

Regulation #5113
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 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 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 (10th) absence is considered excused when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence and submits

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appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.

b. For the student’s tenth (10th) 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;
- 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), 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 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 return to school.

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.

66

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

68

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

72

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

75

76 The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building
77 principal or his/her designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may
78 appeal that decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee, whose decision shall be
79 final.

80

81 B. Mental Health Wellness Days

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83 Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall be
84 permitted to take two mental health wellness days during the school year,
85 during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No
86 student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school days.
87 Mental health wellness days shall be excused when permission by the student's
88 parent/guardian is documented by the student's school, regardless of the
89 number of absences a student has accrued in the school year. Mental health
90 wellness days will not be included in reporting or referrals related to truancy.
91 Mental health wellness day will count as an "absence" for determining chronic
92 absenteeism, as defined in Section II of this policy.

93

94 BC. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences

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96 1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within ten
97 (10) school days of the student's return to school. Consecutive days of absence are
98 considered one incidence of absence.

99

100 2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note from
101 the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person

102 with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by
103 the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate. For any
104 absence due to student illness, the signed note must include the specific symptom(s)
105 exhibited by the student so that the District can monitor trends that would suggest the
106 spread of COVID-19.

- 107
- 108 3. For the student's tenth (10th) absence, and all absences thereafter, documentation of
109 the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and must
110 also include the reason for the absence and the following additional information:

111

112 a. student illness:

- 113
- 114 i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse, who
115 has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return
116 date and including the specific symptom(s) exhibited by the student so that the
117 District can monitor trends that would suggest the spread of COVID-19; or
118 ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's medical
119 professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and location of the
120 consultation and including the specific symptom(s) exhibited by the student so
121 that the District can monitor trends that would suggest the spread of COVID-
122 19.

123 b. religious holidays: none.

124 c. mandated court appearances:

- 125 i. a police summons;
- 126 ii. a subpoena;
- 127 iii. a notice to appear;
- 128 iv. a signed note from a court official; or
- 129 v. any other official, written documentation of the legal requirement to
130 appear in court.
- 131

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

141

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

146

147 5. The District reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received,
148 through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.

149

150 6. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10)
151 school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If
152 documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building
153 principal may, at his/her own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for
154 provision of the completed documentation.

155

156 **ED.** Extraordinary Educational Opportunities

157

- 158 1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:
- 159 a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the student's
160 course work or plan of study;
- 161 b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;
- 162 c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and

- 163 d. include content that is highly relevant to the student; while some opportunities will
164 be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that would
165 limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.
166
- 167 2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.
168
- 169 3. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:
170 a. be submitted to the building principal in writing prior to the opportunity, but no
171 later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in exceptional
172 circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;
173 b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;
174 c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include detail as
175 to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study; and
176 d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.
177
- 178 4. The building principal shall provide a response in writing and include the following:
179 a. either approval or denial of the request;
180 b. brief reason for any denial;
181 c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;
182 d. the specific days approved as excused absences for the opportunity;
183 e. the understanding that the building administrator may withdraw its approval if the
184 opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon requirements
185 of the approval.
186
- 187 5. All decisions of the building principal relating to extraordinary educational
188 opportunities shall be final.
189
- 190 6. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary
191 educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other students
192 and/or school staff when they return.
193

194 7. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-case
195 basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for one
196 student may not be approved for another.

197

198 D.E. Truancy Exceptions:

199

200 1. A student five (5) or six (6) years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or
201 person having control over such student has appeared personally at the school district
202 office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five (5) or six (6)
203 years of age.

204

205 2. Until June 30, 2023, A student seventeen (17) years of age shall not be considered
206 truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents to such
207 student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the
208 school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent. Such
209 withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school
210 administrator from the school that the district provided the parent (or person having
211 control of the child) with information on the educational options available in the
212 school system and community.

213

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

220

221 4. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student seventeen (17) years of age shall not be considered
222 truant if the parent or person having control over such child withdraws such child from
223 school and enrolls such child in an adult education program pursuant to Conn. Gen.
224 Stat. § 10-69. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school District
225 office and sign an adult education withdrawal and enrollment form. Such adult
226 education withdrawal and enrollment form shall include an attestation (1) from a
227 school counselor or school administrator of the school that the District has provided
228 such parent or person with information on the educational options available in the
229 school system and in the community, and (2) from such parent or person that such

230 [child will be enrolled in an adult education program upon such child's withdrawal](#)
231 [from school.](#)

232
233 35. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student
234 in an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be “truant.”

235
236 EF. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal

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238 1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from school
239 (in accordance with Section D.2, above) and subsequently seeks readmission, the
240 Board may deny school accommodations to the student for up to ninety (90) school
241 days from the date of the student’s withdrawal from school.

242
243 2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with Section
244 D.2, above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of his/her withdrawal, the
245 Board shall provide school accommodations to the student not later than three (3)
246 school days after the student requests readmission.

