



2024-2025

SCHOOL POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY GUIDELINES

APPROVED BY THE AJHAE GOVERNING AUTHORITY - APRIL 30, 2022
REVIEWED AND APPROVED – APRIL 30, 2023
REVIEWED AND APPROVED—AUGUST 17TH, 2024
ANN JERKINS HARRIS ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE



ATTENDANCE / TRUANCY SCHOOL POLICY

REVISED AND APPROVED BY GOVERNING AUTHORITY AUGUST 17TH, 2024.

A positive school climate requires students to: follow school rules; accept guidance from school staff; respect themselves and others; and be active citizens. A positive school climate is the product of the school's attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting and caring relationships throughout the school community, no matter the setting.

The AJHAE Governing Board has zero tolerance of violent, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior by its students. Student conduct shall be governed by the rules and provisions of the [Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code]. This policy will be reviewed periodically.

It is the responsibility of students, teachers and administrators to maintain a school environment that:

- A. Encourages all students to be actively engaged in their learning;
- B. Has consequences that are fair and developmentally appropriate;
- C. Relies on preventive and supportive interventions to support positive behavior and academic outcomes; and
- D. Fairly enforces the [Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code].

All students and families are provided a copy of the Parent Handbook [Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code], which contains the rules and regulations that each student is expected to adhere to while in school or participating in any school-related activity, regardless of its location.

The AJHAE district has developmentally and age-appropriate discipline strategies ranging from preventative approaches to supportive interventions to address student misbehavior, including excessive absences.

Students who do not follow school rules on school property and/or at school-related events will be disciplined according to the terms set forth in the [District's/Board's] approved [Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code].

The Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code provides students and families with examples of the types of behaviors that would subject a student to disciplinary action ranging from suspension or expulsion to other less severe forms. Suspension and expulsion will only be used once other options have been exhausted unless the student's behavior poses a threat to the safety of him/herself or others.

A student may be subject to school disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion for harassment, vandalism, physical abuse or other harmful or disruptive behavior toward school personnel or school personnel's property during non-school hours.

If a student's suspension is longer than the school year, the student will not be required to complete the suspension at the beginning of the next school year. However, the student may be required to complete community service or an alternative strategy for engagement, per the superintendent, to be completed during the summer.

Students may be subject to discipline for violation of the [Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code], even if that conduct occurs on property not owned or controlled by the [District/Board] but that is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on property owned or controlled by the [District/Board], or conduct that, regardless of where it occurs, is directed at a [Board/District] official or employee or the property of such official or employee.

Regular school attendance is an important ingredient in students' academic success. Excessive absences interfere with students' progress in mastering knowledge and skills necessary to graduate from high school prepared for higher education and the workforce. To support academic success for all students, the district will partner with students and their families to identify and reduce barriers to regular school attendance. The district will utilize a continuum of strategies to reduce student absences including, but not limited to:

- Notifying the parent or guardian of a student's absence;
- Developing and implementing an absence intervention plan on a case-by-case basis, which may include supportive services for students and families;
- Counseling;
- Parent education and parenting programs;
- Mediation;
- Intervention programs available through juvenile authorities; or
- Referral for truancy, if applicable.

Every student should be in school every day. Even if an absence is excused, it still results in loss of important instruction time for the student. Nonetheless, there are certain instances when a student simply cannot be at school. Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.04 and Ohio Administrative Code 3301- 69-02 set forth the situations in which an absence can be excused. Districts also are permitted to add to the list of excused absences as provided in state law.

	Consecutive Hours	Hours per school month	Hours per school year
HABITUAL TRUANCY	30 HRS. (without legitimate excuse)	42 hrs. (without legitimate excuse)	72 hrs. (without legitimate excuse)
EXCESSIVE ABSENCES	--	38 hrs. (without legitimate excuse)	65 hrs. (without legitimate excuse)
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM	--	--	10% or 92 hrs. (with or without legitimate excuse)

Chronic Absenteeism, as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act, is missing 10 percent or more of the school year for any reasons. It includes excused and unexcused absences. Ten percent of the school year is about 92 hours of absences, but schools and districts do not have to wait until a child has missed 10 percent of the school year to offer supports to the student and his or her family.

Habitual Truancy: Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.011(B)(18) defines habitually truant students as “any child of compulsory school age who is absent without legitimate excuse for absence from the public school the child is supposed to attend for thirty or more consecutive hours, forty-two or more hours in one school month, or seventy-two or more hours in one school year.” Districts should keep in mind that truancy is different from chronic absenteeism. Truancy only counts absences without a legitimate excuse. Also, when a child is habitually truant, the district is required to follow several administrative procedures and legal solutions to ensure the student attends school regularly.

Excessive Absences: Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.191(C)(1) defines excessive absences as a child of compulsory school age who “is absent with or without a legitimate excuse from the public school the child is supposed to attend for thirty-eight or more hours in one school month, or sixty-five or more hours in one school year.” A district should proactively utilize its intervention strategies with students who meet the standard for being excessively absent so that the district can get the student the support he or she may need to get to school every day to prevent the student from becoming truant.

Ohio law requires that if a student is absent with or without legitimate excuse from school 38 or more hours in one school month, or 65 or more school hours in a school year, the following will occur. The school’s attendance officer will notify the child’s parent, guardian, or custodian of the child’s absences after the date of the absence that triggered the notice requirement. If a student’s absences surpass the threshold for a habitual truant, the principal or chief administrator of the school or the superintendent of the school district shall assign the student to a district absence intervention team, which will develop an intervention plan for that student. Every effort will be made to include a parent, guardian or custodian as a member of the student’s absence intervention team. Notice of the plan developed by the student’s absence intervention team will be provided to the student’s parent, guardian or custodian. At no time, however, will students be expelled or suspended out of school due to excessive absences or truancy.

