

Existing policy, number 5113 adopted 6/19/08, modified and with updated legal reference.

*Added by
culture & climate
Training letter
etc.*

Students

Attendance and Excuses

A. Introduction

Regular attendance is essential for an effective school experience and necessary for annual promotion. The responsibility for regular attendance rests with the parents or guardians of the student. The Derby Schools shall make every effort to keep the appropriate person informed in this most critical area.

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children, ages five through eighteen inclusive, to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Parents or persons having control of a child five years of age have the option of not sending the child to school until ages six or seven. Mandatory attendance terminates upon graduation or withdrawal with written parent/guardian consent at ages ~~sixteen or seventeen~~. ~~effective July 1, 2001.~~

State Board of Education definition of being "in attendance:" A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is lost instructional opportunity. The Board of Education requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent.

B. Excused Absences

An absence shall be considered "excused" when a child does not attend school due to illness or injury, death in the immediate family, religious obligation, an emergency, or other exceptional circumstances as approved by the building principal. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child's parent or guardian. All other absences, with or without written explanation, shall be considered unexcused.

Students who plan to be absent for reasons other than those listed above, should seek approval by presenting a note from home to the principal. Responsibility for completion of missed class work lies with the student, not the teacher. Unless a student has an extended illness, all make-up work will be completed within five days after the student returns to school.

Students

Attendance and Excuses (continued)

C. Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence occurs when a student is out of school for reasons other than those approved as excused absences. A family vacation does not qualify as an excused absence. When a student is absent for an unexcused reason, the amount and kind of assistance provided shall be at the discretion of the student's teacher(s) after consultation with the building administrator.

D. Procedure

Any student who is absent for any cause shall have his/her parent or guardian contact the school office giving the reason for such absence.

E. Dismissals

1. Dismissal Request by Parents, Other or Outside Agencies

- a. No child shall be dismissed from school until the administration or other authorized person is satisfied that the student is being released at the request of the parent with whom the child lives, guardian or other authorized individual. If the administration has any doubt regarding the release request, the student shall not be released.

In cases where a parent in possession of custody award from the court makes a specific request regarding non-release of his/her child to the non-custodial parent, the request shall be honored upon receipt of a copy of the custody award. Should the non-custodial parent arrive at his/her child's school and ask that the student be released to him/her, the administration shall contact the custodial parent and, if deemed necessary, enlist the aid of the police department to assure that the custodial parent's directions are followed.

- b. **Emergency Request for Dismissal**

Telephone calls requesting release shall not be honored until the request has been verified by calling the parent or other authorized individual after terminating the conversation in which the release is requested. Parent, legal guardian, or authorized individual, shall come to the school for the child if release is approved.

In cases where an individual comes to the school requesting release of a student, every precaution should be taken to identify and make sure that the individual has the authority to request this release.

Students

Attendance and Excuses

E. Dismissal (continued)

c. Dismissal for Doctor or Dentist Appointment

Dismissal request for appointments with doctors or dentists during the school day shall be honored providing other arrangements cannot be made.

d. Dismissal for Music, Dance and Other Private Lessons

Dismissal requests for the student to take private lessons such as music, dancing or art shall not be honored.

e. Dismissal to Attend Religious Activities

Every effort will be made by school authorities to cooperate with those responsible for religious activities. Dismissal requests to participate in religious activities shall be honored providing other satisfactory arrangements cannot be made.

f. Excuse from Physical Education

Excuses from physical education for more than three consecutive classes shall be granted on a physician's certificate stating that the student is physically unable to take such training. The certificate must be reissued at the beginning of each school year if exemption is to continue.

2. Dismissals Initiated by School Authorities

a. Dismissal Because of Sickness of Students

It frequently is necessary to dismiss students who are ill, or who have been slightly injured while in school. In such cases, the recommendation of the nurse is usually followed although the ultimate decision rests with the administration.

If parents can be reached by telephone, they should be notified of the child's condition and inform the school when they will pick up the student. If no contact can be made with the home or the parent, arrangements should be made with one of the emergency contacts where there is a responsible person. If parental or emergency contacts are unavailable, the nurse or administration, at their discretion, may contact emergency (911) services to ensure the health and safety of the child. If school personnel contact emergency services, the parents/guardians are responsible for all incurred costs.

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Attendance and Excuses

2. Dismissals Initiated by School Authorities (continued)

b. Students Leaving Grounds

No student shall leave the school premises during school hours without permission of the administration. No elementary school child shall be permitted to leave school prior to dismissal at the request or in the company of anyone other than a school employee, a police officer, a DCF case worker, court official, or the parent/legal guardian of the child, unless the permission of the parent is secured.

