

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

The Governing Board believes that excessive student absenteeism and tardiness, whether caused by excused or unexcused absences, may be an early warning sign of poor academic achievement and may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The Board desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the state's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the district.

(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a system to accurately track and monitor student attendance, including methods to identify students classified as chronic absentees and truants, as defined in law and administrative regulation.

To encourage school attendance, the Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies that focus on prevention and early intervention of attendance problems. Preventive Strategies may include efforts to provide a safe and positive school environment, relevant and engaging learning experiences, and school activities that help develop students' feelings of connectedness with the schools. The Superintendent or designee also may provide incentives and rewards to recognize students who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance.

(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)

(cf. 5126 - Awards for Achievement)

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

The Superintendent or designee shall work with students and parents/guardians to identify factors contributing to chronic absence and truancy. Based on this needs assessment, he/she shall collaborate with community agencies, including, but not limited to, child welfare services, law enforcement, courts, and/or public health care agencies, to ensure that alternative educational programs and nutrition, health care, and other support services are available for students and families and to intervene as necessary when students have serious attendance problems.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)

(cf. 3550 - Food Service/Child Nutrition Program)

(cf. 5030 - Student Wellness)

(cf. 5145.6 - School Health Services)

(cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)

(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)

(cf. 5149 - At-Risk Students)

(cf. 6158 - Independent Study)

(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

- (cf. 6164.5 - Student Success Teams)
- (cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)
- (cf. 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth)
- (cf. 6173.2 - Education of Children of Military Families)
- (cf. 6175 - Migrant Education Program)
- (cf. 6179 - Supplemental Instruction)
- (cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)
- (cf. 6183 - Home and Hospital Instruction)
- (cf. 6184 - Continuation Education)
- (cf. 6185 - Community Day School)

As required by law, habitually truant students shall be referred to a school attendance review board (SARB), a truancy mediation program operated by the county's district attorney or probation officer, and/or a juvenile court.

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly analyze data on student absence to identify patterns of absence district wide and by school, grade level, and student population. Such data shall be used to identify common barriers to attendance, prioritize resources for intervention, and monitor progress over time. The Superintendent or designee shall periodically report this information to the Board for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of strategies implemented to reduce chronic absence and truancy and making changes as needed. As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee also shall provide this information to key school staff and community agency partners to engage them in program evaluation and improvement.

School Attendance Review Board

The Board shall appoint members of the district's SARB, who may include, but are not be limited to, a parent/guardian as well as representatives of the district, county probation department, county welfare department, county office of education, law enforcement agencies, community-based youth service centers, school guidance personnel, child welfare and attendance personnel, and school or county health care personnel. (Education Code 48321)

The district's SARB shall operate in accordance with Education Code 48320-48325 and procedures established by the Superintendent or designee.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

- 1740 Employment of personnel to supervise attendance (county superintendent)
- 37223 Weekend classes
- 41601 Reports of average daily attendance
- 46000 Records (attendance)
- 46010-46014 Absences

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

46110-46119 Attendance in kindergarten and elementary schools
46140-46147 Attendance in junior high and high schools
48200-48208 Children ages 6-18 (compulsory full-time attendance)
48240-48246 Supervisors of attendance
48260-48273 Truants
48290-48296 Failure to comply; complaints against parents
48320-48325 School attendance review boards
48340-48341 Improvement of student attendance
48400-48403 Compulsory continuation education
49067 Unexcused absences as cause of failing grade
60901 Chronic absence
GOVERNMENT CODE
54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act
PENAL CODE
270.1 Chronic truancy; parent/guardian misdemeanor
272 Parent/guardian duty to supervise and control minor child; criminal liability for truancy
830.1 Peace officers
VEHICLE CODE
13202.7 Driving privileges; minors; suspension or delay for habitual truancy
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE
601-601.4 Habitually truant minors
11253.5 Compulsory school attendance
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5
306 Explanation of absence
420-421 Record of verification of absence due to illness and other causes

