

SCOTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
Board Policy

Students

Attendance and Excuses

Introduction

Regular attendance is essential for an effective school experience and necessary for annual promotion. The responsibility for regular attendance rests with the parents or guardians of the student. The Scotland Public Schools shall make every effort to keep the appropriate person informed in this most critical area.

Students in the Scotland Public Schools, by Connecticut State Statute, are required to attend school regularly during the hours and days the public school is in session. It is the intent and purpose of the Board of Education to develop and foster the maximum potential in each and every student.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at the Scotland Elementary School, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day, or less than a half day if the late arrival or early dismissal is explained, in writing, by a parent or guardian. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent. A student not meeting the definition of "in attendance" shall be considered absent.

It is our belief that successful performance in school is closely related to regular attendance. When a student is absent, he/she misses the important interaction that occurs in the classroom. For that reason, the Scotland Public Schools establishes the following procedures and regulations which are aimed at the prevention and evaluation of absences for unexcused reasons.

Excused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if written or verbal documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within five (5) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered "excused" when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.

For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness for three (3) days or less with written communication from a parent/guardian. Absences beyond three (3) consecutive days must be verified by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused;
2. Student's observance of a religious holiday;
3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's

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4. Mandated court appearances (documentation required);
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required);
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

When a student is out of school or class because of an excused absence, appropriate provisions will be made by school personnel regarding make up of missed assignments, homework, tests, and other class activities missed.

Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless:

1. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence and meets the documentation requirements; or
2. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence, which is the result of school or District disciplinary action and are excluded from these State Board of Education approved definitions.

An unexcused absence occurs when a student is out of school for reasons other than those approved as excused absences. When a student is absent for an unexcused reason, the amount and kind of assistance provided shall be at the discretion of the student's teacher(s) after consultation with the building administrator.

Chronic Absenteeism

As used in this section, the following definitions are applicable:

1. **Chronically absent child:** an enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten per cent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.
2. **Absence:** An excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to C.G.S. 10-198b, or otherwise outlined above.
3. **District chronic absenteeism rate:** The total number of chronically absent children in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the board

Policy adopted by the Board, June 5, 2018
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of education for such school year.

The Board of Education in compliance with statute, requires the establishment of an attendance review teams when the chronic absenteeism rates in the District is 10 percent or higher.

The membership of attendance review teams may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, chronically absent children, parents or guardians of chronically absent children, and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants.

The attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. The attendance review team shall meet at least monthly, when the chronic absenteeism rate in the District is 10 percent or higher.

The District shall utilize the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education when it becomes available.

The District shall annually include in information for the strategic school profile report for each school and the District that submitted to the Commissioner of Education, data pertaining to truancy and chronically absent children.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-184 Duties of parents (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157)
 10-185 Penalty
 10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy - in general
 10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA
 am11-11-136, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education
 Statutes and
 PA 14-198, An Act Concerning Excused Absences from School for Children of Service M
 10-198b State Board of Education to define "excused absence,"
 "unexcused absence," and "disciplinary absence"
 10-198d Chronic absenteeism
 10-220(c) Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-225)
 45a-8c Truancy clinic. Administration. Policies and procedures. Report. (as
 amended by PA 15-225)
Action taken by State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define

Policy adopted by the Board, June 5, 2018
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“attendance.”

*Action taken by State Board of Education on June 27, 2012, to define
“excused” and “unexcused” absences.*

Policy adopted by the Board, June 5, 2018
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