

Excessive Absences and Truancy

Fast Facts for Families

It is important for your child to attend school every day. When your student misses a significant amount of school, even if the absences are excused, the child misses critical instruction time and learning opportunities. This often has long-term, negative effects on a child, such as lower achievement and a greater chance of not graduating on time.

A new state law defines excessive absence and truancy:

Excessive absence: a student misses 38 or more hours of school in a single month, or 65 or more hours in one school year, with or without a legitimate excuse.

Truancy: a student is absent from school without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in a school year.

The same state law requires schools and districts to create their own local policies to tackle excessive absences and truancy. Each truancy and excessive absence policy must outline a district's interventions, supports and processes for making sure a student gets to school every day. Here are key points from the law to keep in mind:

- Fact 1 **When students miss school because they are chronically or terminally ill and the district excuses their absences, the missed school hours do not count toward truancy.**
The law allows schools to not count these students absent if they actively are receiving home instruction. When a student is chronically or terminally ill, families and districts should work to update the student's individualized education program (IEP) to include home instruction.
- Fact 2 **Districts cannot file a complaint with the juvenile court against a student or the student's family for excessive absences.**
State law outlines acceptable reasons for not attending school. Districts also may add to the list of excused absences.
- Fact 3 **Truancy includes only unexcused absences.**