

Elementary Student Attendance

I Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences

- A. Excused absences include but are not limited to;
 - 1. Absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others,
 - a. Illness that persists longer than three days will require some form of verification in writing from a health professional
 - 2. Absences due to illness or death in the student's immediate family,
 - 3. Absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith, and
 - 4. Absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the administrator.
- B. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Absences of a student without the knowledge of his/her parents, or
 - 2. Absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his/her parent.
- C. Failure to attend school: A student meets the "failure to attend" definition when they have ten (10) total absences (excused, unverified or unexcused) per semester.
- D. Suspension is not to be counted as an unexcused absence for truancy purposes.
- E. Failure to report to Safe Schools Suspension Lab (SSSL) is considered an unexcused absence.

II. Truancy

The Natrona County School Board recognizes that truancy and failure to attend school is an educational issue and that all reasonable and educationally sound corrective actions should be undertaken by the school district prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

A. Truant

A child, kindergarten through sixth grade, meets the definition of a truant if the child has three consecutive unexcused absences or a total of five unexcused absences in any one school year (State Statute 12-4-101).

B. Habitual Truant

A habitual truant is any child, kindergarten through sixth grade, who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child and the parent(s) or guardian(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unexcused absences. This child may need court intervention and will be referred to the District Attendance Officer in order that an investigation may be made into the cause of the truancy; and, if necessary, an affidavit can be prepared and filed with the District Attorney's Office requesting court intervention. The written intervention plan and documentation of non-compliance must be attached to the affidavit when requesting court intervention.

C. Chronic Truant

A chronic truant is any child, kindergarten through sixth grade, who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a habitual truant, has been adjudicated in District Court and placed on an order to attend school, and then continues to accumulate unexcused absences. Should all interventions fail to remedy the attendance problem, the chronic truant may be referred to District Court for violation of previous court order. All school intervention plans existing to this point

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for this child and family must accompany the referral as well as a written recommendation from the Attendance Officer to the court on action the court should take.

III. Intervention Plans

- A. Each elementary school must develop a policy relating to requirements for early intervention. The school plan for improving student attendance must be in accordance with district policies and meet or exceed state statutes.
 1. Letter of concern.
 2. Warning letter for excessive absences, District Attendance Officer may be notified.
 3. Second letter for excessive absences. At this time the District Attendance Officer will be contacted in writing (e-mail) or by telephone as required.
 4. A Ten-day drop letter will also be sent to parents when the student has missed 10 consecutive days. A copy is sent to the Attendance Officer
- B. Once a child is determined to be truant as defined by district policy (three days of unexcused or unverified absences) school officials must make every reasonable effort to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) by telephone or in writing in order to determine the causes for the student's absences. If necessary, a home visit will be made by the District Attendance Officer and findings of that visit will be forwarded to the school for inclusion into the intervention documentation packet.
- C. At this point, school officials must develop a written "intervention plan" to address the student's continued absence in conjunction with the student, parent(s) or guardian(s).
- D. The intervention plan must include, but is not limited to:
 1. Notification of truant child to the District Attendance Officer in writing.
 2. Designation of a person to lead the intervention team. The team leader may be the District Attendance Officer or someone from another agency.
 3. Reasons for the unexcused absences.
 4. Actions to be taken by the parent(s) or guardian(s) and student to resolve the causes of the unexcused absences.
 5. Documentation of referrals to the District Attendance Officer, any appropriate service provider and, if available, alternative school and community-based programs.
 6. Actions taken by the intervention team members.
 7. Actions to be taken in the event unlawful absences continue.
 8. Signatures of the parent(s) or guardian(s) or evidence that attempts were made to involve the parent(s) or guardian(s).
 9. Documentation of involvement of team members.
 10. Guidelines for making revisions to the plan.

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- E. School officials may utilize a team intervention approach. Team members may include representatives from social services, community mental health, substance abuse and prevention, and other persons the school deems appropriate to formulate the written intervention plan. (This may be the same as your at-risk team.)
- F. Once a student has reached the fifth unexcused absence, the District Attendance Officer is notified and assumes the case. An investigation as to the success of the intervention plan is made, the parents are notified in writing that their child is in violation of state statutes and a case number is assigned
- G. The following letters will be sent by the District Attendance Officer to the parent or guardian:
 - 1. Failure to attend letter (ten total absences per semester).
 - 2. Habitually Truant Notice (five unexcused absences).
- H. The District Attendance Officer shall contact the parents/guardian and attempt to resolve the attendance issues.
- I. If the District Attendance Officer is unable to secure improved attendance the Attendance Officer may determine that court intervention is needed.
- J. Once it is determined that court intervention is required, the family is referred to Mercer House for intervention. If there is a no show or no cooperation, an affidavit requesting court intervention is filed with the District Attorney's office in accordance with state statutes.

