

**Student Attendance, Truancy and  
Chronic Absenteeism  
(formerly Student Attendance)**

**I. Attendance and Truancy**

**A. Definitions for Section I**

1. **“Absence”** - any day during which a student is not considered “in attendance” at ~~his/her~~ the student’s assigned school, or on a school sponsored activity (e.g. field trip), for at least one half of the school day.
2. **“Disciplinary absence”** - Any absence as a result of school or district disciplinary action. Any student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. Such absence is not considered excused or unexcused for attendance and truancy purposes.
3. **“Educational evaluation”** - for purposes of this policy, an educational evaluation is an assessment of a student’s educational development, which, based upon the student’s presenting characteristics, would assess (as appropriate) the following areas: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.
4. **“Excused absence”** - a student is considered excused from school if the school has received written documentation describing the reason for the absence within ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school, or if the ~~child-~~ student has been excluded from school in accordance with section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (regarding communicable diseases), and the following criteria are met:
  - a. Any absence before the student’s tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence is considered excused when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence and submits

#5113R(b)

appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.

b. For the student's tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are, with appropriate documentation in accordance with this regulation, considered excused only for the following reasons:

i. student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);

ii. religious holidays;

iii. mandated court appearances (documentation required);

iv. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;

v. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation; or

vi. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.

c. A student, age five (5) to eighteen (18), inclusive, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parent's leave or deployment. In the case of such excused absences, the

#5113R(c)

student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student’s teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to ~~his or her~~ the student’s return to school.

“Excused absence” excludes a student’s engagement in (1) virtual classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged electronic systems, and (4) the completion and submission of assignments, if such engagement accounts for not less than one-half of the school day during remote learning.

5. “In Attendance” - Any day during which a student is present at the student’s assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, for at least half of the regular school day.

6. “Mental health wellness day” - a school day during which a student attends to such student’s emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school.

7. “Remote learning” means instruction by means of one or more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model as may be authorized by the Madison Board of Education (the “Board”) in accordance with applicable law.

6. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Madison Public Schools (the “District”).

7. "Truant" - any student five (5) to eighteen (18) years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

8. "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day for at least one half of the school day, which is not excused or considered a disciplinary absence.

101 “Unexcused absence” excludes a student’s engagement in (1) virtual  
102 classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged  
103 electronic systems, and (4) the completion and submission of  
104 assignments, if such engagement accounts for not less than one-  
105 half of the school day during remote learning.  
106

107  
108 The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building  
109 principal or ~~his/her~~ designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child  
110 may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~ designee, whose  
111 decision shall be final.

112 B. Mental Health Wellness Days  
113

114 Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall be  
115 permitted to take two mental health wellness days during the school year,  
116 during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No  
117 student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school  
118 days.  
119  
120

121 B. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences  
122

- 123 1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within  
124 ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school. Consecutive days of  
125 absence are considered one incidence of absence.  
126
- 127 2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note  
128 from the student’s parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke  
129 in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the  
130 absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.  
131 For any absence due to student illness, the signed note must include the specific  
132 symptom(s) exhibited by the student so that the District can monitor trends that  
133 would suggest the spread of COVID-19.  
134
- 135 3. For the student’s tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence, and all absences thereafter, documentation  
136 of the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above,

137 and must also include the reason for the absence and the following additional  
138 information:

139

140 a. student illness:

141

142 i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse,  
143 who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an  
144 expected return date and including the specific symptom(s) exhibited by  
145 the student so that the District can monitor trends that would suggest the  
146 spread of COVID-19; or

147

148 ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's  
149 medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and  
150 location of the consultation and including the specific symptom(s)  
151 exhibited by the student so that the District can monitor trends that would  
152 suggest the spread of COVID-19.

153

154 b. religious holidays: none.

155

156 c. mandated court appearances:

157

158 i. a police summons;

159

160 ii. a subpoena;

161

162 iii. a notice to appear;

163

164 iv. a signed note from a court official; or

165

166 v. any other official, written documentation of the legal  
167 requirement to appear in court.

168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198

- d. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family: a written document explaining the nature of the emergency.
- e. extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this policy: written pre-approval from the administration, in accordance with this regulation.
- f. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends: none.

~~4. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written documentation. In rare and extraordinary circumstances, a building administrator may, in his/her own discretion, accept the delivery of written documentation through a scanned copy sent by e-mail.~~

- 4. The District reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received, through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.
- 5. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building principal may, at ~~his/her~~ the principal’s own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.

