

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE/LOSS OF CREDIT

Policy

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.

Regular school attendance is both encouraged and mandated. The primary responsibility for adherence to regular attendance rests with the student's parents/guardians and the individual student. Appropriate legal action will be taken against parents/guardians whose children fail to abide by the Connecticut Compulsory Attendance Law.

The Connecticut General Statutes requires students over five and under eighteen years of age to attend school on a regular basis, unless (1) they graduate from high school or (2) their parents/guardians consent to the youngster leaving school at age seventeen. The student's parent/guardian must appear at the high school to sign a form for withdrawing the student from school. The district will provide the parent/guardian with information about educational options available in the school system and in the community.

Trumbull Public Schools recognizes that students may occasionally miss school or class for legitimate reasons. These reasons, when documented by a parent/guardian/school administration/physician, will be reviewed and may be taken into consideration when a student's absences become excessive.

Excessive absences will warrant appropriate follow-up action by the school and may lead to loss of credit.

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

Adopted: 07/26/88
Approved Revisions: 07/18/89, 11/22/94,
10/08/98, 07/16/02, 09/07/04, 07/14/09,
06/06/12, 9/4/12, 8/6/13

Regulations

The high school attendance policy follows the Response to Intervention (RTI) formula to offer a tiered approach to attendance monitoring and behavior correction. Each time a student reaches the next attendance threshold, more faculty members become involved in informing the student and the parent of the upcoming consequences and changing the student's behavior. The formal notification process will be supplemented with daily calls through an automated calling system to the homes of absent students. In addition, a pattern of absenteeism may trigger a referral to Superior Court as outlined in Connecticut State Statutes 10-198a and 46b 149.

Annually at the beginning of the school year, and upon any enrollment during the school year, parents/guardians will be notified of their obligations pursuant to student attendance (Student handbook, www.trumbullps.org under Trumbull High School).

A. ATTENDANCE

- Communication is essential for success in teaching and learning.
- Student seat time is important to learning.
- Intentionally missing class will incur penalties and affect grade.
- Attendance issues need to be resolved as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours from the student's return to school.
- Attendance will be taken by teachers in each period of the day; however, attendance calls to students' homes will be based upon attendance in the designated official attendance period.

Classroom (period) attendance will be recorded electronically by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to notify his/her teacher when he/she will be absent from class and arrange to make up missed work if the absence has been verified by a parent/guardian to the appropriate house office within 48 hours of the student's return.

B. PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor his/her child's attendance via the District parent portal at www.trumbullps.org, student progress report, report card, and/or contacting the student's house office.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to report his/her child's absence to the school each day by calling the student's house office between 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. and speaking with school staff directly or leaving a message on voice mail. A note must also be brought to the house office by the student upon his/her return. Notes must be both written and signed by a parent/guardian and submitted to the student's house office within 48 hours of the absence. Notes must include the student's name, date(s) of absence, and reason for the absence along with a daytime phone number where a parent/guardian can be reached for verification.

C. ABSENCE

Students will have an absence bank, consisting of both excused/verified and unexcused/unverified absences, which is a set number of absences before credit is lost in a given course. Students will lose credit upon reaching 20 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 11 absences in a half-credit course, or 8 absences in quarter-credit course. Full year physical education courses will follow the half-credit threshold of 11 absences as those classes do not

Regulations cont'd.

meet everyday. School approved trips/activities (field trips, school sports, in-school events) and suspensions/expulsions do not count towards the absence bank limit. Students with profound medical issues will be exempt from this policy if it is so noted on their IEP/Section 504* or Individualized Health Care** Plans. In addition, absences for students who have severe illnesses, whereby a physician requires them to be absent for five (5) or more consecutive days, will have those absences exempted from the absence bank. Those illnesses must be documented by a note from the treating physician verifying that the absence was medically necessary. These notes must also be submitted to the house office and school nurse within 48 hours of the student's return to school. Students who enroll in school after the beginning of the school year will have absences prorated to the time of enrollment.

Excused/Verified Absences from school/class

Absences will be considered excused/verified provided that official documentation is presented to the house office within the previously mentioned 48 hour timeframe.

