

Truancy

If a student is absent without an excuse signed by the parent/guardian or if the student leaves school or a class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, the student shall be considered truant. An "habitual truant" shall be defined as a student of compulsory attendance age who has four total days of unexcused absences from school in any one month or 10 total days of unexcused absences during any school year. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted in the total of unexcused absences for purposes of defining a student as an "habitual truant."

In order to reduce the incidents of truancy, parents/guardians of all students shall be notified in writing at the beginning of each school year of their obligation to ensure that all children of compulsory attendance age attend school. Parents/guardians shall be required to acknowledge in writing awareness of their obligations and to furnish the school with a telephone number or other means of contacting them during the school day.

The school shall establish a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences. When a student fails to report on a regularly scheduled school day and school personnel have received no indication that the parent/guardian is aware of the absence, school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian by telephone.

A plan shall be developed for a student who is at risk of being declared habitually truant with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school. When practicable, the student's parent, guardian or legal custodian shall participate with district personnel during the development of the plan. Appropriate school personnel shall make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent, guardian or legal custodian to review and evaluate the reasons for the student's truancy.

In accordance with law, the district may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while truant. Penalties may include a warning, school detention or in-school suspension. Academic penalties, out-of-school suspensions or expulsion shall not be imposed for any truancy.

The administration shall develop regulations to implement appropriate penalties for truancy.

Adopted: September 16, 1993

Revised: September 4, 1996

Revised: March 5, 2008

Revised: February 10, 2009

Revised: October 7, 2009

Revised: August 1, 2012

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-14-101 *et seq.* (dropout prevention and student re-engagement)
C.R.S. 22-33-104 (compulsory school attendance)
C.R.S. 22-33-105 (suspension/expulsion)
C.R.S. 22-33-107 (enforcement of compulsory school attendance)
1 CCR 301-67, Rule 2.01 (7) (definition of "dropout" student)
1 CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 *et seq.* (standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy)

CROSS REFS.: IHBG, Home Schooling
JEA, Compulsory Attendance Ages
JFC, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts
JH, Student Absences and Excuses

NOTE 1: State law requires the local Board of Education to designate an attendance officer for the district to enforce the provisions of the compulsory attendance law, counsel students and parents, and investigate the causes of non-attendance and report those findings to the Board. C.R.S. 22-33-107(1). State law allows the board by resolution to authorize one or more school employees to represent the school district in judicial proceedings to enforce compulsory attendance. C.R.S. 22-32-110(1)(mm).

NOTE 2: State law provides that court proceedings to compel compliance with the compulsory attendance law shall only be used as a last-resort approach for addressing the problem of truancy. The district shall first have attempted other options for addressing truancy that employ best practices and research-based strategies to minimize the need for court action. C.R.S. 22-33-108(5).

NOTE 3: CASB recommends that the district's philosophy regarding make-up work be consistent throughout the attendance and discipline policies. In accordance with state law on educational opportunities during suspension, a student is entitled to full or partial credit to the extent possible for work completed satisfactorily. See C.R.S. 22-33-105 (3)(d)(III). The district has discretion regarding the amount of credit to be awarded for the educational services provided to expelled students. See C.R.S. 22-33-203 (2)(a). The objective should be to reintegrate the student back into the classroom after sufficient remediation opportunities are provided.

NOTE 4: The rules of the State Board of Education define an "habitual truant" as a child who has attained the age of 6 on or before August 1 of the school year in question and is under the age of 17 and who has 4 days of unexcused absences from school in a month or 10 days of unexcused absences during the school year. Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, school districts must report the number of students identified as "habitually truant" to the Colorado Department of Education, in accordance with the State Board of Education's rules regarding the calculation of student attendance and truancy, 1 CCR 301-78. CDE must then make this information accessible to the public by posting it on its website. The State Board's rules also specify how districts shall record and aggregate student absences.