When a student becomes excessively absent from school:

- The school will notify the student’s parents in writing within seven days of the triggering absence;
- The student will follow the school’s truancy plan outlined in its absence intervention policy; and
- The student and family may be referred to community resources.

When a student is habitually truant, the following will occur:

- Within seven days of the triggering absence, the district will do the following:
 - o Select members of the absence intervention team;
 - o Make three meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the student’s parent or guardian on the absence intervention team.
- Within 10 days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team;

- Within 14 school days after the assignment of the team, the district will develop the student's absence intervention plan.
- Within seven days after the plan is developed, the district shall make reasonable efforts to provide written notification to the student's parent or guardian.
- The student has 60 days to successfully implement the plan. If the student does not make progress on the plan, as determined by the absence intervention team, the attendance officer must file a complaint in juvenile court against the student on the 61st day after the implementation of the absence intervention plan.
- The school will have its attendance officer file a complaint against a student who, at any time during the implementation phase of the absence intervention plan, is absent without legitimate excuse 30 or more consecutive hours or 42 or more hours in one school month, unless the absence intervention team has determined that the student has made substantial progress on the absence intervention plan.

ABSENCE INTERVENTION TEAM

According to Ohio law, any district with a chronic absenteeism rate of 5 percent or greater must establish an *absence intervention team*. The absence intervention team develops a student-centered absence intervention plan for every child who is habitually truant by identifying specific barriers and solutions to attendance. The team should include participation of the student and the parent. This is a new requirement for districts to break down barriers to attendance without filing criminal complaints against students in juvenile court.

Membership of each absence intervention team should vary based on the needs of each individual student, but each team MUST include:

- a. A representative from the school or district;
- b. Another representative from the school or district who has a relationship with the child;
- c. The child's parent (or parent's designee) or the child's guardian, custodian, guardian ad litem or temporary custodian.

The school may invite a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, representative of a public or nonprofit agency or representative from the court to participate on the team. The school must make three good faith efforts to engage the student's parent or guardian. The parent may appoint a parent designee, such as a relative or other trusted adult, if the parent is unable to participate. If, after three good faith attempts, the district is unable to ensure participation of the parent, the team should develop the student's absence intervention plan without the parent.

The school must make three good faith efforts to engage the student's parent or guardian as outlined in the district's local policy. If the parent is unable to participate in the absence intervention team, the student's parent may appoint a parent designee, such as a relative or other trusted adult. If, after three good faith attempts, the district is unable to ensure participation of the parent, the team should develop the student's absence intervention plan without the parent. Additionally, if the parents are not responsive to the requests, the school must determine whether there is cause to report the parents to the county children services agency for abuse or neglect.

If a student becomes habitually truant within 21 school days prior to the last day of instruction of a school year, the school district or school may assign one school official to work with the child's parent, guardian, custodian, guardian ad litem or temporary custodian to develop an absence intervention plan during the summer. If the school district or school selects this method, the school/district and student must implement the plan no later than seven days prior to the first day of instruction of the next school year. In the alternative, the school district or school may toll the time periods to accommodate for the summer months and reconvene the absence intervention process on the first day of instruction of the next school year. If the 61st day after the implementation of the absence intervention plan falls on a day during the summer months, in the school district's discretion, the absence intervention team or the attendance officer may extend the implementation of the plan and delay the filing of the complaint for an additional 30 days from the first day of instruction of the next school year.

Teachers and other school staff are mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect per Ohio Revised Code 2151.421.

School will engage with the county children services agencies whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

The school will not wait until the 61st day after an absence intervention plan is developed to report suspected abuse or neglect.

The school must make three good faith attempts to engage the student's parents in the absence intervention team process. The school administration will then determine whether the parents should be reported to their county children services agencies if they are not responsive to these requests.

AJHAE will have its attendance officers file complaints against a student in juvenile court on the 61st day after the implementation of an absence intervention plan, provided that all of the following apply:

- The student was absent without legitimate excuse from the public school the child is supposed to attend for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month, or 72 or more hours in a school year;
- The school district or school has made meaningful attempts to re-engage the student through the absence intervention plan, other intervention strategies and any offered alternatives to adjudication described under division (C)(2)(b) of section 3321.191 of the Revised Code; 13
- The student has refused to participate in or failed to make satisfactory progress on the plan, as determined by the absence intervention team, or any offered intervention strategies or alternative to adjudication. Districts also are required to have their attendance officers file a complaint against a student who, at any time during the implementation phase of the absence intervention plan, is absent without legitimate excuse 30 or more consecutive hours or 42 or more hours in one school month, unless the absence intervention team has determined that the student has made substantial progress on the absence intervention plan.

Applicable Ohio Revised Code Sections contained within this policy:

- ORC 3313.20 (Rules - locker search policy - professional meetings)
 - ORC 3313.534 (Policy of zero tolerance for violent, disruptive or inappropriate behavior)
 - ORC 3313.66 (Suspension, expulsion or permanent exclusion-removal from curricular or extracurricular activities)
 - ORC 3313.661 (Policy regarding suspension, expulsion, removal, and permanent exclusion)
 - ORC 3313.662 (Adjudication order permanently excluding pupil from public schools)
 - ORC 3321.191 (Adoption of policy regarding student absences; intervention strategies)
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