

Truancy

North Canaan Elementary School's policy on student truancy shall stress early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for students. Referral to legal authorities normally shall be made only when local resources are exhausted. For purposes of implementing this policy and for reporting purposes regarding truancy, North Canaan School will utilize the State Board of Education approved definitions of "excused", "unexcused" and "disciplinary" absences.

"Truant" shall mean a student age five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four unexcused absences in any one month, or ten unexcused absences in one school year.

"In attendance" shall mean a student 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.

"Chronically absent child" is an enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

"Absence" means an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to CGS 10-198b.

"District chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year.

"School chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

Remediation of Truancy

School personnel shall seek cooperation from parents or other persons having control of such child and assist them in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations which will detail the following school district obligations under the district's truancy policy.

1. Notify parents annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.
2. Obtain telephone numbers for emergency record cards or other means of contacting parents or other persons having control of the child during the school day.
3. Establish a system to monitor student attendance.
4. Make a reasonable effort by telephone and by mail to notify parents or other persons having control of the child, enrolled in grades one through eight, inclusive, when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previous approval or other indication to

denote parents are aware of the absence. (Note: Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to this section 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.)

5. Identify a student as "truant" when the student accumulates four unexcused absences in any month or ten in a school year.
6. Identify a student as "chronically absent" when the student accumulates 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.
7. Appropriate school staff meet with parents of a child identified as truant or chronically absent to review and evaluate the situation, within ten days of such designation.

Students so identified may be subject to:

- (a) retention in the same grade to acquire necessary skills for promotion or retention.
 - (b) a requirement to complete a summer school program successfully before being promoted to the next grade.
8. When a petition is filed, an educational evaluation of the truant student shall be done by appropriate school personnel if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
 9. Provide coordination of services and refer "truants" to community agencies that provide child and family services.
 10. If in existence, refer the child to the children's probate court truancy clinic.

The Board, on or before 8/15/18, shall implement a truancy intervention model identified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as identified by the Commissioner of Education. The intervention models must also address the needs of students with disabilities. Parents or other persons having control of each child shall be notified of such truancy model. (Note: The SDE is required to identify these effective truancy intervention models by 8/15/18.)

The Board of Education, in compliance with statute, requires the establishment of attendance review teams when chronic absenteeism rates in the District meet the following circumstances:

1. A District team must be established when the District's chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher.
2. A school team must be established when the school chronic absenteeism rate is 15 percent or higher.

3. A team for either the District or each school must be established when (a) more than one school in the District has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher or (b) a 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.

The membership of attendance review teams may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school counselors, school social workers, teachers, chronically absent children, parents or guardians of chronically absent children, and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants.

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 or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available. Such plan must include the means for collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance, truancy and chronic absenteeism. The data must be disaggregated by school district, school grades and subgroups such as race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free and reduced priced lunches, students whose primary language is not English, and students with disabilities.

The District shall annually include in information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the District that submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

The Principal or his/her designee of any elementary or middle school located in a town/city designated as an alliance district may refer to the children's truancy clinic established by the Probate Court serving the town/city, a parent/guardian with a child defined as a truant or who is at risk of becoming a truant. An attendance officer or a police officer shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent/guardian.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents. (as amended by PA 98-243, PA 00-157 and PA 18-15)

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA 00-157, P.A. 11-136 and PA 16-147)

10-198b State Board of Education to define "excused absence," "unexcused absence," and "disciplinary absences"

10-198c Attendance review teams (as amended by PA 17-14)

10-198d Chronic absenteeism (as amended by PA 18-182)

10-198e Identification of truancy identification models (as amended by PA 18-182)

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

45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)

10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)

10-202e f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.

10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules. *Campbell v New Milford*, 193 Conn 93 (1984).

Action taken by the State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define "attendance."

Action taken by the State Board of Education on June 27, 2012, to define "excused" and "unexcused" absences.

Adopted: March 14, 2013

Revised: December 8, 2020

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

North Canaan, Connecticut

Truancy**Unexcused Absences/Truancy**

In accordance with Board policy regarding truancy (unexcused absences), the following regulations pertain:

1. Twenty Absence Limit. No student may receive course credit for a full year course after having been absent from that course more than twenty (20) class periods during the school year. These absences will be pro rated for other than full year courses and for courses meeting other than five (5) periods per week. All absences in a class will be counted except those incurred while a student participates in school-sponsored activities and/or essential administrative business.