Middle School

A. Procedure

Students in grades 7 and 8 could face retention when their absence from school exceeds 20% of the school year. Notification shall be made periodically to parents regarding attendance records of students. In addition to the report card system, parents will be notified by mail of excessive absences. All absences from school/class will count toward the number of allowable absences per year. The following interventions will take place when the specific numbers of absences have been accumulated:

1. At 3 absences, within a marking period, the child's homeroom teacher and guidance counselor shall meet with student to discuss his/her attendance and send written notification to parents.
2. At 20 absences, written notification shall be sent to the parents informing them of the situation and a team conference with the parent will be scheduled.
3. At 30 absences, a second parent conference shall be held with the team members and the building principal.
4. At this conference, possible retention shall be discussed if further absences occur. The student shall also attend the meeting. Excessive absences due to unavoidable circumstances will be reviewed at this meeting. If the student conscientiously kept up with his/her work and had no control over his/her absence, retention shall not have to be an option.

B. Appeal Procedure

If the parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the decision of the building administrator regarding possible retention, the parent/guardian may appeal, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools. All such appeals must be received prior to June 1st. A decision will be rendered by the Superintendent of Schools prior to the last day of school in June.

Students

Attendance and Excuses (continued)

Grades 9-12

A student who exceeds five unexcused absences in a marking period will be subject to a reduction of his/her grade due to lack of class participation due to absence. Teachers will count non-attendance and the resulting lack of participation as 10% of the marking period grade.

Absences from class and/or school will only be excused for the following reasons:

1. Illness
2. Long-term or chronic illness verified by the school nurse or a physician
3. Death in the immediate family
4. Religious holidays
5. Legal obligations
6. School sponsored activities (field trips, assembly programs, etc)
7. Other situations that are approved by the building administrator(s).

It is the responsibility of the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide a parent note or other documentation to support the request for an excused absence.

Any consideration of absences beyond the defined limit in this policy will be made by made by the administration in consultation with the individual teacher(s) at the request of the student and parent.

Tardiness To Class

Students who are tardy to class will receive the following consequences:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 st offense | -verbal warning from the teacher |
| 2 nd offense | -teacher assigned detention |
| 3 rd offense | -teacher assigned detention and parent notification by the teacher |
| 4 th offense | -teacher will refer student to the administration for possible disciplinary action |

Any further offenses of tardiness will result in other disciplinary action including assignment to in-school suspension.

Tardiness To Class

A student who is tardy to class more than 15 minutes without a pass from an administrator, nurse, faculty member, or authorized staff member will be considered absent from class.

Students

Attendance and Excuses (continued)

Class Cuts

Any student who is present in school but absent from class without permission from an administrator, nurse, faculty member, or authorized staff member will be issued a class cut. The teacher will submit a class cut form to the administration, and the administration will give an office detention and will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) by letter. A student who cuts a class a second time will lose credit in the course. The teacher will submit a class cut form indicating a second class cut to the administration, and the administration will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the loss of credit.

Loss of credit due to class cutting is not subject to appeal by the student unless the administration determines that extraordinary extenuating circumstances occurred in a particular case.

Truancy

Connecticut General Statutes define a truant as a child who fails to attend school from age five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive. The school administration will make a concerted effort to prevent and remedy truancy in its early stages for students who are found to be truant. These efforts will include holding a meeting with appropriate school staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) after the student's fourth (4th) unexcused absence (truancy) within a month or tenth (10th) unexcused absence (truancy) in a school year. The Superintendent is required to bring a truant student's case to the Superior Court under the Family with Service Needs Law (FWSN) if the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to attend the required meeting with school personnel or fail to cooperate with the school administration in trying to solve the child's truancy problem. Prior to a written complaint to Superior Court, a referral will be made to the Child Study Team to determine whether or not an educational evaluation is appropriate.

Remediation of Truancy

School personnel shall seek cooperation from parents or other persons having control of such child and assist them in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations which will detail the following school district obligations under the district's truancy policy:

1. Notify parents annually of their obligations under the attendance policy.
2. Obtain telephone numbers for emergency record cards or other means of contacting parents or other persons having control of the child during the school day.
3. Establish a system to monitor student attendance.

