

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY**

Note: The following **optional** policy addresses both chronic absence, which refers to students missing an excessive number of school days for any reason, whether excused or unexcused, and truancy, which refers to students missing school and/or being tardy without a valid excuse. Education Code 48260 defines a "valid excuse" for purposes of classifying students as truants; see the accompanying administrative regulation. Also see BP/AR 5113 - Absences and Excuses for information about methods of verification of student absences.

The Governing Board believes that absenteeism, whatever the cause, may be an early warning sign of poor academic achievement and may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The Board desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the state's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the district.

*(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)*

*(cf. 5113.11 - Attendance Supervision)*

Note: The following paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice. Districts must monitor unexcused absences for the purpose of identifying students who are classified as truants pursuant to Education Code 48260-48273. In addition, Education Code 52060 requires districts to include the rates of school attendance, chronic absence, dropout, and graduation, as applicable, in their local control and accountability plan (LCAP) (see BP/AR 0460 - Local Control and Accountability Plan), and chronic absence will be one of the state accountability indicators in the California School Dashboard beginning in the fall of 2018 (see BP 0500 - Accountability). Pursuant to the LCAP template adopted by the State Board of Education, "chronic absence" is the number of students who are absent on 10 percent or more of the school days in the academic year (July 1 through June 30) divided by the total enrollment during the academic year.

Other tools to calculate chronic absence are available, such as the [District Attendance Tracking Tool](#) and [School Attendance Tracking Tool](#) from Attendance Works.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a system to accurately track student attendance in order to identify individual students who are chronic absentees and truants, as defined in law and administrative regulation, and to identify patterns of absence throughout the district. He/she shall provide the Board with data on school attendance, chronic absence, and truancy rates districtwide, for each school, and disaggregated for each numerically significant student subgroup as defined in Education Code 52052. Such data shall be used in the development of annual goals and specific actions for student attendance and engagement to be included in the district's local control and accountability plan and other applicable school and district plans.

*(cf. 0400 - Comprehensive Plans)*

*(cf. 0420 - School Plans/Site Councils)*

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 0460 - Local Control and Accountability Plan)*

*(cf. 0500 - Accountability)*

The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies that focus on prevention of attendance problems, which may include, but are not limited to, efforts to provide a safe and

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positive school environment, relevant and engaging learning experiences, school activities that help develop students' feelings of connectedness with the school, school-based health services, and incentives and rewards to recognize students who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance. The Superintendent or designee also shall develop strategies that enable early outreach to students as soon as they show signs of poor attendance.

*(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)*

*(cf. 5126 - Awards for Achievement)*

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)*

*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*

*(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

Note: In developing strategies for addressing chronic absence and truancy, districts may consider reasons for absences given by individual students as well as survey data using tools such as the California Healthy Kids Survey and/or the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey System available from WestEd.

The Superintendent or designee shall consult with students, parents/guardians, school staff, and community agencies, as appropriate, to identify factors contributing to chronic absence and truancy.

Interventions for students with serious attendance problems shall be designed to meet the specific needs of the student and may include, but are not limited to, health care referrals, transportation assistance, counseling for mental or emotional difficulties, academic supports, efforts to address school or community safety concerns, discussions with the student and parent/guardian about their attitudes regarding schooling, or other strategies to remove identified barriers to school attendance. The Superintendent or designee may collaborate with child welfare services, law enforcement, courts, public health care agencies, other government agencies, and/or medical, mental health, and oral health care providers to make alternative educational programs and support services available for students and families.

*(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)*

*(cf. 5030 - Student Wellness)*

*(cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)*

*(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)*

*(cf. 6158 - Independent Study)*

*(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)*

*(cf. 6164.5 - Student Success Teams)*

*(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)*

*(cf. 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth)*

*(cf. 6173.2 - Education of Children of Military Families)*

## CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

*(cf. 6175 - Migrant Education Program)*  
*(cf. 6179 - Supplemental Instruction)*  
*(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)*  
*(cf. 6183 - Home and Hospital Instruction)*  
*(cf. 6184 - Continuation Education)*  
*(cf. 6185 - Community Day School)*

