

2017-18 Truancy and Chronic Absence Policy

Whereas the Ohio Department of Education and the School believe that regular school attendance is an important ingredient in students' academic success. Excessive absences interfere with students' progress in mastering knowledge and skills necessary to graduate from high school prepared for higher education and the workforce. To support academic success for all students, the School will partner with students and their families to identify and reduce barriers to regular school attendance. Accordingly, the following policy is effective immediately:

I. School Strategies to Reduce Habitual Truancy and Chronic Absence:

The School will utilize a continuum of strategies to reduce student absence including but not limited to:

- ⌚ Notification of student absence to parent or guardian;
- ⌚ Development and implementation of an absence intervention plan, which may include supportive services for students and families;
- ⌚ Counseling;
- ⌚ Parent education and parenting programs and mediation;
- ⌚ Intervention programs available through juvenile authorities; and
- ⌚ Referral for truancy if applicable.

II. Definition of Truancy and Excessive Absences:

A. The definition of an "habitual truant" is as follows:

1. Absent 30 or more consecutive hours without a legitimate excuse;
2. Absent 42 or more hours in one month without a legitimate excuse;
3. Absent 72 or more hours in one year without a legitimate excuse.

B. Habitual truancy also includes "excessive absences" as follows:

1. Absent 38 or more hours in one school month with or without a legitimate excuse;
2. Absent 65 or more hours in one school year with or without a legitimate excuse.

III. Truancy is Not Criminal:

1. Students cannot be expelled or suspended (out of school) for being truant (beginning July 1, 2017);

2. The School will take several steps to engage the student and family before filing a complaint with juvenile court (including parental notification, an absence intervention team and an absence intervention plan detailed below)
3. A complaint cannot be filed until 61 days after failed implementation of an absence intervention plan or unless; or
4. If a child has been absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours or 42 or more hours in a month during the implementation of an absence intervention plan.

IV. Student Discipline

1. The School may permit students to make up missed work due to suspensions;
2. The School will not apply any remaining part or all of a suspension to the following school year, but the superintendent may require a student to participate in community service or an alternative consequence for the number of hours equal to the time left on the suspension.

V. EMIS Reporting Changes

1. When the School notifies a parent when a student has excessive absences;
2. When a child has been absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in one school year;
3. When a child has been adjudicated an unruly child for being a habitual truant violates the court order regarding that adjudication;
4. When an absence intervention plan has been implemented for a child.

VI. Excessive Absences

When a student is excessively absent from school the following will occur:

1. The School will notify the student's parents in writing within seven days of the triggering absence;
2. The student will follow the district's plan for absence intervention; and
3. The student and family may be referred to community resources.

VII. Habitually Truant

When a student is habitually truant, the following will occur:

- A. Within seven days of the triggering absence, the School will do the following:
 1. Select members of the absence intervention team;

2. Make three meaningful attempts to secure the student's parent or guardian's participation on the absence intervention team.

B. Within 10 days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team;

C. Within 14 days after the assignment of the team, the School will develop the student's absence intervention plan;

D. If the student does not make progress on the plan within 61 days or continues to be excessively absent, the School will file a complaint in the juvenile court.

VIII. Absence Intervention Team

The School shall utilize the "absence intervention team" when a student is deemed habitually truant. The purpose of the absence intervention team is to establish a student-centered absence intervention plan for every child who has been deemed habitually truant by identifying specific barriers and solutions to attendance. The team is cross-sector and ideally includes participation of the student and the parent. This requirement is aimed at breaking down barriers to attendance without filing criminal complaints against the student in juvenile court.

Membership of each team should vary based on the needs of each individual student, but each team **MUST** include:

1. A representative from the school;
2. Another representative from the school who has a relationship with the child;
3. The child's parent (or parent's designee) or the child's guardian, custodian, guardian ad litem or temporary custodian.

The school may consult or partner with public and nonprofit agencies to provide assistance as appropriate to students and their families to reduce absences.

Information: The Ohio Department of Education will be releasing technical guidance to assist with implementation requirements required by House Bill 410. Additional questions and comments can be sent to school_improvement@ohio.education.gov

