

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

I. Compulsory Attendance Ages

Under Ohio law, children between the ages of 6 and 18 are of compulsory school age. Every child of compulsory school age must attend a school, which conforms to the Minimum Standards prescribed by the State Board of Education until one of the following occurs.

- 1. The child receives a diploma granted by the Board or other governing authority indicating such student has successfully completed all State and local requirements.
- 2. The child receives an age and schooling certificate.
- 3. The child is excused from school under standards adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Ohio law.

The parent/guardian of any child who is of compulsory school age must send such child to school unless he/she is exempt as listed above.

II. Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance

A child of compulsory school age residing in the District has a “legitimate excuse for absence from the public school the child is supposed to attend” if any of the following apply:

- 1. the child in question has enrolled in and is attending another public or nonpublic school in this or another state;
- 2. the child in question is excused from attendance for any of the reasons specified in R.C. 3321.04; or
- 3. the child in question has received an age and schooling certificate in accordance with R.C. 3331.01.

The District may temporarily deny admittance to any student who is otherwise entitled to be admitted to the District if the student has been suspended or expelled from the schools of another district in the State of Ohio or an out-of-state district and if the period of suspension or expulsion has not expired. The student and parent/guardian will have an opportunity for a hearing before the CEO or his/her designee to determine the admittance or non-admittance of the student.

III. Truancy

It is the goal of the District to design and disseminate an attendance policy, which will encourage students to attend school.

A. Documentation

Each school shall have a file for every student at the school with current information on:

- X names of parents/guardians
- X date of birth
- X address
- X phone number or voicemail box number

- X immunizations
- X emergency contact information

B. Establishment of an Attendance Plan

The Office of Attendance and the Regional Superintendents shall develop and maintain a uniform attendance plan. The Attendance Plan shall address the following:

1. how attendance is taken;
2. who is responsible for taking attendance;
3. a uniform document to record attendance;
4. where attendance forms must be submitted and by what time;
5. how to maintain accurate recording and accounting of school attendance;
6. a system for reporting truancy cases to Juvenile Court for state mandated prosecution (this may be done in cooperation with the Office of Student and Family Support Services).

Every school in the District shall utilize the Attendance Plan. Each school principal shall establish an Attendance Committee with clearly defined roles comprised of the assistant principal, a guidance counselor, a teacher, a parent, students, a family liaison or social worker, a designated Attendance Liaison, community members and a CTU building chairperson.

The Committee shall appoint a coordinator and prepare a written list of the names of the members, indicating the responsibilities of each member. Alternate members, who are to be properly trained, must be appointed to replace absent members. The Attendance Committee is responsible for monitoring the school's attendance plan and for working with the Office of Attendance to develop year-round incentives to promote good attendance. The roles and hours for Attendance Liaisons shall periodically be evaluated and re-defined in order to be more effective in reaching parents/guardians.

C. Attendance Plan Procedures

1. Recording Attendance: A student's daily attendance begins with the first scheduled class. An adult staff member must take attendance within the first 10 minutes of class. For elementary schools the attendance records must be submitted to the school office by 10:00 a.m. and attendance should be migrated to entry on the School-Net PC. Attendance at the secondary school level must be recorded for every class period. For all schools, attendance must be updated in the school's student information system by noon each day. In secondary schools, attendance records for all class periods scheduled before noon must be submitted to the school office by noon and for afternoon class periods, attendance records must be submitted by 4:00 p.m.

2. Absences and Excuses: A parent or guardian must call in to excuse a student within the first 30 minutes of the student's scheduled school day, regardless of whether the student will be absent for the entire day or only a portion of it.¹ Reasons for which a student may be excused include:

- X personal illness;
- X illness in the family;
- X quarantine of the home;

¹"School day" for purposes of this policy means the school day established by the State Board of Education, which currently requires at least 5 hours of scheduled classes, supervised activities or approved educational options, exclusive of the lunch period, for grades one through six, and at least 5½ hours of scheduled classes, supervised activities or approved educational options, exclusive of the lunch period, for grades seven through twelve.

- X death of a relative;
- X homework due to the absence of parents or guardians;
- X observance of a religious holiday;
- X emergency set of circumstances, which in the judgment of the Chief Executive Officer constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school; this includes students during an out-of-school suspension if the student is receiving instructional services.

All other absences will be considered "unexcused."

Should illness or some other reason arise which may require a student to leave school during the school day, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must give permission for the student to be dismissed early from school. The school principal, or other designated school administrator, has the authority to review requests for early dismissal.

The District discourages parents/guardians from allowing students to miss school for non-emergency trips or vacations. Each student who has been absent from school must immediately upon returning to school make arrangements to make up missed work. The conditions under which a student may make up missed work due to unexcused absences shall be determined by the student's teacher and school principal on a case-by-case basis.

A tardy student must go to the school office for a late pass. A tardy student will not be admitted to class without a late pass. The school office shall reconcile the student's attendance record to reflect that the student was present but tardy. Teachers shall also reconcile their attendance records to reflect when students are present but tardy.

