

# CASD Truancy Elimination Plan

## **I. Introduction**

The Basic Education Circular (Purdon's Statutes), August 8, 2006, recommends that schools develop a Truancy Prevention Plan (TEP) as a means to address truancy. The BEC stresses the need to "partner" with parents/guardians to reduce truancy, and to minimize referrals to community agencies.

This document is intended to provide comprehensive, step-by-step procedural guidelines to address attendance issues in the Chambersburg Area School District. Please be advised that the secondary level Assistant Principal or the elementary level Regional Principal may override or modify any and all procedures enumerated in this document.

## **II. Attendance Procedure Guidelines**

### **A. Compulsory Attendance Requirements**

1. Compulsory school age refers to the period of a child's life from the time the child enters first grade, which shall be no later than eight years of age, until the age of seventeen.
2. Students who had been withdrawn or had poor attendance in kindergarten shall not repeat kindergarten as once again attendance would not be mandatory.
3. Students aged sixteen may withdraw from school with proof of full time employment and signed parental permission. Please refer to General Employment Permit (Appendix).

### **B. Categorizing Absences**

1. Absences are initially entered in MIG/SIRS as unexcused until the CASD receives a written excuse explaining the reason for the absence.
2. Parental failure to submit a written excuse within three calendar days of the absence shall result in the absence being classified as unlawful for students from first grade through age seventeen. Students shall not be permitted to make up work for days classified as unlawful.
3. Parents may hand write excuses or use the 'Absence Excuse Form' available in hard copy at the school or on the CASD website under 'Families'. Each absence excuse must be submitted with an explanation and parental signature. Written excuses must also be submitted for late arrivals and prior to early dismissals.
4. Principals and/or Attendance Secretaries shall check for siblings at other schools and ensure that absence classifications be consistent within families.
5. Unless otherwise specified by a doctor, absences for appointments shall be allowed one half excused day.

### C. Attendance Meetings

1. Each elementary Principal/Head Teacher and secondary Assistant Principal shall conduct a monthly Attendance Meeting with an Attendance Committee consisting of the Attendance Secretary, a School Counselor, and a School Nurse.
2. The Attendance Secretary shall provide committee members with a Period/Daily Attendance Report prior to the meeting.
3. The Attendance Secretary shall maintain attendance records in MIG/SIRS including notations of the issuance of all mail correspondences (doctor notes, first offense, etc.). Letters shall be generated directly from MIG/SIRS.
4. Upon 5 cumulative absences and with the approval of the Attendance Committee, the Attendance Secretary shall issue a Five Day Letter and a school staff member shall place a phone call to the parents.
5. Elementary teachers shall place the phone call.
6. CAMSN and CAMSS teams shall decide which staff member places the phone call.
7. The CASHS grade level Principal shall decide which staff member places the phone call.
8. A parental conference shall be considered on a case by case basis.
9. The Attendance Committee shall decide whether/when to issue further correspondences to parents using the following general guidelines. The Attendance Secretary shall issue all correspondences.
  - a. Seven cumulative absences shall generate a Seven Day Letter.
  - b. Ten cumulative absences shall generate a Doctor Note. The Doctor Note must indicate a return date to school.
  - c. Three unlawful absences shall generate a First Offense Notice.
  - d. All correspondences shall be sent via regular mail. Doctor Notes, First Offense Notices, and Combo Letters shall be assigned an effective date of three mail delivery days after the postmark date.

### D. Tardiness

1. Four incidents of tardiness, regardless of number of minutes shall constitute one half day of unlawful absence.
2. Eight incidents of tardiness, regardless of number of minutes shall constitute one full day of unlawful absence.

**III. Truancy Procedure Guidelines** The BEC states that school districts should exercise caution and reason when utilizing punitive measures and involving other systems.

A. Following the third unlawful absence, the Attendance Secretary shall issue a First Offense Notice via regular mail and assign it an effective date of three mail delivery days after the postmark date.

