

Saginaw Public Schools



2025-26

FROM ABSENCE TO ACHIEVEMENT

SPSD Truancy & Attendance Handbook: Ensuring Every Student's Future



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Executive Summary

Student success begins with consistent attendance. While teacher effectiveness plays a crucial role in academic achievement, even the best educators cannot be effective if students are not present in the classroom. Research consistently links regular school attendance to higher academic performance, improved social development, and long-term success.

Chronic absenteeism—defined as missing 10% or more of school days—significantly impacts student achievement. According to national studies, students with excessive absences perform lower on standardized tests, are more likely to fall behind academically, and face increased risks of grade retention and dropping out. Data also shows that attendance patterns established in early education predict long-term academic outcomes, emphasizing the importance of proactive intervention.

The Saginaw Public School District (SPSD) recognizes the critical need for a comprehensive truancy prevention and intervention plan to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive. Our strategy focuses on early identification, multi-tiered interventions, and collaborative partnerships with families and community stakeholders. With the addition of dedicated Truancy Officers, Attendance Improvement Paraprofessionals, and a structured Attendance Review Committee, SPSP is committed to addressing barriers to attendance and fostering a culture of accountability and support.

This handbook outlines a clear, step-by-step process for monitoring attendance, implementing early interventions, and escalating support as needed, ensuring that students receive the necessary guidance to remain engaged in their education. The plan also incorporates data-driven strategies to address disparities in attendance, particularly among historically underserved student populations.

Regular attendance is not just a school requirement—it is a fundamental component of academic success and future opportunity. By working together, SPSP can reduce chronic absenteeism, support students and families, and build a stronger foundation for student achievement.

Michigan Compulsory Attendance Law

(MCL 380.1561) – Revised School Code

Compulsory Attendance Requirement

Under Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 380.1561, the state requires all children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend school for the entire school year every year. This attendance must be continuous and consecutive unless an exemption applies.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

A child may be legally exempt from compulsory school attendance if they meet one of the following conditions:

- Nonpublic School Enrollment: The child is attending a state-approved nonpublic or parochial school.
- Home Education: The child is being homeschooled in an organized educational program that includes instruction in reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, literature, writing, and English grammar.
- Age-Based Exemption: A child who turns 16 may be excused from school if their parent or legal guardian provides written consent for withdrawal from formal education.

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Pending Legislation: Senate Bill 285

The Michigan Senate is considering a change to the compulsory attendance age requirement. Senate Bill 285 proposes:

- Lowering the compulsory school age to 5, making kindergarten attendance mandatory.
- If passed, this law will take effect starting with the 2025-2026 school year.
- Parents and legal guardians will be required to enroll all children who turn 5 years old by September 1 in a kindergarten program.

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Parent & Guardian Responsibilities

Michigan law holds parents and legal guardians accountable for ensuring their child attends school regularly. If a student accumulates excessive unexcused absences, truancy intervention measures will be initiated, including:

- School-level interventions
- Attendance improvement plans
- Home visits from truancy officers
- Legal action if necessary, as per state and district truancy policies

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Legal Implications for Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with Michigan's compulsory attendance law may result in:

- A formal truancy referral
- Parental fines or legal action
- A court-ordered attendance improvement plan

For more details on Michigan's attendance laws, visit:

Michigan Legislature - MCL 380.1561

Saginaw Public School District (SPSD) Attendance & Truancy Procedures & Flowchart

Aligned with the ISD County-Wide Truancy Flowchart

Purpose

This document outlines the attendance intervention and truancy process for SPSPD, aligning with Saginaw ISD's county-wide truancy procedures while incorporating the district's two dedicated Truancy Officers, Attendance Improvement Paraprofessionals (AIPs), the Attendance Review Committee (ARC), and the implementation of Parent Conferences and School Attendance Agreements.



Truancy Officers (Lead Role)

- Elementary Truancy Officer (PreK-5): Focuses on early intervention, parent engagement, and school-based strategies to improve attendance before legal action.
- Secondary Truancy Officer (6-12): Works with middle and high school students, addressing chronic absenteeism through intervention strategies, law enforcement collaboration, and court proceedings.