If a parent or guardian does not call to excuse a student, the school is responsible for contacting the parent or guardian of each unexcused student. The Office of MIS shall develop and maintain an electronic calling system that will notify parents and guardians on the same day of a student's unexcused absence. These calls shall be conducted in the evening hours in order to reach a higher number of parents and guardians. A computer-generated notice shall be sent to the parents/guardians of students who have two consecutive days of unexcused absences. This written notice shall warn the student and the student's parent/guardian of the legal consequences of being a habitual or chronic truant and shall require that the student's parent/guardian cause the student to attend school.

The above procedures also apply for students who fail to attend part-time school or classes in violation of R.C. 3321.08 and 3321.09.

Elementary school students who have accumulated 3 consecutive unexcused absences must have a conference with their teacher. In addition, the Attendance Liaison will telephone the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If the Attendance Liaison is unable to contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or if after the student-teacher conference no sufficient explanation has been provided for the 3 absences, and under the District's Attendance policy criteria the 3 consecutive absences remain unexcused, the Attendance Liaison shall conduct a home visit and issue a legal warning to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Secondary school students who have accumulated 3 consecutive unexcused absences must have a conference with their school's guidance counselor. In addition, the Attendance Liaison will telephone the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If the Attendance Liaison is unable to contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or if after the student-counselor conference no sufficient explanation has been provided for the 3 absences, and under the District's Attendance policy criteria the 3 consecutive absences remain unexcused, the Attendance Liaison shall conduct a home visit and issue a legal warning to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Upon proper notice of the home visit, parent(s)/guardian(s) are required by Ohio law to be present.

Failure to attend home visits or other required parental education and training programs held pursuant to the District's Attendance Policy, constitutes *parental education neglect* under Revised Code Section 2919.222. Parents guilty of such conduct may be charged and face punishment of fines up to \$250 and imprisonment of up to 30 days.

D. Habitual and Chronic Truancy

A "habitual truant" is any child of compulsory school age who is absent without a legitimate excuse for absence from the public school the child is supposed to attend for five or more consecutive school days, seven or more school days in one school month,² or twelve or more school days in a school year.³

Upon failure of a parent/guardian to cause a student's attendance at school when that student is considered a habitual truant, the District shall assign the habitual truant student to a truancy intervention program which may include assigning the student to an alternative school pursuant to R.C. 3313.533. In addition to the truancy intervention program, the District may do either or both of the following, if appropriate:

1. revoke the student's driving privileges, according to the procedure described below and pursuant to R.C. 3321.13; and/or
2. file a complaint in juvenile court jointly against the student and the parent/guardian alleging that student is an unruly child for being an habitual truant or is a delinquent child for being an habitual truant who previously has been adjudicated an unruly child for being a habitual truant and that the parent/guardian has violated R.C. 3321.38.

A "chronic truant" is any child of compulsory school age who is absent without legitimate excuse for absence from the public school the child is supposed to attend for seven or more consecutive school days, ten or more school days in one school month, or fifteen or more school days in a school year.

Upon the failure of a parent/guardian to cause a student's attendance at school when that student is considered a chronic truant, the District shall file a complaint in the appropriate juvenile court jointly against the student and the parent/guardian alleging that the child is a delinquent child for being a chronic truant and that the parent/guardian has violated R.C. 3321.38.

Parents/guardians found to have violated R.C. 3321.38(A) may be required to give a bond in the sum of not more than five hundred dollars with the condition that the parents/guardians cause the child in their care to attend school. Parents/guardians found to have violated R.C. 3321.38(A) may also be fined not more than five hundred dollars or may be ordered to perform not more than seventy hours of community service work under R.C. 3321.99.

E. Loss of Driving Privileges

Truancy. When the Attendance Office and/or the Chief Executive Officer receives information that a student of compulsory school age has reached the level of a habitual/chronic truant and determines that it is appropriate for the student's driving privileges to be revoked as a consequence of the habitual/chronic truancy, the following procedure applies:

²A "school month" consists of four "school weeks," and a "school week" consists of five school days.

³The "school year" begins on the first day of July of each calendar year and closes on the 30th day of June of the succeeding calendar year.

1. The CEO or his/her designee shall notify, in writing, the student and his/her parent/guardian and state that information regarding the student's absences has been provided to the Attendance Office and the CEO and, as a result of that information, the student's driving privileges are denied. This notification shall also state that the student and his/her parent/guardian may appear before the CEO or his/her designee to challenge the information provided to the CEO and the Attendance Office.
2. The notice from the CEO or his/her designee to the student includes the scheduled time, place and date of the hearing, which shall be scheduled between three and five days after the notification is given. Upon the request of the student or parent/guardian, an extension may be granted by the CEO or his/her designee. The CEO or his/her designee must then notify the student and the parent/guardian of the new hearing time, place and date.
3. At the hearing before the CEO or his/her designee, the student shall have an opportunity to present evidence that he/she has not been habitually/chronically absent without legitimate excuse.
4. If a habitual/chronic truant does not appear at a hearing before the CEO or his/her designee, or if the student does not convince the CEO/designee that the absences were legitimate, the CEO/designee must notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the appropriate juvenile judge. Such notification must be given to the Registrar and the juvenile judge within two weeks of the receipt of the information regarding habitual/chronic truancy or, if a hearing for the student is held, within two weeks after the hearing.