Absences counted toward a student's absence bank include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Appointments with health professionals that cannot be made outside regular school hours
- Emergency family situations
- Student initiated visit to Guidance
- Personal illness

Absences exempt from a student's absence bank include the following:

- Bus failure (confirmed by the transportation provider)
- College visitations, 2 per year for 11th and 12th graders (documentation from the college)
- Court appearances (documentation from the court clerk or attorney)
- Death in family (documentation verifying relationship)
- Excused/verified visit to school nurse
- Expulsions
- Field trips/athletic events/school sponsored events
- Illness requiring hospitalization (documentation from treating physician)
- Religious observation (documentation from parent for recognized religious holiday)
- Special testing/meetings (AP, PPT/Section 504 etc.)
- Suspensions
- Counselor initiated guidance visits

Students with excused/verified absences from school or class will be given appropriate opportunity to make up class work they have missed in order to complete curriculum requirements. Failure on the part of the student to complete his/her responsibility in making up missed work will impact his/her grade.

Unexcused/Unverified absences from school/class

Unexcused/unverified absences are those which are not reconciled within 48 hours of the absence. An absence which is not reported by a parent/guardian either by phone or note will be considered unexcused/unverified. Class cuts will also count as unexcused/unverified absences. A class cut is defined as any time a student has reported to school but does not report to his/her designated class, and does not have staff permission to be in any other location. Class cuts may

Regulations cont'd.

not be excused/verified by a parent/guardian phone call or note. All unexcused/unverified absences will be counted towards a student's absence bank.

As a result of a class cut or an unexcused/unverified absence, a student will not earn credit for class work/assessments missed and will not be provided makeup privileges. Excessive unexcused/unverified absences and/or class cuts may lead to loss of credit/academic failure in one or more of the student's courses. If class cuts (any unexcused/unverified absence) amount to more than 50% of a student's total absences, he/she will automatically be disqualified from credit recovery. Class cuts are subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the Standard of Conduct policy.

Students who lose credit for a particular course, due to excessive absences, will not be eligible to retake said course in summer school.

D. ABSENCES AND PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Any student who has not reported to school or is not present for at least half of the scheduled school day is considered absent from school. Students who are considered absent from school will not be permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activity (i.e. athletic practice, game, rehearsal, performance, etc.). Coaches and advisors will monitor attendance to ensure compliance with this regulation. Exceptions to this policy will be considered by the Principal or his/her designee only upon receipt of a written request from the parent/guardian and will be handled on an individual basis.

E. TARDY TO CLASS

Students who are tardy (both excused/verified and unexcused/unverified) and miss more than 20% (time) of a class will be marked as absent for the class. This absence will count towards the absence bank, and the excused/verified, unexcused/unverified designation will apply towards determining eligibility for making up work missed. Student tardies that are less than 20 percent (time) of a class will not count towards the absence bank, but will be considered by the appeals board if an appeal for reinstatement of lost credit is made. When students leave school and return to school for any reason, the house office will note the time on the student's pass back to class so it can be recorded properly in accordance with the 20 percent tardy designation. Please see Student Handbook (www.trumbullps.org) under Trumbull High School) for procedures.

F. LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY RELEASE (grades 11 and 12 only)

Students with assigned study halls either Time Slot 1, 7 or 8 will be excused from school with parental permission and completion of necessary documentation. This privilege may be revoked as a result of disciplinary action or academic need/failure.

G. EARLY DISMISSAL

If an early dismissal request is for an excused/verified absence from instructional period(s), the student must submit the written request from a parent/guardian to the house office on or before the day of the request. If the note is not received, the absence will be considered a class cut or an unexcused/unverified absence.

Regulations cont'd.

H. TRUANCY

“Truant” shall mean a student age five to eighteen who has four unexcused (unverified) absences in any one month or ten unexcused (unverified) absences in one school year as defined by Connecticut State Statute 10-198a. Further definition of what constitutes truancy for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Connecticut State Statute 10-198a and State reporting purposes pursuant to subsection © of Section 10-220 can be found in Appendix F. The use of these definitions for State reporting purposes does not preclude districts from using separate definitions of excused and unexcused absences for their internal use, including decisions on promotion/retention, grading and disciplinary action.

Once a student is truant and 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 guardian is aware of the student’s absence, a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian shall be made by school personnel via the automatic calling system.

Assigned school staff will conduct a mandatory meeting with parents/guardians of a student identified as truant in order to review and evaluate the situation. If the parent/guardian fails to attend the required meeting with appropriate school staff or fails to cooperate with the school staff in trying to resolve the problem, the building administrator, in conjunction with the Superintendent’s office, may file a complaint with the Superior Court alleging that the acts or omissions of student identified as “truant” are such that the student’s family is a “family in need of services.”

The District will coordinate services with and referrals of truant students to community agencies, which provide child and family services.

The Board of Education shall annually report to the State Department of Education the total number of students enrolled in grades 9-12, who are habitual truants.