Step 1: Early Attendance Interventions (School-Level Response)

Activation Point: 2 Unexcused Absences

Teacher Responsibility:

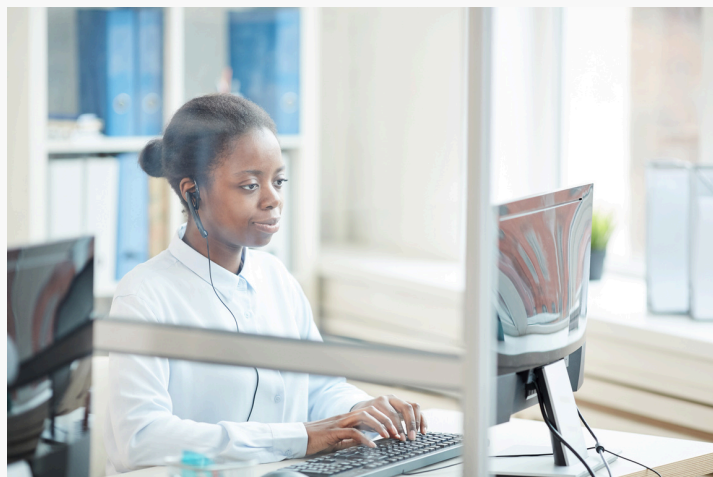
- Make direct contact with the parent/guardian via phone call, email, or personal note.
- Document the outreach in the student information system.



Activation Point: 3 Unexcused Absences

Attendance Improvement Paraprofessional (AIP) Responsibilities:

- Review attendance data and identify patterns.
- Contact parents via phone call, letter, or home visit to discuss attendance concerns.
- Educate parents and students about Michigan attendance laws and the importance of daily attendance.
- Implement building-level interventions (mentoring, counseling referrals, or incentive programs).



Activation Point: 5 Unexcused Absences

- **District Sends District Letter #1**
 - Official notification to parents regarding attendance concerns.
 - Copies maintained in student records.
- **Parent Conference #1 (Mandatory)**
 - **Development of a School Attendance Agreement/Intervention Plan:**
 - Agreement signed by Parent, Student, Social Worker, Attendance Improvement Paraprofessional, and School Intervention Team.
 - Plan includes student attendance expectations, intervention strategies, and consequences.
- **Attendance Review Committee (ARC) Responsibilities:**
 - Each school building will establish an Attendance Review Committee.
 - The ARC will review the pupil's attendance record after 5 absences or 7 tardies in a semester.
 - The committee will re-examine each pupil's attendance record after every 2 additional absences/tardies.
 - Recommend interventions such as additional parent meetings, attendance contracts, and referrals.
- **Truancy Officer (Elementary or Secondary) Responsibilities:**
 - Begin Case Management: Open a case for the student and track intervention efforts.
 - Conduct direct parent outreach via home visit using district-provided vehicle or scheduled school meeting.
 - Coordinate with AIPs, counselors, and social workers for additional support.
- **Intervention Checklist Begins**
 - Track interventions, including parent communication, referrals, and meetings.
 - Document if CPS, DHHS, or law enforcement contacts are needed.



Step 2: Escalated Interventions (District & SISD Involvement)

Activation Point: 7-9 Unexcused Absences

District Sends District Letter #2 (cc'd to SISD Truancy Officer)

- A second formal warning letter is issued to parents.
- The letter is copied to the SISD Truancy Officer for awareness.

Parent Conference #2 (Mandatory)

- Review progress on the School Attendance Agreement/Intervention Plan.
- Implement additional interventions or modify the attendance plan if needed.
- Mandatory Meeting with Family Engagement Specialist (Mrs. Inez).
- Parents must sign documentation acknowledging the seriousness of continued absenteeism.

Truancy Officer (Elementary or Secondary) Responsibilities:

- Take the lead role in attendance enforcement.
- Conduct home visits using district-provided vehicles to directly engage with families.
- Issue formal truancy warning notices to parents.
- Work with community agencies to provide family support.
- Implement additional behavioral contracts or attendance agreements.
- Determine if legal intervention is necessary and coordinate with school staff.

School Administrator Responsibilities:

- Continue documentation in Intervention Checklist.
- Refer the case to the SISD Truancy Officer for additional support if needed.

Attendance Review Committee (ARC) Responsibilities:

- Continue monitoring attendance cases and provide ongoing intervention recommendations.
- Work with Truancy Officers to ensure compliance with attendance agreements.

For Students in Grades 9-12:

- If excessive absences continue, the student may be referred to the Alternative School (Pending Board/Superintendent Approval).