Withdrawal from School. When the Chief Executive Officer receives information that a student of compulsory school age has withdrawn from school, the Chief Executive Officer must, within two weeks after the withdrawal, notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the county juvenile judge. Notification is not necessary if:

1. the student has withdrawn because of a change of residence;
2. the student is enrolled in and attending, in accordance with District policy, an approved program to obtain a diploma or its equivalent; or
3. the student holds a full-time Age and Schooling Certificate and is regularly employed.

Notification to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the juvenile judge must comply with R.C. 3321.13, R.C. 4507.061 and all other applicable Ohio and Federal laws and regulations.

The Registrar of Motor Vehicles is required to suspend the temporary instruction permit or driver's license of the student who is the subject of the notice. If a temporary permit or license has not been issued for that student, the Registrar is prohibited from issuing a temporary permit or a license.

Denial of driving privileges remains in effect until the student reaches age 18 or until the denial is terminated for another reason allowed by Ohio law. In accordance with Ohio law, a student whose driving privileges have been denied can file a petition seeking their reinstatement.

F. Communication

Both students and their parents/guardians need to be provided with clear and accurate information on the District's Attendance Policy. In an effort to communicate the District's policy, the following measures should be taken:

1. Principals should hold separate assemblies to explain the District's attendance policy and procedures, in addition to giving a presentation at school open houses.
2. The State attendance laws should be explained in a letter from the CEO to each parent and should be addressed on a special airing of Educating Cleveland's Children on channel 50.
3. The Department of Family and Community Engagement should hold workshops for families to explain the new attendance laws, plans and expectations.
4. The Office of External Affairs and the Office of Attendance should develop and implement District-wide incentives throughout the year, including multi-media public service announcements, to promote good attendance.

G. Training

Each school year should begin with a training session for school clerks, teachers, assistant principals and principals that includes the proper methods for recording attendance. The District shall produce an "attendance video" that emphasizes the importance of proper attendance accounting and provides training on how it should be done. All staff should view this video during orientation. The video should also be viewed by new hires throughout the year.

Attendance Office staff must be well briefed in attendance procedures so that they can train their entire faculty and assist in updating the Attendance Plan on an annual basis. Regional Superintendents shall require principals, assistant principals and clerks to attend Average Daily Membership training sessions. Chiefs shall designate central staff to conduct a periodic review of the District's attendance policies and procedures.

H. Monitoring and Enforcement

The Regional Superintendents shall be responsible for all attendance within their region. They are to monitor the attendance of each school, as the CEO deems necessary.

The principal of each school shall be held accountable for all attendance within her/his school. The Attendance Committee within each school shall follow the District's Attendance Plan. The Attendance Committees are responsible for maintaining the Plan within the schools and for engaging parents/guardians and the community around the schools in promoting good attendance. The school Attendance Committees should meet with their principals on a weekly basis from the first week of school until the week after Average Daily Membership calculations ("ADM"). Following ADM week, the school Attendance Committees should meet bi-weekly.

Any enrolled students who are not counted during ADM may result in a direct reduction to the school's funding, as it does for the District's funding. Schools that have a 0-5% absentee rate should receive special budgeting incentives. The Office of Attendance, MIS, and the Regional Superintendents shall develop a process to assure compatible data maintenance at the school level and District level. An official evaluation of each school's implementation of the District's Attendance Plan shall be made annually by the Office of Attendance.

Violations of the District's Attendance Plan shall be reported to the Office of Attendance. The Office of Attendance is authorized, pursuant to R.C. 3321.18, to institute proceedings against

any officer, parent, guardian or other person violating laws relating to compulsory education, including, but not limited to the proceedings, called for by this attendance policy.

[Adoption date: February 1, 2001]

LEGAL REFERENCES

ORC 2151.011; 2151.02; 2151.022; 2151.18; 2151.23; 2151.27; 2151.28;
2151.311; 2151.312; 2151.313; 2151.35; 2151.354; 2151.355;
2151.356; 2151.358; 2151.359; 2151.3512; 2151.47;
3321.01 et. seq.
3331.02
3730.99
4109.13
4507.061
5139.36
OAC 3301-35-02; 3301-35-03; ; 3301-51-13
123rd General Assembly, Senate Bill Number 181
Educating Cleveland's Children: Strategic Initiatives for the Cleveland Municipal
School District

CROSS REFERENCES

IGBG, Home-Bound Instruction
IGCF, Home Instruction
JECE, Student Withdrawal from School
JFE, Pregnant Students
JEGA, Permanent Exclusion
JHC, Student Health Services and Requirements
JHCC, Communicable Diseases
JK, Employment of Students