

Students

Attendance and Truancy

Connecticut state law requires parents to have their children to 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. A phone call verifying the student's absence must be made by 9:30 a.m. to be followed by a written note of excuse on the first day the student returns to school.

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.

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Attendance and Truancy (continued)

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.

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 must be requested in writing.

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

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 has developed the following policy. The administrators of K-12 schools shall:

1. Annually notify parents or other person having control of each child enrolled in a grade from kindergarten to twelve in writing of the obligations of the parent pursuant to student attendance (C.G.S. 10-184).
2. Obtain from each parent or other persons having control of an enrolled child a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school day.
3. Establish a system for monitoring student's individual absences/tardies.
4. Make a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone the parent(s) or other such person(s) whenever a child fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent or other person is aware of the student's absence.

Students

Attendance and Truancy

Truancy (continued)

5. Identify a student as “truant” when the student has four (4) unexcused absences in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in any school year.
6. Hold a meeting with the appropriate school personnel and the parent or other person having control of the child identified as a "truant" within ten (10) days of such designation to review the reasons for the truancy and evaluate the situation.
7. Referral will be made to a child study team to, determine whether or not an educational evaluation is appropriate, prior to a written complaint to Superior Court.
8. File a written complaint, by the Superintendent, with the Superior Court alleging that the acts or omissions of any 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 identified as “truant” fails:
 - a. to attend the required meeting to evaluate why the child’s truant or
 - b. to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem.
9. Provide for the coordination of services and shall refer enrolled students who are truants to community agencies providing child and family services.

A student who is identified as “truant” may be subject to the following consequences:

- A. Promotion to the next grade may be contingent upon the student successfully completing a summer school program
- B. The student may be retained in the same grade in order to acquire the skills necessary for promotion to the next grade level

Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to subdivision (4) above, 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.

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Attendance and Truancy

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

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

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised 1995 - PA 95-304)

10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules

Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984).

Policy adopted: September 10, 2007

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Thomaston, Connecticut

Students

High School Attendance

Excused Absences and Truancy

Attendance

Connecticut State law requires parents to make sure that their child between the ages of 5 to 18 attends school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor to student success; thus, any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism and improve student performance while providing students the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed due to a legitimate absence.

Absence

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school (283-3030). If staffing and time permit, the school will call the parent/guardian to check on the absence. A student should not be absent from school without the parents' knowledge and consent. **Written explanations of all absences are required and shall be submitted to the main office for each student on the day that the student returns to school. The final decision as to whether an absence is excused or unexcused rests with the school administration.**

Verified and Unverified

Attendance is required in every class every day. For the purpose of this policy, ALL absences, verified and unverified will count toward the maximum number allowable. Acceptable reasons for school absences are:

1. Illness – Any prolonged or frequent illness which causes a student to be absent from class more than five (5) times consecutively or more than five (5) times in one marking period must be confirmed by a physician.
2. Religious holidays.
3. Court appearance/probation appointments with documents provided.
4. College visits/interviews and other post-secondary plans with verification provided.
5. Bereavement (Death in the family).
6. Absences as approved by the administration.

Students

High School Attendance

Excused Absences and Truancy (continued)

Suspension in and out of school, school field trips, verified college visits and religious holidays will not count toward the maximum allowable number of absences.

All absences will be justified according to the established categories listed above.

Any student accumulating ten (10) absences from a half year class or twenty (20) absences from a full year class will have reached the maximum allowable number of absences and will receive a grade no higher than F+ (55) for that course.

A warning letter will be sent to a parent/guardian after the fifth absence from a half-year course and after the tenth absence from a full year course. If the absences do not diminish the Principal may convene a study team meeting to discuss the situation and recommend corrective action. The parent may request a meeting with the school administration at any time to discuss the attendance issue.

Family trips and vacations will not generally be regarded as reasons for exceeding the absence limitation. Parents are strongly discouraged from scheduling vacations during times when school is in session.

Procedures

Recognizing that absences from class reflect negatively upon the quality of education received by students, the following procedures are established:

1. Parents are required to call the school each morning by 9:30 a.m. to indicate the absence of their child.
2. Parents are required to provide a written explanation for each absence due upon the student's return to school. Notes will be retained on file should an appeal be necessary.
3. Any student who is absent from a class (20) days for any full year course or (10) days during any half-year course will receive a grade no higher than F+ (55) for that course. The administration will notify the parent by certified mail that the maximum number of days has been reached.

Students

High School Attendance

Excused Absences and Truancy (continued)

Make-up Work

It is the student's responsibility in grades 7-12 to complete work missed due to absences. The following guideline will be considered:

- A. Fewer than five (5) absences from school or a class – the student will have one (1) week to complete the work.
- B. Five (5) consecutive or greater absences from school or a class – the student will have two (2) weeks to complete the work.
- C. Homework requests may be made to the Guidance Department (ext. 311) on the second day a student is absent.

