

Rhea County Department of Education



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Rhea County Truancy-Discipline Board

Our main goal is to make sure that students are learning to the best of their ability. To learn, students must be in school and have a safe learning environment. If they are under the influence of nicotine or other vape products, they are not focused. To address the growing problem of chronic absenteeism and vaping by students, we began a new tiered intervention plan last year with programs that will connect families to the schools and can also provide needed resources to help students attend school. We will continue with those programs for the 2024-2025 school year.

Addressing Attendance

The Progressive Truancy Plan offers a three-tiered approach to help families and students who are facing chronic absenteeism. At each tier, there's a different action or support.

Tier 1 applies to all students and includes school-based incentives for good attendance. Parents/guardians of students who accumulate 3 unexcused absences will be contacted via BrightArrow with a reminder of School Rules, District Policies, and State Law.

Tier 2 begins after a student has accrued five unexcused absences. A message via BrightArrow with a reminder of School Rules, District Policies, and State Law will be sent.

When a student reaches eight unexcused absences, a district level meeting is set. Parents and student must meet with the Rhea County Truancy-Discipline Board at Central Office on set date and time. This meeting reiterates the importance of attending school as well as the punitive measures of Saturday School. Student services from local juvenile court services will be made available, but not limited to: Juvenile Justice Reform, Department of Children's Services, and U-Turn Programs. An Attendance Contract will be completed by the student and parent.

For Tier 3, when students have accrued ten unexcused absences, we have partnered with Judge Jace Cochran to ensure laws written to make sure students attend school and make sure parents get them

to school are followed. Efforts will be made to protect our students from any abuse situations or neglect. We need to do what is best for our students and families. A petition to appear in Juvenile Court will be issued.

Addressing the use of Vaped by Students

In an effort to eliminate vaping among our students, we are using the **American Lung Association's In-Depth Program** which stands for Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health teaches students about nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and how to kick the unhealthy addiction. Completion of this program will be required on the first vaping offense by the student. The parent and child must complete it on the second offense. First-Time Offenders will appear before the Truancy/Discipline Board. On the Second and Third Offense, the student and parent will be issued a summons to Juvenile Court.

Other School Issued Citations, such as unruly, will also require an appearance before this Board and if deemed appropriate, a petition will be filed for Juvenile Court.