

Students

Attendance/Truancy/Dismissal

Attendance

In accordance with Connecticut state law, the Board of Education will require parents to cause their children ages five to sixteen inclusive (to eighteen inclusive as of July 1, 2001) to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. The Stonington Board of Education believes that learning experiences that occur in the classroom are considered to be meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Time lost from class is irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction. The Board will also require that accurate records be kept of the attendance, tardies, and early dismissals of each child. A student should not be absent from school without the parent's knowledge and consent. Verification of any absence should be in writing or by phone call by a parent or guardian.

The administration shall establish guidelines for excused and unexcused absences and such procedures as deemed necessary to determine the cause of truancy, including medical verification for excessive absence, and shall cooperate with other private and governmental agencies in correcting the cause thereof. Parents and/or guardians shall be notified annually of their obligations regarding school attendance.

An absence shall be considered "excused" when a child does not attend school due to illness or injury of student, serious illness of family member which necessitates absence of student, death in the immediate family, religious obligation, a school sponsored activity, college visit, an emergency or other exceptional circumstances as approved by the principal or his/her designee. A phone call made to the school office or a written excuse submitted to school officials must state a reason for such absences and is required from the child's parent or guardian. All other absences with or without written explanation shall be considered unexcused.

Students attending school who are under seven and over eighteen years of age and whose attendance is not required by law but who are registered in a public school must maintain satisfactory attendance.

Truancy

The Board shall report annually to the State Department of Education on a school by school basis the number of children who are habitual truants. A "truant" means a child ages seven through eighteen inclusive who has four unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in one year. A "habitual" truant" is defined as a truant who has twenty unexcused absences in any one year.

Board policy with respect to unexcused absences stresses early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for students exhibiting truancy behavior. School personnel, wherever possible and as much as possible, will seek cooperation from parents and assist parents in remedying and preventing truancy. Only when all local resources are exhausted is referral to legal authorities recommended.

Students

Attendance/Truancy/Dismissal (continued)

Dismissal

No school, grade, or class may be dismissed before the regularly scheduled dismissal time without the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

No teacher may permit any individual student to leave school prior to the regular hour of dismissal without permission of the principal.

No student may be permitted to leave school at any time other than at regular dismissal without the approval of the student's parent/guardian. Early dismissal should be requested only in emergency or unusual situations.

If a court official presents legal permission to take custody of the child, or if a police officer arrests a student, the parent/guardian shall be notified of these situations by the administration.

Request for release of a student during the school day originating outside the schools must be handled by the administration to ensure maximum provisions for the safety and welfare of the student.

(cf.5142.2)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of Parents

10-199-10-202 Attendance, Truancy in General (revised 1995 PA 95-304)

10-202E Policy on Dropout Prevention

10-202F Dropout Prevention Grant Program

10-221 (b) Board of Education to Prescribe Rules

PA 90-240

PA 91-303

Campbell v. New Milford, 193 CONN 93 (1984)

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