

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY MANUAL

SECTION: **5000**
CATEGORY: **Students**
POLICY CODE: **5113.1/Attendance Grades K-8**

ATTENDANCE GRADES K-8

Policy Statement

The Trumbull Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is essential for an effective and productive learning experience. The sequential presentation of school learning requires a continuity of instruction. The maximum benefits for each individual child can be achieved only from participation and interaction in daily activity.

The Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 10-184, 10-186, and 10-210, require students over five (5) and under eighteen (18) years of age to attend school on a regular basis. The primary responsibility for adherence to regular attendance rests with the student's parent/guardian and the individual student. The District will comply with Connecticut State Statutes related to compulsory school attendance.

The Board of Education recognizes that students may occasionally miss school for entirely legitimate reasons. Absences that occur for no legitimate reason or with no notification to the school will warrant appropriate follow-up action by the school.

The Board of Education believes that family vacations should not take place when school is in session.

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, "absence" means an excused absence, unexcused absence, or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the Connecticut State Board of Education. For purposes of this definition, a student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., a field trip), for at least half of the school day.

The Trumbull Board of Education recognizes the importance of early intervention for students exhibiting truancy behavior, and for that purpose distinguishes between "excused absences" and unexcused absences" as follows:

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets the following criteria:

- For absences one (1) through nine (9) in a school year, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation;
- For the tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter in a school year, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons: student illness if verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional; student's observance of a religious holiday; death in the student's family or other emergency

beyond the control of the student's family; mandated court appearance if supported by appropriate additional documentation; the lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends; or extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administrators in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.

A student, age five to eighteen, inclusive, whose parent/guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, as defined in Connecticut General Statutes § 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. In the case of excused absences pursuant to this paragraph, such student and parent/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 student prior to his/her return to school from such period of excused absence.

A student's absence from school shall be considered "unexcused" if it does not meet the criteria to be considered an "excused" absence and if it is not the result of school or District disciplinary action.

Based on the definitions above, a "truant" is a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences in one month, or ten (10) unexcused absences in one year.

Based on the definitions above, a "chronically absent" student is a child who has accumulated a total number of absences at any time during a school year that is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at the school during the school year.

Adopted: 7/9/1985
Revised: 1988, 2/1992, 2/23/1993,
6/1993, 11/22/1994, 12/1997,
11/10/2015, 2/13/2018, 8/28/2018

References

- Connecticut Public Act 17-14, "An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education"
- Connecticut General Statutes §10-184, 10-186, 10-198a, 10-198b, 10-198c, 10-198d, 10-210, 27-103, 46b-149
- Connecticut State Department of Education, "Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention"
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131: Student Standard of Conduct
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6115.1: Protected Prayer
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6173: Homebound and Hospitalized Instruction

Regulations

I. General Regulations for Student Attendance

1. Each school will record and maintain all student attendance and tardiness information.
2. It is the responsibility of a parent/guardian to report his/her child's absence to the school each day by calling the school's office prior to 9:00 a.m. that day by:
 - a) telephoning the school secretary or school nurse;
 - b) e-mailing the school secretary or school nurse; or
 - c) speaking to the school secretary or school nurse in person.
3. Each school will keep close contact with parents/guardians of students having difficulty with attendance and shall make parents/guardians aware of the importance of regular school attendance. Both the home and school should work cooperatively to achieve this end.
4. Each school will record if an absence is excused or unexcused. The principal or school nurse may request additional information regarding a student's absence. A parent/guardian may request reconsideration of the recording of an excused or unexcused absence in accordance with the attendance guidelines of the Connecticut State Board of Education.
5. When an absence occurs, the student will be given sufficient opportunity to make up any missed work. Teachers are not required to provide tutoring for make-up work caused by family vacations when school is in session. If special help or tutoring is needed as a result of such absences, any cost incurred is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, not the District.
6. A student returning to school after a hospitalization must present a note from the physician regarding the hospitalization. The note should also state in detail any physical limitations, treatment programs, or medication changes. A change in his/her Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) may be required upon re-entry to school. Therefore, a full disclosure by the student's physician is necessary to ensure the well-being of the student.

II. Regulations for Determining Truancy

1. The school principal and/or his/her designee will hold a meeting with the parent/guardian of a child who is a "truant" or a "chronically absent" student as defined above. Such meeting will be held no later than ten (10) school days after the student's designation as "truant" or "chronically absent" based upon the definitions articulated earlier in this policy.
2. Whenever a student enrolled in school in grades K-8 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/guardian (or other person having control of the student) is aware of the child's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by the automated calling system, the parent (or such other person) shall be made by the school personnel. Such notice shall include a warning that two (2) unexcused absences from school in a month or five (5) unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs. Persons who, in good faith, give or fail to give

notice 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. An IEP Team meeting will be convened to determine the appropriateness of a special education evaluation of the truant or chronically absent student. In addition, there will be consideration of referral to the school's Early Intervention Team (EIT).
4. The school system will coordinate services with community agencies and referrals of truant and chronically absent students to agencies providing child and family services.
5. The Superintendent may file a written complaint with the Superior Court, Juvenile Matters for a Family with Service Needs when a student is truant or chronically absent. If a parent/guardian having control of a child who is truant or chronically absent fails to attend the meeting with the school principal and/or his/her designee, the school principal shall notify the Superintendent, who shall file, no later than fifteen (15) calendar days after such failure to attend such meeting, a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs.

III. Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention

1. The Board, in compliance with State 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:
 - a) A team for the District must be established when the District chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher.
 - b) A team for a school must be established when the school chronic absenteeism rate is 15 percent or higher.
 - c) A team for either the District or each school must be established when (i) more than one school in the District has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher; or (b) the 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.
2. 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/guardians. Each established attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.
3. The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.
4. The District shall annually report to the Connecticut State Department of Education data pertaining to truant and chronically absent children in schools under its jurisdiction.