Dismissal

No student will be allowed to leave the school for any reason without the approval of the administration or dismissal due to illness by the school nurse only. Any student who leaves the building without permission is subject to suspension.

1. **Dismissal from school for special appointments** (doctors, dentists, college visits): The student must provide the office with a note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the dismissal. The student must bring the note to the administrator who validates the note and explains the procedure for dismissal. Students will only be dismissed for reasons listed under the excused absences. Parents are strongly urged not to schedule appointments during school hours. Students may not be dismissed from school without permission of the main office.
2. **No student will be dismissed from school without a written note from a parent or guardian.**

Late Arrival to School

Students obtaining late arrival privileges must be in a senior homeroom.

If an eligible student has a study hall the first period of the day, the student will be permitted to arrive for 8:28 AM. Students may not arrive later the 8:28 AM.

In order to be academically eligible for late arrival, students are not allowed any failing grades, incomplete grades, or grades below a "C-" average for the previous quarter report card in the current academic year.

A complete and approved late arrival form must be on file in the main office, signed by a parent or guardian. Signed forms are due by _____.

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High School Attendance

Excused Absences and Truancy (continued)

Class Cuts

A cut occurs when a student chooses not to attend an assigned class/study hall without prior permission of the teacher, nurse, or administrator.

Class cuts will be recorded in the attendance taking process and will count toward the maximum allowable number of absences per course.

Class cuts will result in the following discipline:

The first class cut will be handled by the classroom teacher. A referral form will be filled out by the teacher and handed in to the administrator and a detention will be issued.

The second class cut will be handled by the classroom teacher. A referral form will be filled out by the teacher and handed in to the administrator and one in-school suspension will be issued.

The third class cut will be handled by submittal of a completed referral form to the administrator, who will assign the student two in-school suspensions.

Any further cutting will result in additional days of suspension, to be determined by the administrator. After two days of suspension, a conference will be held with administration and the parent to review the student's attendance record and to establish a plan of remediation.

NOTE: Students who cut a class may lose school privileges. The duration of this action will vary depending on the number of classes cut. School privileges that are subject to loss include but are not limited to:

1. Attending extracurricular activities such as dances, field trips and sporting events.
2. Late Arrival (Seniors)
3. Café (Study hall/Free-time)
4. Parking privileges

Students

High School Attendance

Excused Absences and Truancy (continued)

Tardiness Policy

Tardiness to School

Tardiness to school interferes with the learning of the student and disrupts the learning environment for others. Seniors with late arrival privileges who are not in homeroom by 8:28 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Students that are not in their 1st class by 7:37 a.m. are considered tardy.

Students who are tardy to school must sign in at the office and receive a late pass to class.

A student discovered on school grounds, who has not reported to their 1st class, homeroom or the office, will also be considered tardy.

Excessive tardiness will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension and referral to administration. A tardy to school is only considered as being excused when the reason for the tardy falls under the excused absence criteria and is verified by a note.

Chronic tardiness will result in the loss of student parking privileges.

Tardiness to Class and Study Hall

Students are expected to attend all classes and study halls.

An unapproved tardy occurs when the student arrives to class or study hall late without a pass signed by a faculty/staff member, nurse or administrator.

During each course, two unexcused tardies to class will be equal to one absence.

Any unexcused tardy to class in excess of twenty (20) minutes will count as an absence to class.

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Excused Absences and Truancy (continued)

Attendance Review Committee

Upon the tenth (10) absence from any half year course or twentieth (20) absence from any full year course, a student will receive no grade higher than an F+ (55). Parents and/or guardians will be notified via certified mail that their child has exceeded the allotted absences and will be receiving a maximum grade of an F+ for that marking period.

Every parent has a right to a hearing with the Attendance Review Committee regarding any student's failure based upon absences. In order to request a hearing, the parent should contact the school Principal. Parents should bring all documentation and explanations of absences with them to the hearing.

The Attendance Review Committee consists of an administrator, classroom teacher, nurse, and a school counselor.

Decisions of the Attendance Review Committee may be appealed to the Superintendent.

Truancy

Pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes, school superintendents have the authority, and in some cases, the duty to file written complaints with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters alleging that the acts or omissions of a juvenile are such that the juvenile's family constitutes a "Family With Service Needs" (FWSN). This includes juveniles who are truant and habitually truant.

Truancy referral to the court is appropriate only when the school has exhausted all administrative and social service remedies and has reasonable cause to believe that the absenteeism constitutes truancy. In addition to that, referrals must provide documentation of at least 4 days of unexcused absences in one (1) month or ten (10) days during the current school year to meet the definition of truancy, or 20 days during the current school year to meet the definition of habitual truancy.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute (17a-101), the failure by parents or guardians to assure that a child attends school may constitute educational neglect and may be reported to the Department of Children Families (DCF).