to be “in attendance” 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. A student not meeting the definition of “in attendance” shall be considered absent.

Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is lost instructional opportunity. The Killingly Board of Education requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent.

Definitions (related to chronic absenteeism)

Chronically absent child: 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: An excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day.

District chronic absenteeism rate: 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: 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.

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Excuses (continued)

Excuses

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school 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/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.

Such documentation includes a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate. Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism.

- 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 (must be verified by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence);
 2. Student's observance of a religious holiday;
 3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
 4. Mandated court appearances (documentation required);
 5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required);
 6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

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7. Excused Absences for Children of Service Members

An enrolled student, age five to eighteen, inclusive, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten days of excused absences in any school year and, at the discretion of the Board of Education, additional excused absences to visit such child's parent or legal guardian with respect to such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of such excused absences such child and parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by such child prior to his or her return to school from such period of excused absence.

- C. A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless:
1. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence and meets the documentation requirements; or
 2. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence, which is the result of school or District disciplinary action and are excluded from these State Board of Education approved definitions.

When the school in which a child is enrolled receives no notification from a parent or other person having control of the child is aware of the child's absence, a reasonable effort shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel to notify by telephone and by mail such parent or other person having control of the child.

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.

Responsibility for completion of missed classwork lies with the student, not the teacher. Unless a student has an extended illness, all make-up work will be complete within five days after the student returns to school.

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:

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1. A team for the District must be established when the District chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher.
2. A team for the school 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 established attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

The Principal or his/her designee of any public school located in the town of Killingly, as long as Killingly is designated as an Alliance district may refer to the children's truancy clinic established by the Probate Court serving Killingly, a parent/guardian with a child defined as a truant or who is at risk of becoming a truant. ***(An attendance officer or a police officer shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent/guardian.)***

Dismissal

No school, grade, or class may be dismissed before the regularly scheduled dismissal time without the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

No teacher may permit any individual student to leave school prior to the regular hour of dismissal without the permission of the Principal.

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No student may be permitted to leave school at any time other than at regular dismissal without the approval of the student's parent/guardian. If a court official with legal permission to take custody of a child, or if a police officer arrests a student, the parent/guardian should be notified of these situations by the administration.

10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)

(cf. 5142 - Student Safety)

(cf. 5113.2 - Truancy)

(cf. 6113 - Released Time)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157)

10-185 Penalty

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by P.A.11-136, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes and PA 14-198

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy - in general

Action taken by State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define "attendance."

Action taken by State Board of Education on June 27, 2012, to define "excused" and "unexcused" absences.

45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)

PA 15-225, An Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism

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Absences Generally

If absence from school is to be considered excused, the administration shall require a satisfactory written explanation from the parent or legal guardian of the child within ten (10) school days of the last absence. The administration will determine whether absences are excused or unexcused. Only those absences which are written and meet the criteria as excused absences will be approved as excused.

I. Definitions

The following is a list of definitions applicable to this regulation:

1. "Student" - is any child officially enrolled within the Killingly Public Schools, grades K-12, inclusive.
2. "Absence" - is when a student in grades K-12, inclusive, is absent from an entire regularly scheduled school day with or without authorized permission.
3. "Truant" - is any student who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.
4. "Unexcused Absence" - is an absence from any entire regularly scheduled school day for which the absence is not excused as defined in #6 below.
5. "Excused Absence" - includes those absences defined as follows.
 - a. Reasons of health, including illness, incapacity or doctor's visit(s). The district reserves the right to require a physician's or other appropriate certification for absences in excess of three (3) consecutive days or a total of fifteen (15) in any school year.
 - b. Religious holiday or obligation.
 - c. Legitimate court appearance.
 - d. Death in the immediate family or attendance at a funeral.
 - e. School activities as approved by school administration.
 - f. Suspension or expulsion.