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS
Improving Student Achievement by Addressing Chronic Absence, Policy Brief,
December 2010
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS
School Attendance Review Board Handbook, 2009
School Attendance Improvement Handbook, 2000
WEB SITES
CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>
Attendance Counts: <http://www.attendancecounts.org>
California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance:
<http://www.cascwa.org>
California Department of Education: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY**Definitions**

Chronic absentee means a student who is absent from school, for any reason, on 10 percent or more of the days in a given school year. Chronic absenteeism is determined by dividing the total number of days the student is absent by the total number of days he/she is enrolled, exclusive of holidays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Truant means a student who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. (Education Code 48260)

Habitual truant means a student who has been reported as a truant three or more times within the same school year, provided the district has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian. (Education Code 48262, 48264.5)

Chronic truant means a student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date, provided the district has met the requirements of Education Code 48260-48263 and 48291. (Education Code 48263.6)

Attendance Supervisor(s)

The Superintendent or designee shall appoint or contract with a supervisor of attendance and assistant supervisors as necessary to supervise the attendance of district students. Such supervisors shall perform duties related to compulsory full-time education, truancy, compulsory continuation education, work permits, and any additional duties prescribed by the Superintendent. (Education Code 48240, 48243, 48244)

(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)

(cf. 5113.2 - Work Permits)

Addressing Chronic Absence

When a student is identified as a chronic absentee, the attendance supervisor shall communicate with the student and his/her parent/guardian to determine the reason(s) for the excessive absences, ensure the student and parent/guardian are aware of the adverse consequences of poor attendance, and jointly develop a plan for improving the student's school attendance.

(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

The student may be referred to a student success team or school-site attendance review team to assist in evaluating the student's needs and identifying strategies and programs that may assist him/her.

(cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)
(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)
(cf. 5149 - At-Risk Students)
(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)
(cf. 6164.5 - Student Success Teams)
(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)
(cf. 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth)
(cf. 6173.2 - Education of Children of Military Families)
(cf. 6175 - Migrant Education Program)

A student who is struggling academically may be offered tutoring or other supplemental instruction, extended learning opportunities, and/or alternative educational options as appropriate.

(cf. 6158 - Independent Study)
(cf. 6176 - Weekend/Saturday Classes)
(cf. 6178.1 - Work Experience Education)
(cf. 6179 - Supplemental Instruction)
(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)
(cf. 6183 - Home and Hospital Instruction)
(cf. 6184 - Continuation Education)

Whenever chronic absenteeism is linked to a nonschool condition, the attendance supervisor may recommend community resources and/or collaborate with community agencies and organizations to address the needs of the student and his/her family.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)
(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)
(cf. 5145.6 - School Health Services)

Addressing Truancy

An attendance supervisor or designee, peace officer, probation officer, or school administrator or designee may arrest or assume temporary custody, during school hours, of any minor student found away from his/her home who is absent from school without a valid excuse. Any person arresting or assuming temporary custody of a minor student shall deliver the student and make reports in accordance with Education Code 48265 and 48266. (Education Code 48264, 48265, 48266)

(cf. 3515.3 - District Police/Security Department)

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

The attendance supervisor shall investigate a complaint from any person that a parent/guardian has violated the state compulsory education laws contained in Education Code 48200-48341. (Education Code 48290)

When a student has been identified as a truant, as defined above, the following steps shall be implemented based on the number of truanancies he/she has committed:

1. Initial truancy

- a. A student who is initially classified as truant shall be reported to the attendance supervisor. (Education Code 48260)
- b. The student's parent/guardian shall be notified by the most cost-effective method possible, which may include email or a telephone call, that: (Education Code 48260.5)
 - (1) The student is truant.
 - (2) The parent/guardian is obligated to compel the student to attend school. If the parent/guardian fails to meet this obligation, he/she may be guilty of an infraction of the law and subject to prosecution pursuant to Education Code 48290-48296.
 - (3) Alternative educational programs are available in the district.
 - (4) The parent/guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the student's truancy.
 - (5) The student may be subject to arrest or held in temporary custody by a probation officer, a peace officer, a school administrator or attendance supervisor or his/her designee under Education Code 48264 if found away from home and absent from school without a valid excuse.
 - (6) The student may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of his/her driving privilege pursuant to Vehicle Code 13202.7.
 - (7) It is recommended that the parent/guardian accompany the student to school and attend classes with the student for one day.
 - (8) A peace officer, including School Police, may cite a student if found away from home and absent from school without a valid excuse.