I. LOSS OF CREDIT/APPEALS

The parent/guardian will receive contact in writing from school staff upon a student’s crossing of each attendance threshold. The first contact will be made upon 12 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 5 absences in a half-credit course, or 4 absences in a quarter-credit course. The second contact will be made upon 16 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 8 absences in a half-credit course, or 6 absences in a quarter-credit course. The third contact will be made when a student reaches the limit of 20 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 11 absences in a half-credit course, or 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, which will result in a loss of credit for the course. Please note that for purposes of this policy, physical education courses will be viewed as half-credit courses.

Once a student loses credit in a course, he/she will have the opportunity to provide evidence demonstrating his/her excessive absences were medically or socially (documented religious holidays, death in family, legal, etc.) necessary. Whatever is submitted at this time should be supplemental to any documents that were required as per the current policy of reporting absences within a 48 hour time period after the student has returned from his/her absence. The completed

Regulations cont'd.

appeals packet must be received no later than the last class day of the semester in which credit has been lost, unless otherwise notified.

There will be one non-house-specific appeals board for the school. The appeals board will have five members made up of two regular education teachers, one special education teacher, a guidance counselor and an administrator. This appeals board will review submitted documents in a private meeting, make a decision, and rule on all cases. If class cuts (unexcused/unverified) amount to more than 50% of a student's total absences, he/she will automatically be disqualified for credit recovery. The committee will make their decision solely on the data provided at the time the absences occurred and any pertinent supplemental documents. The committee will review all student academic and attendance records maintained by the district before making a decision. No hearings will be held with parents or students. It is the responsibility of the student/parent-guardian to provide, in writing, a convincing level of evidence to prove there was an overwhelming reason for the great majority of his/her absences. Three of the five committee members must vote for credit recovery for it to pass. The student and parent/guardian will receive a phone call and a letter mailed to the home informing the student of the committee's final decision. No further appeals may be made.

*A student qualifies for Section 504 protection if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities and exhibits such.

**An Individualized Health Care Plan is a temporary accommodation to assist a student during that period of time they need support.

References:

- ◆ Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-184, 10-185 and 10-186
- ◆ Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-198a
- ◆ Connecticut General Statutes, Section 46b-149
- ◆ Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-210
- ◆ Standard of Conduct, Policy Code 5131
- ◆ Concussion and Head Injuries, Policy Code 5141.7
- ◆ Protected Prayer, Policy Code 6115.1

Appendices A – F follow

ATTENDANCE THRESHOLD MONITORING SHEET

Name of Student: _____

Name of Course: _____

Length of Course (circle): Quarter Credit/Half Credit/Full (1) Credit

THRESHOLD 1 NOTIFICATION:

Date/Time of Phone Call: ____ / ____ Name of Parent/Guardian Contacted: _____

Phone Number Dialed: _____ Date Letter Was Mailed: _____

Letter Mailed to the Following Address: _____

Please attach a copy of the letter mailed to this document

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

THRESHOLD 2 NOTIFICATION:

Date/Time of Phone Call: ____ / ____ Name of Parent/Guardian Contacted: _____

Phone Number Dialed: _____ Date Letter Was Mailed: _____

Letter Mailed to the Following Address: _____

Please attach a copy of the letter mailed to this document

Counselor Signature: _____ Date: _____

THRESHOLD 3 NOTIFICATION:

Date/Time of Phone Call: ____ / ____ Name of Parent/Guardian Contacted: _____

Phone Number Dialed: _____ Date Letter Was Mailed: _____

Letter Mailed to the Following Address: _____

Please attach a copy of the letter mailed to this document

Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL
LOSS OF CREDIT WARNING NOTICE

FIRST WARNING

(“First Warning” is generated by 12 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 5 absences in a half-credit course, or 4 absences in a quarter-credit course)

DATE

Dear _____

I am writing to follow up on our conversation by phone on _____ regarding _____’s number of absences in _____ class, period _____. As you know, he/she has passed the first warning threshold for attendance and we now consider him/her to be at risk of losing credit for this course.

An acceptable level of attendance is important for student growth and success, and we provide this early notice in hopes that your child will make the appropriate adjustments to finish this course under the maximum allowed absences before loss of credit. **Loss of credit occurs at 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, 11 absences for a half-credit course, and at 20 absences for a full year (1 credit) course.**

You will receive a second phone call/letter from your child’s guidance counselor if he/she passes the second and final warning threshold for this course. You will receive a final phone call/letter from your child’s house administrator if he/she passes the threshold for loss of credit. At that point, your child will have to retake the course in summer school if he/she meets eligibility requirements, or retake the course the following semester/school year.

