

501.9 CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

The district believes that school attendance leads to the greatest learning opportunities for students. Students who are present in school and engaged active learners take greater ownership over their educational outcomes. For this reason, it is the priority of the district to foster regular student attendance throughout the school year and reduce barriers to regular attendance for students in the district.

Chronic absenteeism/absences means any absence from school for more than ten percent of the days in the semester] established by the district.

Truant/truancy means a child of compulsory attendance age who is absent from school for any reason for at least twenty percent of the days in the semester.

Chronic absenteeism and truancy do not apply to the following students who:

- have completed the requirements for graduation in an accredited school or has obtained a high school equivalency diploma
- are excused for sufficient reason by any court of record or judge;
- are attending religious services or receiving qualifying religious instruction in accordance with relevant laws;
- are unable to attend school due to legitimate medical reasons;
- have an individualized education program than affects the student's attendance;
- have a plan under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794, that affects the child's attendance;
- are attending a private college preparatory school accredited or probationally accredited;
- are excused under *Iowa Code* §299.22;
- are exempt under *Iowa Code* §299.24;
- are a military applicant undergoing military entrance processing;
- are engaged in military service;
- are traveling to attend a funeral; or
- are traveling to attend a wedding.

Evidence may be shown in written or verbal communications with the building level administration. Reasonable travel time will be afforded for engaging in the exceptions listed above. Students are subject to disciplinary action for truancy including suspension and expulsion. It is within the discretion of the principal to determine, in light of the circumstances, whether a student may make up work missed because of truancy. Students receiving special education services will not be assigned to in school suspension unless the goals and objectives of the student's Individualized Education Program are capable of being met.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the designated school officials, to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy. The administrative regulations will indicate the disciplinary action to be taken for truancy.

Legal Reference:	34 C.F.R. sec. 300 28 C.F.R. Pt. 35 <i>Iowa Code</i> §§ 294.4; 299. 281 I.A.C. 12.3(4).
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I.C. Iowa Code	Description
Iowa Code § 294.4	<u>Teachers - Daily Register</u>
Iowa Code § 299	<u>Compulsory Education</u>
I.A.C. Iowa Administrative Code	Description
281 I.A.C. 12.3	<u>Administration</u>
C.F.R. - Code of Federal Regulations	Description
28 C.F.R. 35	<u>Judicial - Disability - Nondiscrimination</u>
34 C.F.R. Pt. 300	<u>Education - Disabilities/Children/Assistance to States</u>

501.9 -R(1) CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience. The education that goes on in the classroom builds from day to day and absences can cause disruption in the educational progress of the absent student. Irregular attendance or tardiness by students not only limits their own studies, but also interferes with the progress of those students who are regular and prompt in attendance. Attendance is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation and communication among students, parents and the school.

This regulation is divided into two sections: Section I addresses legal requirements related to chronic absenteeism and truancy and Section II addresses additional academic, disciplinary and extracurricular consequences students face due to chronic absenteeism and truancy. It is important for students to recognize that chronic absenteeism and truancy impacts all these facets of their educational experience.

SECTION I – Legal Requirements

Chronic Absenteeism

When a student meets the threshold to be considered chronically absent, the school official will send notice by mail or e-mail to the county attorney where the district's central office is located. The school official will also notify the student, or if a minor, the student's parent, guardian or legal or actual custodian via certified mail that includes information related to the student's absences from school and the policies and disciplinary processes associated with additional absences.

School officials will send notice when the student's absences meet the threshold, but before the student is deemed chronically absent.

School Engagement Meeting

If a student is absent from school for at least fifteen percent of the days or hours in the grading period, the school official will attempt to find the cause of the absences and start and participate in a school engagement meeting. All of the following individuals must participate in the school engagement meeting:

- The student;
- The student's parent, guardian or legal or actual custodian if the student is an unemancipated minor; and
- A school official.

The purpose of the meeting is to understand the reasons for the student's absences and attempt to remove barriers to the student's ongoing absences; and to create and sign an absenteeism

prevention plan.

A letter will be sent after 7 days in the grading period notify the student and the student's parent, guardian or legal or actual custodian if the student is an unemancipated minor of attendance concerns. A formal designation letter will be sent when a student is absent 10 % of the days or hours in the grading period. A meeting will be requested with the student; the student's parent, guardian or legal or actual custodian if the student is an unemancipated minor; and a school official. **Absenteeism Prevention Plan**

The absenteeism prevention plan will identify the causes of the student's absences and the future responsibilities of each participant. The school official will contact the student and student's parent/guardian at least once per week for the remainder of the school year to monitor the performance of the student and the student's parent/guardian under the plan. If the student and student's parent/guardian do not attend the meeting, do not enter into a plan or violate the terms of the plan, the school official will notify the county attorney.

SECTION II – Academic and Disciplinary Requirements

Students who are absent without a reasonable excuse, as determined by the principal, will be assigned to [supervised study hall, detention, early bird school, Saturday school, in-school suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary sanction]. Reasonable excuses include illness, family emergencies, recognized religious observances and school-sponsored or approved activities. Reasonable excuses may also include family trips or vacations approved by the building principal if the student's work is finished prior to the trip or vacation. [Supervised study hall, detention, early bird school, Saturday school, in-school suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary sanction] will be assigned on a two-for-one basis.

A student who is unexcused for one or more classes for less than a whole school day, will be assigned to [supervised study hall, detention, early bird school, Saturday school, in-school suspension or other appropriate disciplinary sanction] for the next days during the class period(s) missed. If a student is unexcused for a whole day of classes, he or she will spend the next two days in [supervised study hall, detention, early bird school, Saturday school, in-school suspension or other appropriate disciplinary sanction]. Parents are expected to telephone the school office to report a student's absence prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. Students with unexcused absences may also be referred to the at-risk coordinator.

School work missed because of absences must be made up within two times the number of days absent, not to exceed 5 days. The time allowed for make-up work may be extended at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Students will be allowed to make up all work missed due to any absence and will receive full credit for make-up work handed in on time. Teachers will not have attendance or grading practices that are in conflict with this provision.

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