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

- c. The student may be required to attend makeup classes on one day of a weekend pursuant to Education Code 37223. (Education Code 48264.5)
- d. The student may be given a written warning by a peace officer. A record of this warning may be kept at school for not less than two years or until the student graduates or transfers from the school. If the student transfers, the record may be forwarded to the new school. (Education Code 48264.5)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

- e. The attendance supervisor may notify the district attorney and/or probation officer of the name of each student who has been classified as a truant and the name and address of the student's parents/guardians. (Education Code 48260.6)

2. Second truancy

- a. Any student who has once been reported as a truant shall again be reported to the attendance supervisor as a truant if he/she is absent from school without valid excuse one or more days or is tardy on one or more days. (Education Code 48261)
- b. The student may be required to attend makeup classes on one day of a weekend pursuant to Education Code 37223. (Education Code 48264.5)
- c. The student may be assigned to an after-school or weekend study program within the county. If the student fails to successfully complete this study program, he/she shall be subject to item #3 below. (Education Code 48264.5)
- d. An appropriate district staff member shall make a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the student and parent/guardian by communicating with the parent/guardian at least once using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include email or a telephone call. (Education Code 48262)
- e. The attendance supervisor may notify the district attorney and/or probation officer whether the student continues to be classified as a truant after the parents/guardians have been notified in accordance with item #1b above. (Education Code 48260.6)

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)**3. Third truancy (habitual truancy)**

- a. A student who is habitually truant, irregular in school attendance, or habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at school may be referred to, and required to attend, a school attendance review board, (SARB) program, a truancy mediation program established by the district attorney or the probation officer, or a comparable program deemed acceptable by the district's attendance supervisor. (Education Code 48263, 48264.5)
- b. Upon making a referral to the SARB or the probation department, the attendance supervisor shall provide the student and parent/guardian, in writing, the name and address of the SARB or probation department and the reason for the referral. This notice shall indicate that the student and parent/guardian shall be required, along with the district staff person making the referral, to meet with the SARB or a probation officer to consider a proper disposition of the referral. (Education Code 48263)
- c. If the student does not successfully complete the truancy mediation program or other similar program, he/she shall be subject to item #4 below. (Education Code 48264.5)
- d. If the attendance supervisor determines that available community services cannot resolve the problem of the truant or insubordinate student or if the student and/or student's parents/guardians have failed to respond to the directives of the district or to services provided, the attendance supervisor may so notify the district attorney and/or the probation officer. (Education Code 48263)

4. Fourth truancy

- a. Upon his/her fourth truancy within the same school year, the student shall be within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. (Education Code 48264.5; Welfare and Institutions Code 601)
- b. If a student has been adjudged by the county juvenile court to be a habitual truant, the attendance supervisor shall notify the juvenile court and the student's probation or parole officer whenever the student is truant or tardy on one or more days without a valid excuse in the same or succeeding school year, or is habitually insubordinate or disorderly at school. The juvenile court and probation or parole officer shall be notified within 10 days of the violation. (Education Code 48267)

CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

5. Absence for 10 percent of school days (chronic truancy)

- a. The attendance supervisor shall ensure that the student's parents/guardians are offered language-accessible support services to address the student's truancy.
- b. If a chronically truant student is at least age 6 years and is in any of grades K-8, the attendance supervisor shall notify the parents/guardians that failure to reasonably supervise and encourage the student's school attendance may result in the parent/guardian being found guilty of a misdemeanor pursuant to Penal Code 270.1.

Records

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain accurate attendance records for students identified as habitual or chronic truants. The Superintendent or designee also shall document all contacts with a student and his/her parent/guardian regarding the student's attendance, including a summary of all conversations and a record of all intervention efforts.

The Superintendent or designee shall gather and transmit to the County Superintendent of Schools the number and types of referrals made to the SARB and of requests for petitions made to the juvenile court. (Education Code 48273)