

Students

School Attendance and Truancy

Connecticut state law requires parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. The responsibility for regular attendance rests with the students' parents, guardians or with the students themselves when they become of legal age.

In order for students to develop to their full potential, the Board of Education deems it essential that students attend school on a regular basis. The learning experiences that occur in the classroom are considered to be meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Time lost from class tends to be irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction.

Excused Absence

The Board believes a student should not be absent from school without the parents' knowledge and consent, therefore verification of an absence should be in writing by parent or guardian.

An absence shall be considered "excused" when a child does not attend school due to:

- A. Illness or injury,
- B. Death in the immediate family,
- C. Religious obligation,
- D. Court appearance,
- E. School sponsored activity,
- F. An emergency, or
- G. Other exceptional circumstances. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child's parent or guardian. All other absences with or without written explanation shall be considered unexcused.

Unexcused Absence

Board policy with respect to unexcused absences stresses prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences. The schools will make all reasonable efforts to keep parents and students informed as to attendance problems and will make all reasonable efforts to help students improve their attendance when such improvement is warranted. Only when all local resources are exhausted is referral to legal authorities recommended.

Release of Student during School Day

The Board recognizes the need for students to be in school for the full instructional day. It is encouraged that early dismissal should be requested only in emergency or unusual situations.

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School Attendance: Absences and Excuses

Release of Student during School Day (continued)

Request for release of a student during the school day originating outside the schools must be handled by the administration to ensure maximum provisions for the safety and welfare of the student.

Dismissal before the normal end of the school day, the parent/guardian must sign the student out.

Students who become ill during the school day may be excused by the school nurse, and transportation home will be arranged by the parent.

Truancy

The Board of Education strives to provide each child with a continuing education which will prepare the student to assume adult roles and responsibilities. Therefore, regular attendance and punctuality are expected from all children enrolled in our schools. By statute, responsibility for assuring that students attend school rests with the parent(s) or other person having control of the child. Every effort must be made to keep absences and tardiness to a minimum. To assist parent(s) and others in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education directs the administration to develop regulations regarding truancy.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-184 Duties of parents.
 10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general.
 10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.
 Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984).
 10-184 Duties of parents (re mandatory schooling for children age seven or older and under sixteen years, inclusive).
 10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance. Hearing. Appeal to state board. Establishment of hearing board.
 10-233a-10-233f Inclusive, re: suspend, expel removal of pupils.
 10-233c Suspension of pupils.
 10-233d Expulsion of pupils.
 State Board of Education Regulations

Policy adopted: August 14, 1995

NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 New Haven, Connecticut

Students

School Attendance: Absences and Excuses

Student Absences and Excuses

Attendance at school every day is expected at New Haven Public Schools. Academic achievement is directly related to a student's attendance.

Positive attitudes regarding punctuality and attendance should be encouraged. Student tardiness and absenteeism are kept by the school and placed on the student permanent record.

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children attend school each day. In the cases of illness or other unavoidable circumstances that may prevent your child from attending school, parents are expected to contact the school each day. In the case of a long-term illness, parents must notify the school immediately in order that a special program of instruction can be developed. If a student cuts classes or school without permission the school will call home and take appropriate disciplinary action.

Parents will be contacted by the school each day a student is absent if notification from parent is not received.

A student may be retained in a grade with an absence of twenty or more days from school. An appeal process has been established to consider students with extenuating circumstances. Please contact your school for further information.

High School Attendance Procedures

When a student is absent, the following procedure will be adhered to:

1. Parents will be called each day that a student is absent from school.
2. All students who reach a total of five (5) absences will be placed on academic probation, and the parent will be notified in writing.
3. After the tenth (10th) absence, the student will have a formal hearing by a school attendance committee to determine course credit status. A letter will be sent home notifying parents they must contact the school to attend the hearing.

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School Attendance: Absences and Excuses

High School Attendance Procedures (continued)

4. If parents do not contact the school and the student reaches fifteen (15) absences, the school will send the parents a letter notifying them they will have 5 school days to contact the school for a formal hearing. If the parent does not comply, the student will be subject to administrative withdrawal if over 16 years old and lose all course credits if under 16 years old.
5. Extenuating circumstances such as illness, death in the family, fire, etc. Will be recognized by the New Haven Board of Education as excuses for a student to be absent from school. Any other absence will be deemed an unexcused absence.
6. All documentation and communication will be reviewed by the attendance committee to determine whether or not course credit is to be withheld.
7. Total course credit will be withheld unless the review committee determines otherwise.
8. The student and parent will be notified in writing when course credit is withheld.
9. Student attendance will be reviewed regularly after the formal hearing.
10. The student and parents will have the right to appeal the school attendance committee's decision to a central attendance review board. A written letter of appeal must be received in the principal's office within five (5) days of the school committee's decision. In the case of seniors, written appeal must be submitted two (2) weeks prior to graduation.

