

STUDENTS

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

Definitions¹

Truant – A “truant” is a child subject to compulsory school attendance^{2,3} and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

Valid cause for absence – A child may be absent from school because of illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the student’s control as determined by the Regional Office or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student.

Chronic or habitual truant – A “chronic or habitual truant” is a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 10 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

Truant minor – A child to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs, and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused.

Truancy

The Regional Office of Education will determine if the student is truant, chronic or habitual truant, or a truant minor. The Regional Superintendent shall direct the appropriate ROE staff to develop diagnostic procedures to be used for identifying the cause(s) of unexcused student absenteeism. The diagnostic procedures shall include, but not be limited to, interviews with the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), and any school official(s) or other people who may have information.⁴

¹ Each district must have a policy describing diagnostic procedures to identify the cause(s) of absenteeism and supportive services and available resources for truants and chronic truants (105 /26-13; 23 Ill. Admin. Code – 1.29 (c). The policy’s definitions are from 105 ILCS 5/26-2a.

² Children ages 7 to 16 years are subject to compulsory attendance with the following exceptions: (1) any child attending a private or parochial school, (2) any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school, (3) any child who is excused for temporary absence by the principal, (4) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (5) any child between 12 and 14 years old while in

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The following supportive services may be offered to truant or chronically truant students:⁵

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Student and/or family counseling
- Information about community agency service

If truancy continues after supportive services have been offered, the Building Principal shall refer the matter to the Regional Superintendent. The Regional Superintendent may call upon the resources of outside agencies, such as the juvenile officer of the local police department or the truant office of the Regional Office of Education of Champaign-Ford Counties. The Regional Superintendent, school district administrators, and teachers shall assist and furnish such information, as they have to aid truant officers.

No punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action shall be taken against a chronic truant for his or her truancy unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.⁶

Absence Notification⁷

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must: (1) upon their child's enrollment, provide telephone numbers to the Building Principal and update them as necessary, and (2) authorize all absences and notify the school in advance or at the time of the child's absence.

If a student is absent without prior authorization by the parent(s)/guardian(s), the Building Principal or a designee shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their child's absence within 2 hours after the first class by telephoning the numbers given.⁸

confirmation classes, and (6) any child absent because the tenets of his or her religion forbid secular activity on a particular day (105 ILCS 5/26-1).

³ A pregnant student is covered by the compulsory school age requirements unless she is unable to attend due to a complication arising from her pregnancy which is certified to the county or district truant officer by a physician (105 ILCS 5/26-1(2)). Home instruction, correspondence courses, or other instruction may be provided to a pregnant student (1) before the birth of the child when the student's

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physician has indicated, in writing, that the student is medically unable to attend regular classroom instruction and (2) for up to 3 months following the child's birth or a miscarriage (105 ILCS 5/10-22.6a).

⁴ 23 Ill. Admin. Code – 1.29(c).

⁵ 23 Ill. Admin. Code. – 1.29 (c). The School Code references to dropout prevention include: 105 ILCS 5/26-3a (regional superintendent activities and annual report); 105ILCS 5/10-20.25a (annual report by school boards); and 105 ILCS 5/1A-4(E) (State Board of Education report).

⁶ 105 ILCS 5/26-12-12;23 Ill. Admin. Code – 1.29 (c)

⁷ These notifications are required only for children enrolled in kindergarten through 8th grade (105 ILCS 5/26-3b).

⁸ State law requirements are met whether or not there is any answer at the telephone number(s) given. Further, State law requirements are met if the notification is given to a household member of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), provided the member is at least 10 years of age (105 ILCS 5/26-3b).