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Absences Generally(continued)

- g. An emergency.
- h. An enrolled student, age five to eighteen, inclusive, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten days of excused absences in any school year and, at the discretion of the Board of Education, additional excused absences to visit such child's parent or legal guardian with respect to such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of such excused absences such child and parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by such child prior to his or her return to school from such period of excused absence.
- i. Such other limited absences that have prior written approval of the Principal. Parents or legal guardians shall submit a written request for approval to the Principal. Such written request shall be submitted during a reasonable period of time prior to the date(s) of absence. The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the Principal.
- j. Such other reasonable exceptional circumstances as approved by the Principal.

II. Administrative Regulations (Grades K- 12)

1. Procedure - Generally

The school administration will make a concentrated effort to prevent and remedy truancy in its early stages for students who are found to be truant.

2. Notification and Monitoring

- a. Annually, at the beginning of the school year and upon any enrollment during the school year, obtain from the parent or other person having control of each student, a telephone number or other means of contacting the parent or such other person during the school day.
- b. Annually, in writing, at the beginning of the school year and upon any enrollment during the school year, notify the parent or other person having control of each student, of their obligations to assure regular school attendance pursuant to Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

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c. Each school shall maintain a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences. Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the student's parent or legal guardian is aware of the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or legal guardian shall be made by school personnel. Persons who, in good faith, gives or fails to give notice pursuant to law shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give such notice.

3. School Based intervention

a. Upon a student being identified as a truant, the Principal, or Assistant Principal or designee(s) shall schedule a meeting with the parent or legal guardian to review and evaluate the reasons for the truancy. The meeting shall be held within ten (10) school days after the student is identified as a truant. Should such parent or other person decline to attend the meeting that fact shall be documented and the meeting shall be held.

b. As part of the overall intervention process the Principal or Assistant Principal or designee(s) shall coordinate services with and referrals of truant students to community agencies providing child and family services.

c. Upon a student being identified as a truant and prior to considering a referral to the planning and placement team (PPT), intervention efforts should assure that all resources available within the context of regular education (mainstream) have been comprehensively explored and utilized as appropriate to address the truancy behavior.

d. Provided that the provisions of section c above have been satisfied, any truant student who has fifteen (15) unexcused absences in any school year shall promptly be referred to a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) in order that the PPT may determine whether or not a handicapping condition is the primary cause of the truancy behavior. In the absence of current school based educational evaluations, and upon recommendation of the PPT school based educational evaluations shall be conducted to assess the appropriateness of the student's educational program. For the purposes of this section such evaluations shall be considered current if completed within the preceding year prior to the date of the court referral.

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Absences Generally (continued)

4. Court Referral (Students Ages Five (5) Through Eighteen (18) inclusive)

a. The Superintendent of Schools may file a written complaint with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters for each student alleged to be a truant. (NOTE: Juveniles under the age of eleven (11) are generally not considered to be of sufficient maturity to make reasoned and independent judgments concerning school attendance. Generally, it is reasonable to presume that the truancy can be attributed to the actions of a parent. Therefore, referrals concerning students under the age of eleven (11) should be given special consideration. Representatives of the school district, Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Juvenile Court should jointly review such cases to determine appropriate action.)

b. The Superintendent of Schools shall file a written complaint with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters for each student alleged to be a truant if the parent/guardian fails to cooperate with school officials in determining and eliminating the cause of the truancy. (NOTE: Juveniles under the age of eleven (11) are generally not considered to be of sufficient maturity to make reasoned and independent judgments concerning school attendance. Generally, it is reasonable to presume that the truancy can be attributed to the actions of a parent. Therefore, referrals concerning students under the age of eleven (11) should be given special consideration. Representatives of the school district, Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Juvenile Court should jointly review such cases to determine appropriate action.)

c. The Superintendent of Schools shall file a written Family With Service Needs complaint with the Superior Court for juvenile Matters if the parent or legal guardian of a child identified as a truant 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.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of Parents

10-198a Policies and procedures Concerning Truants (revised PA 95-304)

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, Truancy in General

10-202e-f Policy on Dropout Prevention and Grant Program

10-221 (b) Board of Education to Prescribe Rules Campbell vs. New Milford,
193 Conn. 93 (1984)

46b-149 Family with Service Needs