

Butler County School System

ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY AND TARDY POLICY

The internal hearing officer is charged by the Board to determine appropriate sanctions to be taken against students and parents. The school attendance officer will provide additional support to ensure the effectiveness of the policy.

TRUANCY (Unexcused Absence)

TRUANCY DEFINITION

(Alabama State Board of Education, 2004)

The parent, guardian, or other person having charge of any child officially enrolled in Alabama public schools (K-12) shall explain in writing the cause of any and every absence of the child no later than three (3) school days following return to school. A maximum of three absences per semester will be excused per parent note(s).

- One parent note may cover a one-day absence as well as absences for an illness/injury for up to 3 consecutive days.
- Beginning with the fourth absence, an excuse from a physician must be submitted or prior permission from the principal must be given in order for the absence(s) to be excused. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant each day he/she is absent.
- The child shall also be deemed truant for any absence determined by the principal to be unexcused based upon the State Department of Education's current School Attendance Manual.
- Seven unexcused absences within a school year constitute a student being truant for the purpose of filing a petition with the Court. The Interagency Committee on Youth Truancy Task Force recommendations known as the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program timeline for reporting truancy were used to define the truancy status of students in the Butler County School System.

A suspension will be counted as an excused absence. Credit and/or passing to the next grade may be withheld from truant students who have eight (8) or more unexcused absences within a semester. The principal/attendance committee will determine if credit will be denied based on truancy. If credit is denied or the student is retained as a result of truancy, the parent/guardian may appeal.

Truant students will be managed according to the procedure outlined below:

TRUANCY OCCURRENCE #1:

- Parent/guardian shall be notified via school telephone messaging service by the school principal or his/her designee when (date) the unexcused absence occurred. This communication will also emphasize/encourage compliance with school attendance rules.

TRUANCY OCCURRENCE #2:

- Parent/guardian shall be notified via school telephone messaging service by the school principal or his/her designee when (date) the unexcused absence occurred. This communication will also emphasize/encourage compliance with school attendance rules.
- The parent, guardian, or person having control of the child shall attend a school or phone conference with the school principal or his/her designee.

TRUANCY OCCURRENCE #3:

- Parent/guardian shall be notified via school telephone messaging service by the school principal or his/her designee when (date) the unexcused absence occurred. This communication will also emphasize/encourage compliance with school attendance rules.
- Parent/guardian shall be notified in writing by the school principal or his/her designee when (date) the third unexcused absence occurred. This communication will also emphasize/encourage compliance with school attendance rules and notification that the parent, guardian, or person having control of the child is required to attend the School Level Early Warning Meeting with the school principal/designee.

TRUANCY OCCURRENCES #4-7

- Parent/guardian shall be notified via school telephone messaging service by the school principal or his/her designee when (date) the unexcused absence occurred. This communication will also emphasize/encourage compliance with school attendance rules and notification that the parent, guardian, or person having control of the child is required to attend the Early Warning Program provided by the Butler County School System & Butler County Juvenile Court.
- Failure to attend the Early Warning Program will result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent, guardian, or person having control of the child under Code of Alabama (1975), §16-28-12(c) (failure to cooperate), or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.
- School principal or his/her designee will make routine attempts to contact the student's parent, guardian, or person having control of the student to develop an action plan to prevent further truancy.

TRUANCY OCCURRENCES #8 OR MORE

- Parent/guardian shall be notified via school telephone messaging service by the school principal or his/her designee when (date) the unexcused absence occurred. This communication will also emphasize/encourage compliance with school attendance rules.
- School principal or his/her designee will make routine attempts to contact the student's parent, guardian, or person having control of the student to develop an action plan to prevent further truancy.
- Charges will be filed against the parent, guardian, or person having control of the child under the Code of Alabama (1975), §16-28-12(c) (failure to cooperate), or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.
- The superintendent or his/her designee will notify the Department of Public Safety regarding students who are 16 to 19 years of age with more than 10 consecutive or 15 cumulative days of unexcused absences during a single semester.

Child Under Probation

The school attendance officer should be notified by the juvenile probation officer of all children in the school system under probation supervision by the juvenile court as consistent with state statute, Code of Alabama (1975), §12-15-100 and 105.

When a child under probation is truant, the school attendance officer should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

Tardies, Late Check-ins, and Early Check-outs

An Excused Tardy, Late Check-in or Early Check-out includes:

- Documented illness or injury
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Late school bus arrival
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the principal)

An Unexcused Tardy, Late Check-in or Early Check-out is not covered by the aforementioned definition. Examples of an unexcused tardies, late check-ins, or early check-outs may include, but may not be limited to:

- Repetitive or chronic tardiness, late check-ins or early check-outs due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional
- Non-emergency family situations

Excessive tardies, late check-ins and/or early check-outs (total incidents will be combined) will result in the following:

- Tardies, late check-ins and/or early check-outs will be treated as a Class I offense. Subsequent Class I offenses may be treated as a Class II offense.
- Credit and/or passing to the next grade may be withheld from students who have eight (8) or more occurrences within a semester.