

TRUANCY

Under law, a compulsory school-age student is habitually truant if the student has attained the equivalent of 10 full days of nonexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of nonexcused absences during a school year. The board of education is required to enforce the truancy laws of the state. The superintendent/designee shall carry out the responsibilities of the attendance coordinator in accordance with the state law and Department of Education rules.

It is the goal of the Augusta schools to ensure the rights of access for all school-age persons to an appropriate educational opportunity and, when necessary, to develop interventions to regular school curricula for those children and youth at risk of becoming dropouts and those who may have left school.

The following provisions govern the procedure to be followed when a student is habitually truant.

Step one:

When a student has been absent from school for a period of 10 full days or 7 consecutive days without an excuse, a letter is sent to the parents requesting a conference to discuss the student's absences from school and the development of a plan of action to resolve the situation.

The results of the meeting with parents or other actions are recorded.

If this initial meeting does not resolve the situation, the superintendent or his/her designate shall implement interventions that best address the problem. These interventions may include:

- Frequent communication between teacher and family
- Changes in the learning environment
- Mentoring
- Student counseling
- Tutoring, including peer tutoring
- Placement into different classes
- Evaluation for alternative education programs
- Attendance contracts
- Referral to other agencies for family services

Failure of the student or the student's parents to appear at scheduled meetings does not preclude the school from implementing a plan to address the student's habitual truancy.

Step two:

If the student continues to be absent or if the student returns to school (either in the regular or alternative program) and is absent without an excuse for a second period or 5 days, the superintendent is notified. The superintendent shall arrange a meeting with the parents and the student and his/her teachers and support personnel and/or Department of Health and Human Services or Department of Correction officials.

The results of the meeting with parents or other actions are recorded.

If the superintendent or designee is unable to correct the truancy, a letter will be sent via registered mail. The letter will include:

1. Statement that the student is required to attend school, pursuant to section 5001-A.
2. Explain parents' right to inspect the student's attendance record.
3. Explain that the failure to send the student to school and maintain regular attendance is a civil violation, in accordance with section 5053-A.
4. Explain the possible actions
 - a. Notification of local law enforcement department.
 - b. Request for another meeting to review and adjust plan.
 - c. Notification of school board and possible action taken by law enforcement authorities (District Attorney's Office).

LEGAL REFS: M.S.M.A. 5001A and 5053A

Adopted: March 23, 1992, amended August 10, 2005

Department of Public Schools, Augusta, Maine.