

Attendance and Excuses

In accordance with Board Policy 5113 and Connecticut General Statutes 10-184:

At the beginning of each school year or upon time of enrollment during the school year, LEARN will:

- a. notify in writing the parent or other person having control of each child of the obligation to assure regular school attendance by the child,

and
- b. obtain from the parent or person having control of each child, a telephone number or other means of contact during the school day.

Whenever a child ages 7-16 enrolled in school or program fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, and if school personnel have not been notified of an excused absence, a reasonable effort will be made to notify the parent or person responsible of the child by telephone. Determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the school administrator or his/her designee. The school/program shall maintain a record of individual unexcused absences for student in accordance with the school/program attendance recording procedures.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

A **truant** means a child enrolled in school that has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences within a school year.

A **habitual truant** means a child who has twenty unexcused absences within a school year.

Unexcused absence means any absence from an entire regularly scheduled school day for which the absence is not excused as defined below.

Excused absence means any absence from a regularly schedule school day for:

- a. Reasons of health, including illness or visits to a doctor. The school reserves the right to require certification from a physician or other appropriate certification for absences in excess of fifteen days in a school year or five consecutive school days.
- b. Religious holidays
- c. Court appearance
- d. Funeral in immediate family
- e. Suspension or expulsion from school
- f. Family hardship, subject to approval of the Director or his/her designee
- g. Such other absences which have had the prior approval of the child's teacher or the Director or his/her designee

Absenteeism Procedures

The Director and his/her staff will make a concerted effort to prevent and remedy truancy in its early stages for students who are found to be truant. This will include:

1. Annually at the beginning of the school year or upon the enrollment of a student during the school year, the Director shall notify the parent or other person having control of the student of the definitions regarding absenteeism and the obligations pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-184 to assure that children between the ages of five and eighteen attend school or otherwise show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction.
 2. Annually at the beginning of the school year or upon the enrollment of a student during the school year, the Director shall request a telephone number or other means of contacting the parent or other person having control of the student.
 3. The parent or other person having control of a student must notify the school on the day of a student's absence. Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, and the parent or person having control of the student does not contact the school, school personnel, or volunteers under the direction of the Director shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent or other person in control of the student by telephone.
 4. When the student returns to school after an absence, the parent or legal guardian of the student shall send a note to school explaining the reason for the absence. The determination whether the absence is excused or unexcused will be made by the principal or his/her designee.
 5. Whenever a student is **truant** as defined above, the Director or his/her designee shall schedule a meeting with the parent or other person having control of such child and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student being a **truant**. Should such parent or such other person decline to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting shall be held. The student and the parent or other person having control of the student shall be apprised of the Executive Director of LEARN's authority and obligation to file a written complaint with the superior court for each **habitual truant**. In addition to the meeting, the Executive Director of LEARN or his/her designee shall refer the student to the planning and placement team for an independent evaluation to review the reasons for the student being **truant** and to develop appropriate actions.
- 5a. Specific Procedures for LEARN' Special Education Regional Classrooms
LEARN administration will make a concerted effort to support local districts to remedy truancy in its early stages. LEARN administration will notify the LEA that sends a student to a LEARN program that the student is truant as per LEARN policy. The LEA will take responsibility for addressing the matter by implementing LEA Board of Education policies.

APPENDIX A
ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER C.G.S. 10-184

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Although we realize most parents are genuinely concerned about their child's school attendance, Connecticut law requires that LEARN schools/programs provide you with written notice of your obligations. This law provides that each parent or other person having control of a child seven years of age and older and under sixteen year of age is obligated to ensure their child attend school regularly during the hours school is in session, unless such parent or other person shows that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction. Connecticut law provides that each day's failure to comply with these requirements is a separate offense punishable by a \$25.00 fine.

Even though state law mandates school attendance for children five and eighteen years of age, LEARN and the Magnet School encourage and expect regular attendance of any child currently enrolled in school as it is essential to the educational process.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Eileen S. Howley, Ed.D
Executive Director

ESH/mr

Appendix B
Parent Letter

Dear

As you know, children must attend school on a regular basis in order 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, I'm writing to ask for your help. _____ has ___ unexcused absences from school. You have already received information from LEARN explaining the attendance policy.

This is a serious problem and we all need to work together to solve it. Please contact _____ immediately for an appointment. _____ will work with you and your child to improve school attendance.

Sincerely,

Principal/Administrator