Step 3: Legal & Court Interventions

Activation Point : 10+ Unexcused Absences

District Sends Certified Letter #1 to Parent/Guardian

- Notifies parents of legal consequences under Michigan Compulsory Attendance Law.
- Copies forwarded to SISD Truancy Officer and school administration.

Truancy Officer (Elementary or Secondary) Responsibilities:

- Prepare legal documentation and submit a truancy petition.
- Collaborate with law enforcement and juvenile court officials.
- Serve legal notices to parents/guardians regarding compulsory school attendance.
- Conduct follow-up home visits to confirm compliance or lack thereof.
- Represent the school district in court hearings.
- Continue to monitor compliance with any court-ordered attendance improvement plans.

SISD Truancy Officer Actions (if escalated to county level):

- Petition filed with the Prosecutor's Office for court intervention.
- Collaboration with juvenile courts and law enforcement to determine appropriate legal actions.
- Monitor compliance with court-ordered attendance improvement plans.

Legal Consequences for Parents & Students (Per County Guidelines):

- Delayed Sentence: Parents may be placed on a monitoring period to ensure compliance.
- Probation: Student and family may be required to report to a probation officer.
- Fines or Jail Time: As determined by the court for continued non-compliance.



Step 4: Ongoing Monitoring & Support

Truancy Officers (Elementary & Secondary) Take Lead:

- Continue tracking attendance cases for students at risk of chronic truancy.
- Maintain communication with law enforcement and the court system.
- Support students facing legal consequences by coordinating with school staff.
- Conduct follow-up home visits using district vehicles to ensure compliance.

Attendance Improvement Paraprofessionals (AIPs):

- Continue monitoring attendance patterns and updating student intervention plans.
- Offer incentives, recognition programs, and peer mentorship to encourage attendance.
- Provide support for students transitioning back to school after intervention.