Students

Attendance and Excuses

Remediation of Truancy (continued)

4. Make a reasonable effort to notify parents or other persons having control of the child when a child does not arrive at school and there has been no previous approval or other indication which indicates parents are aware of the absence. *(Note: Persons who in good faith give or fail to give notice pursuant to this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.)*
5. Counselor Responsibilities. The guidance counselor will:
 - A. At the first unexcused absence, arrange a conference with the student to provide counseling and make any required adjustments.
 - B. When notified of the third unexcused absence arrange a conference between the student and guidance counselor and send written notification to parents.
 - C. Arrange a meeting within ten (10) days of the fourth unexcused absence in a month or the tenth unexcused absence during the school year with the student, parents, and a school administrator.
6. Administrative Responsibilities. Whenever a child enrolled in school, ages five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive, unless such child has either graduated from high school or withdrawn with written parental/guardian permission at ages sixteen or seventeen, effective July 1, 2001, fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent, (or other person having control of the child), is aware of the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, and by mail the parent or such other person shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of the school principal. The required mail notice shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in one month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court alleging the belief that the acts or omission of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs.

The school administration will make early concentrated efforts to prevent and remedy truancy in its beginning stages. These efforts will include:

Students

Attendance and Excuses

Remediation of Truancy (continued)

- A. For the student's unexcused absence from a course which results in Grade reduction, the administrator will:
1. Confer with the student.
 2. Inform the parent by phone or mail.
- B. The school will have the appropriate staff member(s) arrange a meeting with the parent (or other person having control) of the child who is truant within ten (10) school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in one school year. At this meeting a designated staff shall coordinate services with and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and family services.
- The Superintendent of Schools shall bring the child's case to Superior Court under the Families with Service Needs law if the parent (or other person having control) fails to:
1. attend the required meeting to evaluate why the child is truant, or
 2. cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem.
- C. When a student's outstanding performance for the latter portion of a marking period may not fully be acknowledged because of the grading restrictions of this policy and upon teacher recommendation, the Principal may review the circumstances and adjust the student's grade.
- D. At the beginning of each new school year, any student who has had ten or more unexcused absences will be identified as an "at risk student" and monitored by appropriate staff. A letter will be sent to parents, and the school social worker will meet with the student to discuss the importance of regular attendance.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents (as amended by PA 9 8-248 and PA 00-157)

10-185 Penalty

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants.
(Revised by PA 95-304, PA 00-157, and PA 11-136)

Students

Attendance and Excuses

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)
10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general
10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program
46b-149 Family with Service Needs
Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn 93 (1984)
Action taken by State Board of Education on Jan. 2, 2008, to define attendance

Policy adopted:

DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Derby, Connecticut

**DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF PARENTAL OBLIGATIONS
UNDER C.G.S. 10-184**

Dear (Parent(s) Name),

Connecticut law requires that annually the school district provide you a written notice of your obligations under Connecticut General Statute 10-184. This law requires each parent or guardian of a child five year of age and older and under eighteen years of age to ensure that the child attends school regularly when school is in session - unless such parent or other person shows that the child is receiving equivalent instruction elsewhere, or that the child has graduated from high school. The parent or person having control of a child sixteen or seventeen years of age may consent to such child's withdrawal from school by signing a withdrawal form at the school district office.

Regular student attendance is essential to the educational process. So we can inform you if your child is absent without a previous explanation, Connecticut law also require that we obtain from you a telephone number or other means of contacting you during the school day. Please complete and return the form attached.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Principal

**DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PARENT NOTIFICATION FORM**

Name(s) of student(s):

Father's Name (please print)

Address
Home Telephone
Work Address
Work Telephone #
Emergency Telephone #
Neighbor's Telephone #

Mother's Name (please print)

Address
Home Telephone
Work Address
Work Telephone #
Emergency Telephone #
Neighbor's Telephone #

DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Parent Notification Letter For Truancy Problems

(Date)

Dear (Parents Name),

As you know, children must attend school regularly to be successful. There is a compulsory school attendance law in Connecticut and parents and guardians are legally responsible for keeping their children in school. I'm sure that you want your child to do well in school and therefore, we are asking you for your help. (Child's Name) has (number of unexcused absences) from school. You have already received information from the school district on the attendance policy which states that if a student is absent for more than 20 days, s/he may not be promoted to the next grade.

(Child's Name) has a serious attendance problem and we all need to work together to solve it. Please contact (Staff Contact Person) at (Telephone Number) immediately for an appointment. We will work with you and your child to improve school attendance.

Sincerely,

Principal