

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

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 standards prescribed by the Ohio Board of Education until one of the following occurs.

1. The child receives a diploma or GED 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 (work permit) and is enrolled in a GED program.
3. The child is excused from school under standards adopted by the Ohio 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.

Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance

A child of compulsory school age residing in the School District may be legally excused from full-time enrollment by:

1. holding a age and schooling certificate, being regularly employed and attending school on a part-time basis in a program approved by the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee;
2. receiving approved home instruction;
3. attending a private or parochial school; or
4. having received a diploma or GED from an approved high school.

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 Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee to determine the admittance or non-admittance of the student.

Absences and Excuses

Regular attendance by all students is very important. In many cases, irregular attendance is the major reason for poor schoolwork; therefore, all students are urged to make appointments, do personal errands, etc., outside of school hours.

Reasons for which students may be excused include, but are not limited to:

1. personal illness of the student;
2. illness in the student's family;
3. needed at home to perform necessary work directly and exclusively for parents or legal guardians (applies to students over 14 years of age only);
4. death in the family;
5. quarantine for contagious disease;
6. religious reasons;
7. traveling out of state to attend a Board-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity (applies to absences of up to 24 school hours) or
8. as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

Each student who is absent must immediately, upon return to school, make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to make up work missed. Students who are absent from school for reasons not permitted by State law may, or may not, be permitted to make up work. Each case is considered on its merits by the principal and the respective teacher(s). Students are requested to bring a note to school after each absence explaining the reason for the absence or tardiness.

The Board of Education does not believe that students should be excused from school for vacations or other nonemergency trips. The responsibility for such absences resides with the parent(s), and they must not expect any work missed by their child to be retaught by the teacher. If the school is notified in advance of such a trip, reasonable efforts are made to prepare a general list of assignments for the student to do while he/she is absent.

The Board authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to establish a hearing and notification procedure for the purpose of denying a student's driving privileges if that student of compulsory school age has been absent without legitimate excuse for more than 60 consecutive hours during a school month or a total of at least 90 hours during a school year.

Truancy

The Board of Education endeavors to reduce truancy through cooperation with parents, diligence in investigating the causes of absence and use of strict guidelines in regard to tardiness and unexcused absence.

When the Board determines that a student has been truant and that the parent, guardian or other person having care of a child has failed to ensure the child's attendance at school, State law authorizes the Board to require the parent/guardian to attend a specified educational program.

This program has been established according to the rules adopted by the State Board of Education for the purpose of encouraging parental involvement in compelling the child's attendance at school.

On the request of the Chief Executive Officer, or when it comes to the attention of the school attendance officer or other appropriate officer of the District, the designated officer must investigate any case of supposed truancy within the District and must warn the child, if found truant, and the child's parent/guardian in writing of the legal consequences of being a "habitual" truant.

A "habitual truant" is any child of compulsory school age who is absent without a legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one month or 72 or more hours in a school year.

The parent is required to have the child attend school immediately after notification. If the parent fails to get the child to attend school, the attendance officer or other appropriate officer, if directed by the Superintendent or the Board, must send notice requiring the child's parent to attend a parental education program.

Regarding "habitual truants," the Board must take as an intervention strategy any appropriate action contained in Board policy.

The Board directs the administration to develop intervention strategies that include all of the following actions if applicable:

1. providing a truancy intervention plan meeting State law requirements for any student who is excessively absent from school;
2. providing counseling for a habitual truant;
3. requesting or requiring a parent/guardian having control of a habitual truant to attend parental involvement programs;
4. requesting or requiring a parent/guardian of a habitual truant to attend truancy prevention mediation programs;

5. notification to the Registrar of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles or
6. taking appropriate legal action.

The attendance officer provides notice to the parent/guardian of a student who is absent without excuse for 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in a school year within seven days after the date of the absence triggering the notice. At the time of notice, the District may take any appropriate action as outlined in this policy as an intervention strategy.

Consistent with Ohio law, the School District shall not suspend, expel or remove a student from school, solely on the basis of the student's absences from school without a legitimate excuse.

Absence Intervention Plan

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, when a student's absences surpass the threshold for a habitual truant, the principal or the Chief Executive Officer assigns the student to an absence intervention team within 10 days of the triggering event. The absence intervention team must be developed within seven school days of the triggering event and is based on the needs of the individual student. The team must include a representative from the student's school or District, a representative from the student's school or District who knows the student and the student's parent or their designee, and also may include a school psychologist, counselor, social worker or representative of an agency designed to assist students and their families in reducing absences. During the seven days while developing the team, the Chief Executive Officer or principal makes at least three meaningful, good faith attempts to secure participation of the student's parent. If the student's parent is unresponsive the District investigates whether the failure to respond triggers mandatory reporting to the appropriate children's services agency and instructs the absence team to develop the intervention plan without the parent.

Within 14 school days after a student is assigned to a team, the team develops a student specific intervention plan to work to reduce or eliminate further absences. The plan includes, at minimum a statement the District will file a complaint in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court not later than 61 days after the date the plan is implemented if the student refuses to participate or fails to make satisfactory progress. The District makes reasonable efforts to provide the student's parent/guardian with written notice of the plan within seven days of development.

The absence intervention plan for a student may include contacting the Juvenile Court to have a student informally enrolled in an alternative to adjudication. The Board directs the Chief Executive Officer to develop written procedures regarding the use of and selection process for offering these alternatives to ensure fairness.

If the student becomes habitually truant within 21 school days prior to the last day of instruction of a school year, the District may either assign a school official to work with the student's parent/guardian to develop an intervention plan during the summer and implement the plan no later than seven days prior to the first day of instruction of the next school year, or reconvene the absence intervention process on the first day of instruction of the next school year.

Filing a Complaint with Juvenile Court

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the attendance officer must file a complaint against the student in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court on the 61st day after implementation of the absence intervention plan when:

1. the student's absences have surpassed the threshold for a habitual truant;
2. the District has made meaningful attempts to re-engage the student through the absence intervention plan, other intervention strategies and any offered alternatives to adjudication and
3. the student has refused to participate in or failed to make satisfactory progress on the plan or any offered intervention strategies or alternatives to adjudication as determined by the absence intervention team.

If the 61st day after intervention falls on a day during the summer months, the District may extend the implementation of the plan and delay the filing of the complaint for an additional 30 days after the first day of instruction of the next school year.

Unless the absence intervention team determines the student has made substantial progress on their absence intervention plan, the attendance officer must file a complaint against the student in juvenile court if the student is absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours or 42 or more hours during a school month at any time during the implementation phase of the intervention plan or other intervention strategy.

[Adoption date: June 27, 2017]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 3313.609; 3313.663; 3313.668
3321.01, 3321.03 through 3321.04; 3321.07 through 3321.09; 3321.13;
3321.14; 3321.16; 3321.19; 3321.191; 3321.22; 3321.38