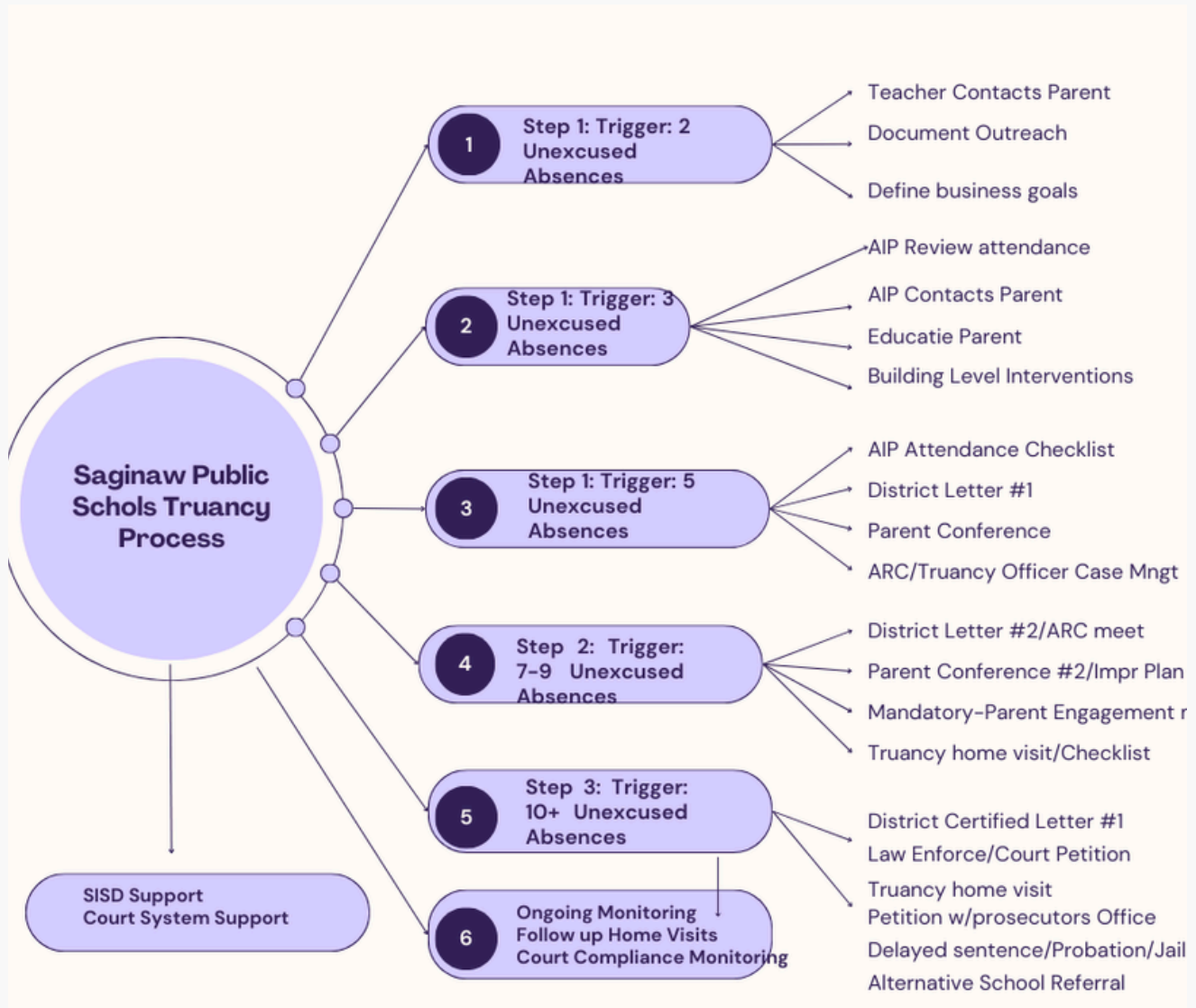


Key Alignment with Saginaw ISD County-Wide Flowchart

SPSD Steps	Saginaw ISD Truancy Process
Step 1: 3-5 Absences – School Interventions	Step 1: District Letter #1
Step 2: 7-9 Absences – SISD Referral	Step 2: Intervention Checklist
Step 2: 7-9 Absences – District Letter #2	Step 3: District Letter #2 (cc'd to SISD Truancy Officer)
Step 2: 9+ Absences – SISD Referral	Step 4: Referral to SISD Truancy Officer
Step 3: 10+ Absences – Court Action	Step 5: Certified Letter #1 & Legal Consequences
Step 3: Court Petition	Step 6: Prosecutor & Court System

Saginaw Public Schools

Truancy Process



A Message to Families: The Power of Attendance

Dear Families,

Your child's future starts with showing up—every single day. Missing just two days a month, even in elementary school, adds up to an entire month of lost learning each year. Research shows that students who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are less likely to read at grade level by third grade—a key predictor of future academic success.

By middle and high school, attendance becomes even more critical. Students who miss just one week per semester in 9th grade are 25% less likely to graduate on time. Even strong students can struggle when they miss too much class time.

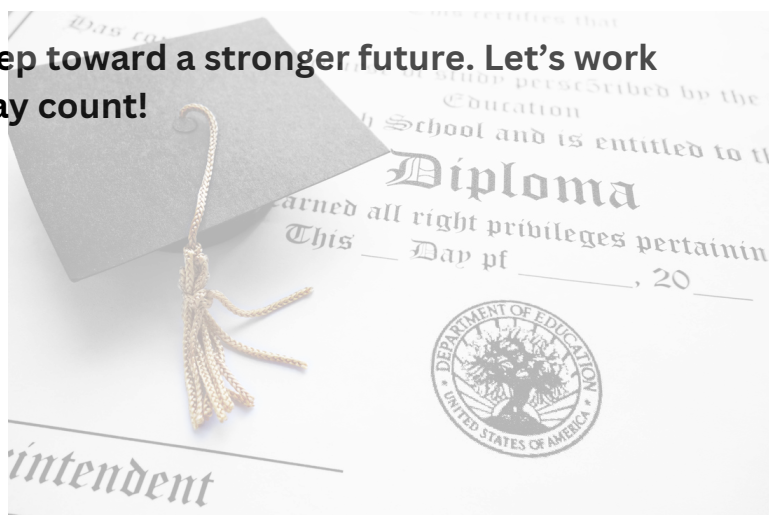
We're Here to Help

We understand that challenges like transportation, health issues, or family responsibilities can make it difficult for students to attend school. If your child is facing obstacles, we are here to support you.

How You Can Help

- Set the expectation that attending school every day is important.
- Monitor absences and address patterns early.
- Reach out to us if your family needs assistance—we're in this together.

Every day in school is a step toward a stronger future. Let's work together to make every day count!



Acknowledgements

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