C. Extraordinary Educational Opportunities

- 1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:

199

200 a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the  
201 student's course work or plan of study;

202

203 b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;

204

205 c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and

206

207 d. include content that is highly relevant to the student; while some opportunities  
208 will be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that  
209 would limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.

210

211 2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.

212

213 3. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:

214

215 a. be submitted to the building principal in writing prior to the opportunity, but  
216 no later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in  
217 exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;

218

219 b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;

220

221 c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include  
222 detail as to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of  
223 study; and

224

225 d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.

226

227 4. The building principal shall provide a response in writing and include the  
228 following:

229

- 230 a. either approval or denial of the request;  
231  
232 b. brief reason for any denial;  
233  
234 c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;  
235  
236 d. the specific days approved as excused absences for the opportunity;  
237  
238 e. the understanding that the building administrator may withdraw its approval if  
239 the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon  
240 requirements of the approval.  
241
- 242 5. All decisions of the building principal relating to extraordinary educational  
243 opportunities shall be final.  
244
- 245 6. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary  
246 educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other  
247 students and/or school staff when they return.  
248
- 249 7. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-  
250 case basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for  
251 one student may not be approved for another.  
252
- 253 D. Truancy Exceptions:  
254
- 255 1. A student five (5) or six (6) years of age shall not be considered truant if the  
256 parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the  
257 school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at  
258 five (5) or six (6) years of age.  
259



260 2. ~~A–~~ Until June 20, 2023, a student seventeen (17) years of age shall not be  
261 considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents  
262 to such student’s withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally  
263 appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such  
264 consent. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance  
265 counselor or school administrator from the school that the district provided the  
266 parent (or person having control of the child) with information on the educational  
267 options available in the school system and community.

268  
269 3. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student who is eighteen (18) years of age  
270 or older may withdraw from school. Such student shall personally  
271 appear in person at the school District office and sign a withdrawal  
272 form. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a  
273 guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the  
274 District provided such student with information on the educational  
275 options available in the school system and community.

276  
277 4. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student seventeen (17) years of age shall  
278 not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over  
279 such child withdraws such child from school and enrolls such child  
280 in an adult education program pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-  
281 69. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school  
282 District office and sign an adult education withdrawal and  
283 enrollment form. Such adult education withdrawal and enrollment  
284 form shall include an attestation (1) from a school counselor or  
285 school administrator of the school that the District has provided  
286 such parent or person with information on the educational options  
287 available in the school system and in the community, and (2) from  
288 such parent or person that such child will be enrolled in an adult  
289 education program upon such child's withdrawal from school.

290  
291  
292 3. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in  
293 an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be “truant.”

294  
295 E. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal

296  
297 1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from  
298 school (in accordance with Section ~~D.2,~~ E.2 or E.4. above) and subsequently

299 seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for  
300 up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student’s withdrawal from  
301 school.

302

303 2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with  
304 Section ~~D.2.~~ E.2. or E.4. above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of  
305 ~~his/her~~ the student’s withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations  
306 to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests  
307 readmission.

308

309 F. Determinations of Whether a Student is “In Attendance”:

310

311 1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as  
312 absent unless ~~he or she~~ the student receives an alternative educational program  
313 for at least one half of the regular school day. In any event, the absence is  
314 considered a disciplinary absence, and will not be designated as excused or  
315 unexcused.

316

317 2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular  
318 school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional  
319 time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours  
320 on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two  
321 hours in order to be considered “in attendance.”

322

323 3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance  
324 with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being “in attendance”  
325 for every day that they receive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher  
326 for an amount of time deemed adequate in accordance with applicable law.

327

328 G. Procedures for students in grades K-8\*

329

1. Notification

330

331 a. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any  
332 child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent or other  
333 person having control of the student enrolled in grades K - 8 in writing of the  
334 obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to ensure that such a student  
335 attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving  
336 equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the District.

337

338 b. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any  
339 child during the school year, the administration shall obtain from the parent or  
340 other person having control of the student in grades K-8 a telephone number  
341 or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school  
342 day.

343

344 2. Monitoring

345

346 Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused  
347 absences of students in grades K-8. Whenever such a student fails to report to  
348 school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction  
349 of the building principal [or ~~his/her~~ designee] shall make a reasonable effort to  
350 notify the parent or other person having control of such student by telephone and  
351 by mail of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an  
352 indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence.  
353 [Reasonable efforts shall include two (2) attempts to reach the parent or other  
354 person at the telephone number provided by the parent or other person. Such  
355 attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the Superintendent.] Any  
356 person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from  
357 liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall  
358 have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results  
359 from such notice or failure to give notice.

