Darien Public Schools
Darien, Connecticut

POLICY

Series 5100
Attendance

Policy 5130

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement this policy.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes §10-220

Connecticut General Statutes §10-184

Connecticut General Statutes §10-198a

Connecticut General Statutes §10-198b

ADOPTED: June 9, 2009
REVISED: July 17, 2013

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ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

A. Definitions

1. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Darien Public Schools.

2. "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day, which absence is not an excused absence.

3. "Excused absence" - an absence from a regularly scheduled school day which, as determined by the building principal [or his/her designee], is for:

    a. reasons of health, including illness, incapacity, or doctor's visits. The administration reserves the right to require physician or other appropriate certification for health-related absences.

    b. religious holidays.

    c. court appearance.

    d. funeral or death in the family.

    e. approved school activities, including field trips.

    f. suspension or expulsion.

    g. in limited circumstances, special activities or emergencies with the consent of the parent or other person having control of the child.

4. “Disciplinary absences” – absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from “unexcused” and “excused” absences.

5. "Truant" - any student five to eighteen years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

    a. A student five or six years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five or six years of age.

b. A student sixteen or seventeen years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents to such student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent.

c. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be "truant."

B. Ages of Attendance

a. Kindergarten: Children who will be five years old on or before January 1 will be eligible to enter kindergarten in September of that school year.

b. First Grade: Children reaching the age of six on or before January 1 shall be eligible to enter the first grade in September of that school year. Children younger than age six on January 1 shall be admitted to first grade only upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools. Once eligible, a student's admittance to first grade will be made in accordance with the Board's promotion and retention policy.

c. Other Grades: Admission of children to other grades shall be made in accordance with the Board's promotion and retention policy.

C. Procedures for students in grades K-8*

1. Notification

a. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent or other person having control of the student enrolled in grades K - 8 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-184 to assure that such a student attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the Darien Public Schools.

b. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall obtain from the parent or other person having control of the student in grades K-8 a telephone number for contacting such parent or other person during the school day.

2. Monitoring

Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of students in grades K-8. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal, or his/her designee, shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or other person having control of such student by telephone of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence. Reasonable efforts shall include two (2) attempts to reach the parent or other person at the telephone number provided by the parent or other person. Such attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the Superintendent. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.

D. <u>Procedures applicable to students ages five to eighteen</u>

1. Intervention

a. When a student is truant, the building principal [or his/her designee] shall schedule a meeting with the parent or other person having control of such student and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the student becomes truant. If the parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.

b. If the parent or other person having control of a student who is truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subsection a, above, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent shall file for such truant a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b - 149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

c. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate.

d. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections a through c above, a regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems shall be referred to the building Child Study Team for program review and assistance. The Team will review the student's need for referral for a planning and placement team (“PPT”) meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for

special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems shall be referred for a PPT meeting for program review.

APPROVED: June 9, 2009
REVISED: July 17, 2013