

TRUANCY PROCEDURES

Schools will investigate individual student absences on a daily basis, and analyze whole-school absence data on a monthly basis.

In cooperation with parents/guardians, teachers, nurses, counselors, social workers, secretaries and administration, the school's attendance coordinator will assess patterns in unexcused student absences. Interventions will be explored to address the cause for attendance concern(s).

As required by Law, the following procedure shall be followed when a student is truant.

- A. The principal, upon determining that a student is truant, shall notify the Superintendent of the student's truancy within five school days of the last unexcused absence. At the same time, the principal will refer the student to the school's intervention team (student assistance team, child study team members, problem solving team members, etc.).
- B. The school's intervention team will confirm the cause of the truancy and assess the effect of the student's absences, as well as any future absences for the student. If it is determined that a negative effect exists, the team shall develop an intervention plan to address the student's absences and the negative effect of these absences within thirty days of the principal's notification.

An intervention plan may include, but is not limited to:

- 1. Frequent communication between the teacher and the family;
 - 2. Changes in the learning environment, alterations to the school day;
 - 3. Mentoring;
 - 4. Student counseling;
 - 5. Tutoring, including peer tutoring;
 - 6. Placement into different classes;
 - 7. Evaluation for alternative education programming;
 - 8. Attendance contracts;
 - 9. Referral to other agencies for family services
- C. The student and his/her parents/guardians shall be invited by a member of the intervention team to attend any meetings scheduled to discuss the student's truancy and the intervention plan. Failure of the student or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to

appear at scheduled meetings does not preclude school administrators from implementing a plan to address a student's truancy.

- D. If the Superintendent/designee is unable to correct the student's truancy, the Superintendent/designee shall serve or cause to be served upon the parent(s) in- hand or by registered mail a written notice that the student's attendance is required by law. The notice shall:
1. State that the student is required to attend school pursuant to 20-A MRSA §5001-A (the compulsory attendance law);
 2. Explain the parent's right to inspect the student's attendance records, attendance coordinator's reports, and principal's reports;
 3. Explain that the failure to send the student to school and maintain the student in regular attendance is a civil violation in accordance with 20-A MRSA § 5053-A and will jeopardize the student's status in the grade he/she is in;
 4. State that the Superintendent/designee may notify local law enforcement authorities of a violation of 20-A MRSA § 5053-A and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) of a violation under and 20-A MRSA § 5051-A(1) (C); and
 5. Outline the plan developed to address the student's truancy and the steps that have been taken to implement that plan.
- E. Prior to notifying local law enforcement authorities, the Superintendent/ designee shall schedule at least one meeting of the intervention team as required by Law and paragraph B of this procedure and may invite a local prosecutor.
- F. If after three school days after the service of the notice described in paragraph E of this policy the student remains truant and the parent(s) and student refuse to attend the meeting referred to in paragraph F, the Superintendent/designee shall report the facts of the unlawful absence to local law enforcement authorities. Local law enforcement may proceed with enforcement action against the parent unless the student is at once placed in an appropriate school or otherwise meets the requirements of the compulsory attendance law.
- G. When a student is determined to be truant and in violation of the compulsory attendance law, and the intervention team has made a good faith attempt to meet the requirements, the Superintendent shall notify the Board of the student's truancy.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 5001-A; 5051-A-5054-A; 22 MRSA § 4002

REVIEWED: May 8, 2014