360

361 [\*Note: State law mandates notification and monitoring only with regard to  
362 students in grades K-8. Boards of Education are free, however, to extend the  
363 application of monitoring and intervention procedures to students at all grade  
364 levels.]

365

366 H. Procedures applicable to students ages five (5) to eighteen (18), inclusive

367 1. Intervention

368

369 a. When a student is truant, the building principal or ~~his/her~~-designee shall  
370 schedule a meeting with the parent (or other person having control of such  
371 student) and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons  
372 for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than ten (10) days  
373 after the student becomes truant. The district shall document the meeting, and  
374 if parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, or is otherwise is non-  
375 responsive, that fact shall also be documented and the meeting shall proceed  
376 with school personnel in attendance.

377

378 b. When a student is truant, the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~-designee shall  
379 coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies  
380 providing child and family services, as appropriate. The district shall  
381 document efforts to contact and include families and to provide early  
382 intervention in truancy matters.

383

384 c. If the Commissioner of Education determines that any school under the  
385 jurisdiction of Madison Board of Education (the "Board") has a  
386 disproportionately high rate of truancy, the district shall implement in that  
387 school a truancy intervention model identified by the Department of Education  
388 pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198e.

389

390 d. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections (a) through (c) above, a  
391 regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be

referred to the building Child Study Team [or other appropriate school-based team] to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The Team will also consider whether the student should be referred to a planning and placement team (“PPT”) meeting to review the student’s need and eligibility for special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be referred to a PPT meeting for program review.

- e. Where the documented implementation of the procedures specified in subsections (a) through (d) above does not result in improved outcomes despite collaboration with the parent/guardian, the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~ designee may, with written parental consent, refer a student who is truant to a Youth Service Bureau.

I. Attendance Records

All attendance records developed by the Board shall include the individual student’s state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

II. **Chronic Absenteeism**

A. Definitions for Section II

- 1. “Chronically absent-~~child student~~” - a ~~child- student~~ who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Board and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year;
- 2. “Absence” - an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes and these administrative regulations;

422 3. “District chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically  
423 absent children under the jurisdiction of the Board in the previous school  
424 year divided by the total number of ~~children~~ students under the  
425 jurisdiction of the Board for such school year; and

426 4. “School chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically  
427 absent ~~children~~ students for a school in the previous school year divided  
428 by the total number of ~~children~~ students enrolled in such school for such  
429 school year.

430 B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams

431 If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or  
432 higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district.

433

434 If a school under the jurisdiction of the Board has a school chronic  
435 absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an  
436 attendance review team for that school.

437

438 If the Board has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism  
439 rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance  
440 review team for the school district or at each such school.

441

442 If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or  
443 higher and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of  
444 fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team  
445 for the school district or at each such school.

446

447 C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams

448

449 Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include  
450 school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers,  
451 representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to  
452 student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined

under I.A.79, and chronically absent ~~children~~ students and their parents or guardians.

)  
Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent ~~children~~ students, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent ~~children~~ students and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Board and its attendance review teams, if any, will consider any chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

**III. Reports to the State Regarding Truancy Data**

Annually, each local and regional board of education shall include information regarding the number of truants and chronically absent ~~children~~ students in the strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Measures of truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken by the board of education to reduce truancy in the school district.

**IV. Evolving State Department of Education and State Board of Education Guidance**

483 The Board will comply with any and all guidance issued by the State Department  
484 of Education and/or State Board of Education regarding attendance requirements,  
485 including during periods of remote learning. ~~blended learning, and regarding~~  
486 ~~attendance requirements of students who choose not to participate.~~  
487

488 Legal References:

- 489  
490 Public Act No. 21-46  
491  
492 June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-2  
493  
494 Public Act No. 21-199  
495  
496 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220  
497  
498 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184  
499  
500 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186  
501  
502 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a  
503  
504 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b  
505  
506 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c  
507  
508 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d  
509  
510 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198e  
511  
512 Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information  
513 System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)  
514  
515 Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, *Definitions of Excused and*  
516 *Unexcused Absences* (June 27, 2012)  
517  
518 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the*  
519 *Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence*  
520 *Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)  
521  
522 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Reducing Chronic Absence in*  
523 *Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and*  
524 *Districts* (April 2017)  
525



526 Connecticut State Department of Education Memorandum, *Youth Service Bureau*  
527 *Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules* (February 22, 2018)  
528  
529 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide*  
530 (February 2018)  
531  
532 ~~Connecticut State Department of Education, *Adapt, Advance, Achieve:*~~  
533 ~~*Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* (June 29, 2020), available at~~  
534 ~~<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf>~~  
535