Monitoring of Absences and Filing of Family with Services Needs (FWSN) Complaints

Legislation requires the following actions:

1. The adoption and implementation of policies and procedures concerning truants and habitual truants by the Board of Education.
2. The legislation applies to students in grades K-8. However, the New Haven Public School will apply these procedures in grades K-12 as part of the dropout prevention program.

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School Attendance: Absences and Excuses

Monitoring of Absences and Filing of Family with Services Needs (FWSN) Complaints (continued)

3. **Truant** - a student in a public or private school who has four unexcused absences in any one month or ten unexcused absences in any school year.

Habitual Truant - a child who has 20 unexcused absences from school in any school year.
4. A meeting must be held with the parent or guardian of any child who is truant within ten (10) school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in a month or tenth unexcused absence in a school year. The reasons for the students' truancy will be reviewed and evaluated at the meeting. At this time the Superintendent may file a written complaint with the Superior Court Juvenile Matters for a Family with Service Needs (FWSN).
5. The school must coordinate services and referrals with community agencies.
6. All K-8 parents or guardian must be notified of the policy annually at the beginning of the school year. All new students during the year will also receive notification of this policy upon enrollment. This notification will also state the parent's obligation pursuant to C.G.S. 10-184.
7. Annually, at the beginning of the school year, or upon enrollment, the school must obtain a phone number to contact the parent/guardian during the school day.
8. The school must have a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of children in grades K-8. This system shall provide that whenever a child fails to report to school and the parents have not notified the school that a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or guardian will be made.
9. Each month a letter is sent from the Superintendent to the parents or guardians of all truant students urging parents to meet with the school staff to devise a plan to help the student maintain regular attendance. The letter warns parents that a FWSN referral will be made on all habitual truants.

Students**School Attendance: Absences and Excuses****Monitoring of Absences and Filing of Family with Services Needs (FWSN) Complaints (continued)**

10. The Superintendent shall file a written complaint pursuant to C.G.S. 46b-149 for each habitual truant enrolled in the schools under his/her jurisdiction.
11. A Family with Service Needs (FWSN) referral will be made on all habitual truants on the form attached. As stated on the form, a PPT will be held to determine the appropriateness of the educational program.
12. The New Haven Public School must annually report to SDE on school-by-school basis the number of students enrolled in grades K-8 who are habitual truants. This report will also include gender, ethnicity, and the number of unexcused absences.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants.

Regulation approved: August 14, 1995

NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Haven, Connecticut

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER C.G.S. 10-184

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Connecticut law requires that the New Haven Public Schools provide you with this written notice of your obligations under Connecticut General Statute 10-184. This law provides that each parent or other person having control of a child seven years of age and older and under sixteen years of age is obligated to cause the child to attend school regularly during the hours and terms school is in session, unless such parent or other person shows that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction. Connecticut General Statute 10-185 provides that each day's failure to comply with these requirements is a separate offense, punishable by a \$25.00 fine.

Regular student attendance is essential to the educational process. Any child, even under age seven who is attending the New Haven Public Schools will be subject to the school district policies, including the attendance policy. So that we may seek to inform you if your child is absent without explanation, the law also requires that we obtain from you a telephone number or other means of contacting you during the school day. Please meet this obligation by filling out and promptly returning the form below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

(Principal)

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FATHER

MOTHER

Mother's Name (please print)

Address

Address

Home Phone

Home Phone

Father's Name (please print)

Work Address

Work Address

Name(s) of student(s):

Work Phone

Work Phone

Emergency Phone #1

Emergency Phone #2

(Relative, Friend, Neighbor)

Dear _____,

As you know, children must attend school on a regular basis in order to be successful. There is a compulsory school attendance law in Connecticut and parents and guardians are legally responsible for keeping their children in school. I'm sure that you want your child to do well in school and therefore, I'm writing to ask for your help. _____ has _____ unexcused absences from school. You have already received information from the _____ Public Schools explaining the attendance policy. This policy states that if a student is absent for more than twenty (20) days, he/she may not be promoted to the next grade.

This is serious problem and we all need to work together to solve it. Please contact _____, _____ immediately for an appointment. _____ will work with you and your child to improve school attendance.

Please call _____ immediately at _____.

Respectfully,