

## CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY

The Board of Trustees 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 student attendance in order to identify individual students classified as chronic absentees and truants, as defined in law and administrative regulation.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies that focus on prevention of attendance problems, which may include, but are not limited to, efforts to provide a safe and positive school environment, relevant and engaging learning experiences, school activities that help develop students' feelings of connectedness with the school, school-based health services, and incentives and rewards to recognize students who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance. The Superintendent or designee also shall develop strategies that enable early outreach to students as soon as they show signs of poor attendance.

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

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 5126 - Awards for Achievement)*

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)*

*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*

*(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

The Superintendent or designee shall work with students, parents/guardians, school staff, and community agencies, as appropriate, to identify factors contributing to chronic absence and truancy. He/she also may collaborate with child welfare services, law enforcement, courts, public health care agencies, other government agencies, and/or medical, mental health, and oral health care providers 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. 5030 - Student Wellness)*

*(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)*

*(cf. 6164.5 - Student Success Teams)*

*(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)*

## **CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)**

*(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)*

Students who are identified as truants shall be subject to the interventions specified in law and administrative regulation.

A student's truancy, tardiness, or other absence from school shall not be the sole basis for his/her out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Alternative disciplinary strategies and positive reinforcement for attendance shall be used whenever possible.

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*  
*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly analyze data on student absence to identify patterns of absence districtwide 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 and in identification of how to best allocate available community resources.

### **School Attendance Review Board**

In accordance with law and administrative regulation, habitual truants may be referred to a school attendance review board (SARB).

*Legal Reference: (see next page)*

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)***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**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)**48225.5 Work permits, entertainment and allied industries**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**48900 Suspension and expulsion**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*COURT DECISIONS*L.A. v. Superior Court of San Diego County, (2012) 209 Cal.App.4th 976**Management Resources: (see next page)*CSBA PUBLICATIONS*Improving Student Achievement by Addressing Chronic Absence, Policy Brief, December 2010*CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS*School Attendance Review Board Handbook, 2012**School Attendance Improvement Handbook, 2000*WEB SITES*CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>**Attendance Works: <http://www.attendanceworks.org>**California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance: <http://www.cascwa.org>**California Department of Education: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>**California Healthy Kids Survey: <http://chks.wested.org>**California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey System: <http://www.cal-schls.wested.org>**OnTrackCA: <http://www.ontrackca.org>*

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY**

**Definitions**

*Chronic absentee* means a student who is absent for any reason on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year, when the total number of days the student is absent is divided by the total number of days the student is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays. (Education Code 60901)

*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)

For purposes of classifying a student as a truant, *valid excuse* includes, but is not limited to, the reasons for which a student shall be excused from school pursuant to Education Code 48205 and 48225.5. A valid excuse also may include other reasons that are within the discretion of school administrators and, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse. (Education Code 48260)

*(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)*

*(cf. 5113.2 - Work Permits)*

**Attendance Supervisor(s)**

The Superintendent or designee shall appoint 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)

## **CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)**

### **Addressing Chronic Absence**

When a student is identified as a chronic absentee, the attendance supervisor shall communicate with the student and his/her parents/guardians to determine the reason(s) for the excessive absences and ensure the student and parents/guardians are aware of the adverse consequences of poor attendance.

*(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)*

The student may be referred to a student success team or school-site attendance review team to assist in evaluating his/her needs and identifying strategies and programs to 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-Based Learning)*

*(cf. 6179 - Supplemental Instruction)*

*(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)*

*(cf. 6183 - Home and Hospital Instruction)*

*(cf. 6184 - Continuation Education)*

### **Addressing Truancy**

An attendance supervisor or designee, peace officer, probation officer, or school administrator or designee may, as applicable, 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 trancies he/she has committed:

1. Initial truancy
  - a. The student 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.

*(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)*

- 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)

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)**

- d. The student and, as appropriate, his/her parent/guardian may be requested to attend a meeting with a school counselor or other school designee to discuss the root causes of the attendance issue and develop a joint plan to improve the student's attendance. (Education Code 48264.5)
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 a valid excuse one or more days or is tardy on one or more days during the school year. (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 his/her 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 student may be given a written warning by a peace officer. A record of that warning may be kept at the 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)
  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)

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY** (continued)

- 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)
4. Fourth truancy
    - a. Upon his/her fourth truancy within the same school year, the student may be referred to 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)

**Records**

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain accurate attendance records for students identified as habitual or chronic truants. The Superintendent or designee may 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.

*(cf. 5125 - Student Records)*

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)