You may monitor your child’s attendance on the Parent Portal of Infinite Campus. For instructions on how to access this feature, please visit www.trumbullps.org/thc. We all wish for your child’s success, and we hope this early warning regarding loss of credit will prompt a positive change in his/her attendance in this course.

Sincerely,
Teacher Name
Department
__ House Office

TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL
LOSS OF CREDIT WARNING NOTICE

SECOND AND FINAL WARNING

(“Second Warning” is generated by 16 absences in a full year (1 credit) course, 8 absences in a half-credit course, or 6 absences in a quarter-credit course)

DATE

Dear _____

I am writing to follow up on our conversation by phone on _____ regarding _____’s number of absences in _____ class, period _____. As you know, he/she has passed the **second and final** warning threshold for attendance and we now consider him/her to be at serious risk of losing credit for this course.

An acceptable level of attendance is important for student growth and success, and we provide this second notice in hopes that your child will make the appropriate adjustments to finish this course under the maximum allowed absences before loss of credit. **Loss of credit occurs at 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, 11 absences for a half-credit course, and at 20 absences for a full year (1 credit) course.**

You received the first warning phone call/letter from the teacher of the course on _____. You will receive a final phone call/letter from your child’s house administrator if he/she passes the threshold for loss of credit. Please note that at that time it will be too late for your child to earn credit in this course. At that point, your child must retake the course in summer school if he/she meets eligibility requirements, or retake the course the following semester/school year.

You may monitor your child’s attendance on the Parent Portal of Infinite Campus. For instructions on how to access this feature, please visit www.trumbullps.org/thc. We all wish for your child’s success, and we hope this final warning regarding loss of credit will prompt a positive change in his/her attendance in this course.

Sincerely,

Counselor Name

____ House Guidance

TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL
LOSS OF CREDIT NOTICE

DATE

Dear _____

I am writing to follow up on our conversation by phone on _____ regarding _____'s number of absences in _____ class, period _____. As you know, he/she has met or exceeded the threshold for loss of credit in this course, and he/she is no longer eligible to receive credit for this course.

An acceptable level of attendance is important for student growth and success, and we provided early notice in hopes that your child would make the appropriate adjustments to finish this course under the maximum allowed absences before loss of credit. **Loss of credit occurs at 8 absences in a quarter-credit course, 11 absences for a half-credit course, and at 20 absences for a full year (1 credit) course.** You received the first warning phone call/letter from the teacher of the course on _____. You received the second and final warning phone call/letter your child's guidance counselor on _____.

Please contact your child's guidance counselor to determine whether he/she is eligible for summer school and for information on how to make such arrangements, if possible. If your child is not eligible for summer school, his/her counselor could also arrange for registration for the same course in the next semester/school year.

A form outlining the appeals process for loss of credit has been provided with this letter. It is your child's responsibility to provide all evidence by the posted deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances. Reinstatement of credit is only available under extraordinary documented circumstances, and the decision of the appeals board is final.

Sincerely,
Administrator Name
House Principal
__ House Office

TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE APPEALS FORM

It is the student's and parent/guardian's responsibility to fill out, collect data, and deliver this form to the student's House Office in order to be considered in the appeals process.

Student Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

House Office (circle one): A / B / C

Grade (circle one): 9 / 10 / 11 / 12

Course: _____ Date Submitted: _____

DATE OF ABSENCE	REASON FOR ABSENCE	DOCUMENTATION
	DIRECTIONS: Place only the letter which represents your reason for absence. M= Medical, L= Legal	DIRECTIONS: Write Y or N to indicate whether you have provided evidence attached to this page.

Student Signature _____

Date / /

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date / /

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences
Adopted June 27, 2012**

The following definitions are for use by Connecticut school districts and schools for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a of the Connecticut General Statutes (Policies and procedures concerning truants), and for the purpose of reporting truancy, pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The use of these definitions for state purposes does not preclude districts from using separate definitions of excused and unexcused absences for their internal uses (including decisions on promotion/retention, grading and disciplinary action).

Excused Absences

A student's absence¹ from school shall be considered excused if written documentation² of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten 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:

- 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; and
- 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 (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of 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 (additional documentation required);
 5. the lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
 6. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. the absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- B. the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

Disciplinary Absences

Absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from these definitions.

¹ The Connecticut State Board of Education policy states that "*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' is considered absent.

² Such documentation should include 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. For example, if a student is out sick two consecutive days, that student must submit the appropriate documentation covering both sick days. If a student is out sick two nonconsecutive days, that student must submit the appropriate documentation following each absence. Schools should take steps to allow non-English speaking parents/guardians to submit documentation in their native language.