

TRUANCY

A student is truant if the student:

- A. Is subject to the compulsory attendance law; and
- B. Has attained the equivalent of 10 full days of nonexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of nonexcused absences during a school year.

The Board shall appoint one or more attendance coordinators in accordance with state law. The following statutory provisions shall be followed when a student is truant:

- A. If the principal or attendance coordinator determines that a student is truant, the principal shall inform the Superintendent. The Principal shall first try to correct the problem, informally. Informal attempts to correct the problem must include referral to the school's Student Intervention Team (SIT) and meeting with the student and the student's parents to identify possible causes of the truancy and to develop a plan to implement solutions to the problem. The Principal/SIT may implement interventions that best address the problem including but not limited to:
 - 1. Frequent communication between the teacher and the family;
 - 2. Changes in the learning environment;
 - 3. Mentoring;
 - 4. Student counseling;
 - 5. Tutoring, including peer tutoring;
 - 6. Placement into different classes;
 - 7. Evaluation for alternative education programs;
 - 8. Attendance contracts;
 - 9. Referral to other agencies for family services; and
 - 10. Other interventions including, but not limited to, referral to the school attendance coordinator, student assistance team, or dropout prevention committee.

Failure of the student or the student's parents to appear at scheduled meetings does not preclude school administrators from implementing a plan to address a student's truancy.

- B. As part of correcting the problem informally, the Principal shall require the student and his/her parents to attend one or more meetings with the SIT. The purpose of the meeting(s) is to reinforce the plan referenced in paragraph A or to develop an alternative plan. Such meetings may involve others including but not limited to case managers, therapeutic treatment providers, and representatives of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services, and the Department of Corrections. The Principal shall schedule the meeting(s) at mutually convenient times.

- C. If the Principal/SIT is unable to correct the student's truancy, the Principal shall serve or cause to be served upon the parent in-hand or by registered mail a written notice that the student's attendance is required by law. The notice shall:
 - 1. State that the student is required to attend school pursuant to 20-A M.R.S.A. §5001-A (the compulsory attendance law);
 - 2. Explain the parent's right to inspect the student's attendance records, attendance coordinator's reports, and Principal's reports;
 - 3. Explain that the failure to send the student to school and maintain the student in regular attendance is a civil violation in accordance with 20-A M.R.S.A. § 5053-A and explain that the matter is being referred to the Superintendent for formal action.
 - 4. Outline the plan developed to address the student's truancy and the steps that have been taken to implement that plan.

- D. The Principal will inform the Superintendent of Schools that they have a student referred to the SIT. If the previous informal efforts have not corrected the student's truancy, formal procedures will be initiated by the Superintendent.

- E. Prior to notifying local law enforcement authorities, the Superintendent shall schedule at least one meeting as required by law.

- F. If a student remains truant and does not follow the plan designated to prevent future absences, the Superintendent shall notify the parent/legal guardian, by registered mail, that attendance is required by law, including the same information outlined in paragraph C, in said letter.

- G. If after three school days after the service of the notice described in paragraph F of this policy the student remains truant and the parent and student refuse to attend the meeting referred to in paragraph E, the Superintendent/designee shall report the facts of the unlawful absence to local law enforcement authorities and DHHS.

The Superintendent shall submit an annual report regarding truancy to the Commissioner by October 1. The report must identify the number of truants in the school administrative unit in the preceding school year; describe the school unit's efforts to deal with truancy; account for actions brought to enforce the truancy law; and include any other information on truancy requested by the Commissioner.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. §§ 5001-A; 5051-A-5054

Cross Reference: JEA – Compulsory Student Attendance
JFC – Student Withdrawal from School (Dropout Prevention Committee)