

Attendance, Truancy, and Automatic Withdrawal Policy (Including Excessive & Habitual Absences and Interventions)

Attendance at school is key to achievement. Students are expected to attend school regularly and on time. Parents/guardians are encouraged to partner with the School to ensure attendance and timeliness.

Parents/guardians are required to notify the School of any absence prior to the start of the school day. Similarly, parents/guardians are required to notify the School in advance of early pick-up. Within 120 minutes after the beginning of each school day, the School shall make at least one attempt in compliance with ORC 3321.141 (A)(2) to contact the parent/guardian of any student absent without legitimate excuse.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make any doctor, dentist, etc. appointments for times other than school hours.

No student shall be suspended or expelled based solely on the number of absences; rather, the School will be proactive in engaging students.

Excessive Absences

A student shall be considered excessively absent when the student is absent (with a non-medical excuse or without legitimate excuse) 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in one school year.

When a student is excessively absent the School within seven days of the triggering absence will notify the student's parents in writing of the student's absences. The School will develop a truancy intervention plan which may include any applicable appropriate interventions contained in this policy.

Habitually Truant

A student shall be considered habitually truant when the student is absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 hours or more in one school month, or 72 hours or more in a school year.

When a student is habitually truant:

1. Within seven days of the triggering absence:
 - a. The Superintendent, Principal, or Chief Administrator shall establish an absence intervention team. The team should be based on the needs of each individual student, but the team shall include at a minimum two representatives from the School, one of whom knows the student, and the student's parent/guardian/custodian/designee/guardian ad litem ("parent"). The team may also include a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, or representative of a public or nonprofit agency designed to assist students and their families in reducing absences.

- b. The School shall make three meaningful good faith attempts to secure participation on the team by the student’s parent/guardian/custodian/designee/guardian ad litem (“parent”). If the student's parent responds to any of those attempts, but is unable to participate for any reason, the School shall inform the parent of the parent's right to participate through a designee. If 7 school days elapse and the student's parent, fails to respond to the attempts to secure participation, the School shall do both of the following:
 - i. Investigate whether the failure to respond triggers mandatory reporting to the public children services agency for the county in which the child resides in the manner described in section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code; and
 - ii. Develop an intervention plan for the student notwithstanding the absence of the child's parent.
2. Within 10 days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team.
3. Within 14 days after the assignment of the team, the School will develop an absence intervention plan for that student in an effort to reduce or eliminate further absences. Within 7 days after developing the plan, the School shall make reasonable efforts to provide written notice of the plan to the student’s parent/guardian.
4. If the student does not make progress on the plan within 61 days or continues to be excessively absent, the School will file a complaint in the juvenile court.
5. In the event that a student becomes habitually truant within 21 school days prior to the last day of instruction of a school year, the School may, in its discretion, assign one School official to work with the student’s parent/guardian/custodian/designee/guardian ad litem to develop an absence intervention plan during the summer. If the School selects this method, the plan shall be implemented not later than 7 days prior to the first day of instruction of the next school year. In the alternative, the School may toll the time periods to accommodate for the summer months and reconvene the absence intervention process upon the first day of instruction of the next school year.

Interventions

Each intervention plan shall be tailored to the individual needs of the student.

However, each plan for a habitually truant student **shall** include:

- A statement that the School will file a complaint not later than 61 days after the date the plan was implemented if the student has refused to participate in, or failed to make satisfactory progress on, the intervention plan or an alternative to adjudication under ORC 3321.191(C)(2)(b)

Intervention plans may include, but are not limited to, the following interventions as are applicable and best suited to individual student needs:

1. Counseling

2. Requesting or requiring a parent, guardian, or other person having care of the student to attend parental involvement programs, including programs adopted under section 3313.472 or 3313.663 of the Ohio Revised Code
3. Requesting or requiring a parent, guardian, or other person having care of the student to attend truancy prevention mediation programs
4. Notification to the registrar of motor vehicles under section 3321.13 of the Revised Code
5. Taking legal action under section 2919.222, 3321.20, or 3321.38 of the Ohio Revised Code
6. Seeking juvenile court involvement to have a student informally enrolled in an alternative to adjudication. (If the School chooses to have students informally enrolled in an alternative to adjudication, the School shall develop a written policy regarding the use of and selection process for offering alternatives to adjudication to ensure fairness.)

Reporting

The School shall report as soon as practical to the Ohio Department of Education: when a notice of excessive absence is submitted to a parent; when a student meets the definition of habitually truant; when a student has been adjudicated an unruly child for being a habitual truant violates the court order regarding that adjudication; when an absence intervention plan has been implemented.

If the student is violating a court order regarding the student's adjudication as an unruly child for being habitually truant, the Board hereby authorizes the school's administrator or his/her designee to inform the student and parent/guardian of the violation and to notify the juvenile court.

The School may take legal action against the parent/guardian pursuant to ORC 3321.20 or ORC 3321.38 if a student is not attending school.

Automatic Withdrawal by School

In accordance with Ohio Revised Code 3314.03, a student will be automatically withdrawn from the School if the student without a legitimate excuse fails to participate in seventy-two consecutive hours of the learning opportunities offered to the student.

Withdrawal by Student

When a student of compulsory school age withdraws from the School, the School shall attempt to ascertain the reason for the withdrawal. If the reason for the withdrawal is for a reason other than a change in residence and is not enrolled in another program, the School shall notify the registrar of motor vehicles and the juvenile court in the county in which the School is located. The notice shall be given within two weeks after the withdrawal and failure to enroll in another program permitted by law.

Collaboration

The Board of Directors recognizes the importance of collaboration in order to help students attend school and to meet their wide-ranging needs. On the date the Board of Directors held a meeting to approve this policy it provided public notice of the meeting and provided an opportunity for parents, guardians, and others having care of students, school employees and volunteers, community members, and local juvenile court judge/s to consult on the development of this policy. The School will continue to work with local agencies regarding increasing attendance. Families, school employees and volunteers, community members, and local juvenile courts, and all agencies and stakeholders are encouraged to bring any concerns or comments regarding this policy to the attention of the School at any time.