247
248 EG. Determinations of Whether a Student is “In Attendance”:

249
250 1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as absent
251 unless he or she receives an alternative educational program for at least one half of the
252 regular school day. In any event, the absence is considered a disciplinary absence, and
253 will not be designated as excused or unexcused.

254
255 2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular
256 school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time
257 offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours
258 on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours
259 in order to be considered “in attendance.”

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

265

266 GH. Procedures for students in grades K-8*

267 1. Notification

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

274

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

279

280 2. Monitoring

281 Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of
282 students in grades K-8. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a
283 regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building
284 principal [or ~~his/her~~ designee] shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or
285 other person having control of such student by telephone and by mail of the student's
286 absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other
287 person is aware of the student's absence. [Reasonable efforts shall include two (2)
288 attempts to reach the parent or other person at the telephone number provided by the
289 parent or other person. Such attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the
290 Superintendent.] Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice
291 shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or

292 imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding
293 which results from such notice or failure to give notice.

294

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

298

299 HJ. Procedures applicable to students ages five (5) to eighteen (18)

300 1. Intervention

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

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

313 c. When a student is truant, the Superintendent or designee shall provide notice to the
314 student's parent or guardian of the information concerning the existence and
315 availability of the 2-1-1 Infoline program, and other pediatric mental and
316 behavioral health screening services and tools described in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-
317 22r.

318

319 d. Beginning July 1, 2023, when a student is truant, an appropriate school mental
320 health specialist, as determined by the District, shall conduct an evaluation of the
321 student to determine if additional behavioral health interventions are necessary for
322 the well-being of the child. "School mental health specialist" means any person
323 employed by the District to provide mental health services to students, including
324 but not limited to a school social worker, school psychologist, trauma specialist,
325 behavior technician, board certified behavior analyst, school counselor, licensed
326 professional counselor or licensed marriage and family therapist.

327

328 ee. If the Commissioner of Education determines that any school under the jurisdiction
329 of Madison Board of Education (the “Board”) has a disproportionately high rate of
330 truancy, the district shall implement in that school a truancy intervention model
331 identified by the Department of Education pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198e.

332 ef. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections (a) through (c) above, a
333 regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be
334 referred to the building Child Study Team [or other appropriate school-based team]
335 to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The Team will
336 also consider whether the student should be referred to a planning and placement
337 team (“PPT”) meeting to review the student’s need and eligibility for special
338 education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems
339 should be referred to a PPT meeting for program review.

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

345
346 **II. Attendance Records**

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

350
351 **II. Chronic Absenteeism**

352 **A. Definitions for Section II**

- 353 1. “Chronically absent child” - a child who is enrolled in a school under the
354 jurisdiction of the Board and whose total number of absences at any time
355 during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total
356 number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such
357 school year;

358 2. “Absence” - an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence,
359 as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to section
360 10-198b of the general statutes and these administrative regulations;

361 3. “District chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically absent
362 children under the jurisdiction of the Board in the previous school year divided
363 by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board for such
364 school year; and

365 4. “School chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically absent
366 children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of
367 children enrolled in such school for such school year.

368 B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams

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

371
372 If a school under the jurisdiction of the Board has a school chronic absenteeism
373 rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team
374 for that school.

375
376 If the Board has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of
377 fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the
378 school district or at each such school.

379
380 If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher
381 and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent
382 (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district
383 or at each such school.

384
385 C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams

386 Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include
387 school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers,

388 representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to
389 student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined under
390 I.A.7, and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians.

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

397

398 **D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan**

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

402

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

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

412

413 **IV. Evolving State Department of Education Guidance**

414 The Board will comply with any and all guidance issued by the State Department of
415 Education regarding attendance requirements, including during periods of blended
416 learning, and regarding attendance requirements of students who choose not to
417 participate.

418

419 Legal References:

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421 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

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423 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184

424

425 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186

426

427 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a

428

429 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b

430

431 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c

432

433 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d

434

435 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198e

436

437 [Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198f](#)

438

439 Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System
440 (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)

441

442 Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, *Definitions of Excused and*
443 *Unexcused Absences* (June 27, 2012)

444

445 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the*
446 *Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence*
447 *Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)

448

449 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Reducing Chronic Absence in*
450 *Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts*
451 (April 2017)

452

453 Connecticut State Department of Education Memorandum, *Youth Service Bureau*
454 *Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules* (February 22, 2018)

455

456 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide*
457 (February 2018)

458

459 [Connecticut State Department of Education, *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's*](#)
460 [Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#) (June 29, 2020), available at [https://portal.et.gov/-](https://portal.et.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf)
461 [/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf](#)

462

463 [Connecticut State Department of Education Memorandum, *Mental Health Wellness*](#)
464 [Days](#) (January 24, 2022)