2. Waiver of Policy. A student who has accumulated more absences than allowed by the policy, but who feels that the situation warrants special consideration, may appeal to the administration for a waiver increasing the number of allowable absences for that particular student. At the discretion of the administration, the parent may be requested to appear at the hearing to verify the legitimacy of the appeal.

Waivers are to be applied in a systemic manner. The administrator will consider all approved absences and any extenuating circumstances and render an impartial judgment.

3. Student Responsibilities. Students are responsible for regular attendance in all classes to benefit from continuity of instruction, sequential presentation of material, class interaction, and the attendant self discipline and responsibility.

It is a student responsibility to have absences approved and notify his/her teachers by presenting approval verification at the next class meeting.

4. Counselor Responsibilities. The guidance counselor will arrange a meeting within ten (10) days of the fourth unexcused absence in a month or the tenth unexcused absence during the school year.

5. Administrative Responsibilities. Whenever a child enrolled in school, ages five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive, unless such child has either graduated from high school or withdrawn with written parental/guardian permission at ages sixteen or seventeen 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 having control of the child), is aware of the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or such other person shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of the school Principal.

The school administration will make early concentrated efforts to prevent and remedy truancy in its beginning stages. These efforts will include the following:

A. For the student's first unexcused absence from a course which results in grade reduction, the administrator will:

- (1) Confer with the student.
- (2) Inform the parent by phone and by mail.
- (3) Arrange for the student to meet with his/her guidance counselor if the situation warrants.

B. For the second and third unexcused absence and for the third unapproved absence thereafter, the administrator will:

- (1) Notify the parent by phone and by mail.
- (2) Confer with the student.
- (3) Enforce disciplinary measures or arrange for referral services as appropriate. This may include referral to the student assistance team (SAT) or other student assistance programs.

C. The school will have the appropriate staff member(s) arrange a meeting with the parent (or other person having control) of the child who is truant within ten (10) school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in one month or tenth unexcused absence in one school year. At this meeting a designated staff shall coordinate services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services.

The Superintendent of Schools shall bring the child's case to Superior Court under the Families with Service Needs law if the parent (or other person having control fails to):

- 1) attend the required meeting to evaluate why the child is truant, or
- 2) cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem.

D. At the beginning of each new school year, any student who has had twenty or more unexcused absences will be identified as an "at risk student" and monitored by appropriate staff. A letter will be sent to parents, and the school counselor will meet with the student to discuss the importance of regular attendance.

6. Truancy Intervention Model

The District, on or before 8/15/18, will implement a truancy intervention model, identified by the State Department of Education (SDE) for any school within the District that has a disproportionately high rate of truancy, as determined by the Commissioner of Education. (Parents shall be notified of such intervention model.) Such models shall also address the needs of students with disabilities.

Chronic Absenteeism

An attendance review team shall be established when chronic absenteeism rates in the District or at individual schools in the District meet the following circumstances:

1. A District team must be established when the district chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher;
2. A school team must be established when the school's chronic absenteeism rate is 15 percent or higher.
3. A team for either the district or each school must be established when (a) more than one District school has a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher or (b) the District's chronic absenteeism rate is 10 percent or higher and one or more District schools have a school chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or higher.

The membership of attendance review teams may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, chronically absent children, parents or guardians of chronically absent children, and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants.

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 or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available. Such plan must include the means for collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance, truancy and chronic absenteeism. The data must be disaggregated by school district, school grades and subgroups such as race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free and reduced priced lunches, students whose primary language is not English, and students with disabilities.

The District will include information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the District that is submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

For Alliance Districts:

The principal or his/her designee of any elementary or middle school district may refer to the children's truancy clinic established by the Probate Court serving the town/city, a parent/guardian with a child defined as a truant or who is at risk of becoming a truant. (An attendance officer or a police officer shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent/guardian.)

Tardiness to School

Continued tardiness by a student is a serious problem. Students are expected to be in their places, ready for work, at the beginning of every school day.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents.

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants. (Revised by PA 95-304 and PA 00-157, PA 11-136 and PA 16-147)

10-198b State Board of Education to define "excused absence," "unexcused absence," and "disciplinary absences"

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10-199 through 10 202 Attendance, truancy in general.

10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.

10-22(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)

45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as amended by PA 15-225)

46b-149 Family with Service Needs.

Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984)

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Regulation approved:

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION
North Canaan, Connecticut