Note: State law establishes a series of interventions that the district is required or authorized to impose depending on the number of trancies committed by a student; see the accompanying administrative regulation. Habitually truant students, as defined in Education Code 48262, may be referred to a school attendance review board (SARB) if established by the county office of education or to a SARB established by the district Governing Board pursuant to Education Code 48321; see BP/AR 5113.12 - District School Attendance Review Board. Instead of the SARB process, students may be referred to a truancy mediation program operated by the county's district attorney or probation officer pursuant to Education Code 48260.6. Education Code 48264.5 authorizes, but does not require, students who continue to be truant after receiving these interventions to be referred to a juvenile court. Parents/guardians of students who are identified as truant may be subject to penalties pursuant to Education Code 48293, Penal Code 270.1, and/or Penal Code 272.

Students who are identified as truant shall be subject to the interventions specified in law and administrative regulation.

*(cf. 5113.12 - District School Attendance Review Board)*

Note: Education Code 48900 expresses legislative intent that alternatives to suspension or expulsion be used with students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school activities; see BP 5144 - Discipline and BP 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process.

A student's truancy, tardiness, or other absence from school shall not be the basis for his/her suspension or expulsion. Alternative strategies and positive reinforcement for attendance shall be used whenever possible.

*(cf. 5144 - Discipline)*  
*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically report to the Board regarding the district's progress in improving student attendance rates for all students and for each numerically significant student population. Such information shall be used to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies implemented to reduce chronic absence and truancy and to make changes as needed. As appropriate, the Superintendent or designee shall engage school staff in program evaluation and improvement and in the determination of how to best allocate available community resources.

*Legal Reference: (see next page)*

## CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)

### *Legal Reference:*

#### EDUCATION CODE

1740-1742 *Employment of personnel to supervise attendance (county superintendent)*

37223 *Weekend classes*

46000 *Records (attendance)*

46010-46014 *Absences*

46110-46119 *Attendance in kindergarten and elementary schools*

46140-46147 *Attendance in junior high and high schools*

48200-48208 *Children ages 6-18 (compulsory full-time attendance)*

48225.5 *Work permits, entertainment and allied industries*

48240-48246 *Supervisors of attendance*

48260-48273 *Truants*

48290-48297 *Failure to comply; complaints against parents*

48320-48325 *School attendance review boards*

48340-48341 *Improvement of student attendance*

48400-48403 *Compulsory continuation education*

48900 *Suspension and expulsion*

49067 *Unexcused absences as cause of failing grade*

52052 *Academic Performance Index; numerically significant student subgroups*

60901 *Chronic absence*

#### GOVERNMENT CODE

54950-54963 *The Ralph M. Brown Act*

#### PENAL CODE

270.1 *Chronic truancy; parent/guardian misdemeanor*

272 *Parent/guardian duty to supervise and control minor child; criminal liability for truancy*

830.1 *Peace officers*

#### VEHICLE CODE

13202.7 *Driving privileges; minors; suspension or delay for habitual truancy*

#### WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

256-258 *Juvenile hearing officer*

601-601.4 *Habitually truant minors*

11253.5 *Compulsory school attendance*

#### CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

306 *Explanation of absence*

420-421 *Record of verification of absence due to illness and other causes*

#### COURT DECISIONS

*L.A. v. Superior Court of San Diego County, (2012) 209 Cal.App.4th 976*

*Management Resources: (see next page)*

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY (continued)**

*Management Resources:*

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Attendance Awareness Month, Fact Sheet, September 2014

ATTENDANCE WORKS PUBLICATIONS

Count Us In! Working Together to Show that Every School Day Matters, 2014

The Power of Positive Connections: Reducing Chronic Absence Through PEOPLE: Priority Early Outreach for Positive Linkages and Engagement, 2014

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

School Attendance Review Board Handbook: A Road Map for Improved School Attendance and Behavior, 2015

School Attendance Improvement Handbook, 2000

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

Attendance Works: <http://www.attendanceworks.org>

California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance: <http://www.cascwa.org>

California Department of Education: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

California Healthy Kids Survey: <http://chks.wested.org>

California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey System: <http://www.cal-schls.wested.org>