B. Subsequent Unlawful Absences for **elementary level students**. (Please note that attendance is not mandatory for kindergarteners. Kindergarten absences shall not be classified as unlawful. However, they shall be subject to parental conferences, Five Day Letters, Seven Day Letters, and home visits.)

1. Upon the fourth unlawful absence the Attendance Secretary shall notify the School Social Worker, who in turn shall issue a truancy citation in the name of the parent/guardian.
2. The School Social Worker shall secure a parental signature and plea on the truancy citation via any combination of mailing or hand delivering a Citation Warning 1 or Citation Warning 2.
3. In the event that a parent refuses to sign a citation, the School Social Worker shall forward it unsigned to the District Justice, whose office shall serve the citation.
4. The School Social Worker shall turn in a Guilty Plea immediately to the District Justice. A Guilty Plea shall result in a fine.
5. The School Social Worker shall turn in a Not Guilty Plea immediately or may hold it pending further unlawful absences.
6. The District Justice shall schedule a truancy hearing for within one week of receiving a Not Guilty Plea.
7. At the hearing, the District Justice shall impose a fine and/or continuance with stipulations.
8. Any further attendance violation shall result in the School Social Worker referring the family to Children and Youth Services.

C. Subsequent Unlawful Absences for **secondary level** students.

1. Upon the fourth unlawful absence the Attendance Secretary shall forward a truancy citation in the name of the parent/guardian to the Outreach Coordinator.

2. The Outreach Coordinator shall secure a parental signature and plea on the truancy citation via any combination of mailing or hand delivering a Citation warning 1 or Citation Warning 2.
3. In the event that a parent refuses to sign a citation, the Outreach Coordinator shall forward it unsigned to the District Justice, whose office shall serve the citation.
4. The Outreach Coordinator shall turn in a Guilty Plea immediately to the District Justice. A Guilty Plea shall result in a fine.
5. The Outreach Coordinator shall turn in a Not Guilty Plea immediately or may hold it pending further unlawful absences.
6. The District Justice shall schedule a truancy hearing for within one week of receiving a Not Guilty Plea.
7. The Attendance Secretary shall prepare a truancy citation in the name of the student for the Principal or Outreach Coordinator to bring to the hearing.
8. At the hearing, the District Justice shall impose a fine to the parent/guardian, a continuance with stipulations, or sentence the student to the CASD Evening Truancy School.
9. In the case of a student being sentenced to the CASD Evening Truancy School, the District Justice shall issue to the Outreach Coordinator a CASD Evening Truancy School sentencing form and a Franklin County C&Y Truancy Prevention Program sentencing form.
10. Charges shall be dismissed upon the student's successful completion of the CASD Evening Truancy School. However, the Outreach Coordinator shall retain the Franklin County C&Y Truancy Prevention Program sentencing form for the remainder of the school year and refer to TPP in the event of further unlawful absences.

D. Subsequent Unexcused Absences for students 17 years of age and older.

1. Absences for students 17 years and older shall be classified as excused or unexcused, but not unlawful. Mandatory attendance laws do not apply. Students shall not be permitted to make up work for days classified as unexcused.
2. The Attendance Secretary shall issue Five Day Letters and Seven Day Letters as appropriate.
3. The Assistant Principal shall refer students with chronic attendance issues to the School Counselor.
4. Students absent for 10 days in a row shall be dropped from the rolls. Students with IEPs shall be referred to the Secretary to the Director of Special Education.

#### **IV. Appendix**

- A. Automated Phone Calls
- B. Absence Excuses (including early dismissal)
- C. Sign Out Forms
- D. Period/Daily Attendance Report
- E. Five Day Letter
- F. Five Day Phone Call
- G. Tardy Letter
- H. Seven Day Letter
- I. Ten Day Letter (Doctor Note)
- J. First Offense Notice
- K. Combo Letter
- L. Citation Warning 1
- M. Citation Warning 2
- N. Citation
- O. Evening Truancy School sentencing form
- P. Franklin County C&Y Truancy Prevention Program referral
- Q. General Employment Permit