III. Referrals for Court Intervention

At no time should a child be referred to the District Attorney's Office requesting any court intervention prior to the written intervention planning being completed with the parent(s) or guardian(s) by the school (i.e. at-risk assessment). Should the parent(s) or guardian(s) refuse to cooperate with the intervention planning to remedy the attendance problem, the school will immediately refer the case to the District Attendance Officer who has the authority to refer the student to District Court in accordance with district policy and state statutes.

Secondary Student Attendance

I. Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences

A. Excused absences include but are not limited to:

1. Absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others.
 - a. Illness that persists longer than three days will require some form of verification in writing.
2. Absences due to illness or death in the student's immediate family
3. Absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith
4. Absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the administrator

B. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

1. Absences of a student without the knowledge of his/her parents, or
2. Absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his/her parent.

C. Failure to attend school: A student that meets the "failure to attend" definition if they have ten (10) total absences (excused, unverified or unexcused) per semester.

D. Suspension is not to be counted as an unexcused absence for truancy purposes.

E. Failure to report to Safe Schools Suspension Lab is considered an unexcused absence.

II. Truancy

The Natrona County School Board recognizes that truancy and failure to attend school is an educational issue and that all reasonable and educationally sound corrective actions should be undertaken by the school district prior to resorting to the juvenile justice system.

A. Habitually Truant

State Statute defines Habitual Truant as any student within the mandatory school age (is under 16 years of age or has not completed the 10th grade) as one that has five (5) or more unverified or unexcused absences in any one school year. W.S. 21-4-106 further requires that all Habitually Truant students must be reported to the District Attendance Officer immediately.

III. Intervention Program

A. Each secondary school must develop a policy relating to requirements for early intervention. The school plan for improving student attendance must be in accordance with district policies and at meet or exceed state statutes.

1. Letter of concern.
2. Warning letter for excessive absences, District Attendance Officer may be notified
3. Second letter for excessive absences. At this time, the District Attendance Officer will be contacted in writing (e-mail) or by telephone as required.
4. A Ten-day drop letter will also be sent to parents when the student has missed 10 consecutive days. A copy is sent to the Attendance Officer.

B. Once a child is determined to be truant, as defined by district policy (three days of unexcused or unverified absences) school officials must make every reasonable effort

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to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) by telephone or in writing in order to determine the causes for the student's absences. If necessary, a home visit will be made by the District Attendance Officer and findings of that visit will be forwarded to the school for inclusion into the intervention documentation packet.

- C. The following letters will be sent by the District Attendance Officer to the parent or guardian:
 - 1. Failure to attend letter (ten total absences per semester)
 - 2. Habitually Truant Notice (five unexcused absences)

- D. Copies of these letters will be forwarded to the District Attendance Officer. A case file will be prepared and an investigation will start immediately. The intent is to find those students with attendance issues and determine the best course of intervention to follow prior to requesting action by the District Attorney through District Court.

- E. Case documentation will include but is not limited to:
 - 1. All communication (verbal or written) sent to parents or guardians.
 - 2. Reasons or causes for all absences (school will provide).
 - 3. Actions to be taken by the parent(s) or guardian(s) and student to resolve the causes of the absences (school will provide).
 - 4. Documentation of referrals made by the District Attendance Officer to appropriate service providers (attendance officer).
 - 5. Documentation as to any discussions about possible alternative school placement or community-based programs (attendance officer).
 - 6. Documentation of all actions taken or proposed by the intervention team or At-Risk Assessment Team (school will provide).
 - 7. Full disclosure of actions to be taken in the event unlawful absences continue (attendance officer).
 - 8. Signatures of the parent(s) or guardian(s) or evidence that attempts were made to involve the parent(s) or guardian(s) (school will provide).

A student may need court intervention and should be referred to the District Attendance Officer in order that an investigation can be made into the causes of the truancy. Intervention actions can be determined and prepared to assure attendance or, if necessary, an affidavit can be filed with the District Attorney's Office requesting court intervention

IV. Referrals for Court Intervention

At no time should a child be referred to the District Attorney's Office requesting court intervention prior to a written intervention plan being completed (i.e. at-risk assessment). Should the parent(s) or guardian(s) refuse to cooperate with the intervention plan, the District Attendance Officer has the authority to refer the student to District Court in accordance with district policy and state statutes.