

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.