

Washington West Supervisory Union Model Policy

Policy F30-R

F30-R: TRUANCY

Policy

It is the policy of the member district schools of the Washington West Supervisory Union: Fayston Elementary School, Harwood Union High School, Moretown Elementary School, Waitsfield Elementary School, Warren Elementary School, and the Waterbury/Duxbury Union School District (Crossett Brook Middle School and Thatcher Brook Primary School) to set high expectations for consistent student school attendance in accordance with Vermont law in order to facilitate and enhance student learning.

In accordance with 16 V.S.A. §1121, Act 44, Section 46 (Truancy), and Vermont Department of Education guidelines (March 23rd, 2010 Memorandum), truancy is defined as a student who is subject to compulsory attendance and who is absent without valid cause or excuse for ten days.

Valid causes for absences include illness, observance of religious holiday, death in the family, family emergency, situations beyond the student's control as determined by the superintendent (or designee), or other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent or guardian for the health or safety of the student and are confirmed in writing or verbally by the parent or guardian of the student.

The member district schools of the Washington West Supervisory Union: Fayston Elementary School, Harwood Union High School, Moretown Elementary School, Waitsfield Elementary School, Warren Elementary School, and the Waterbury/Duxbury Union School District (Crossett Brook Middle School and Thatcher Brook Primary School) shall follow the attached procedures upon implementation of this policy. The Principal is responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of student attendance. The Principal is also responsible for assuring the school has the appropriate family information that allows the school to contact parent(s) or guardian(s) of all students whenever necessary.

Date Warned: 01.20.11
Date Adopted: FES: 02.15.11; HUHS: 02.16.11; MES: 02.01.11; W-D: 02.08.11; WES: 02.14.11; WS: 02.10.11
Legal Reference(s): 16 V.S.A. §1121, Act 44, Section 46 (Truancy)
Cross Reference: Vermont Department of Education Guidelines (March 23, 2010 Memorandum)

Revised 12/20/2010

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Procedures F30-R-P

F30-R-P: TRUANCY PREVENTION/ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Responsibilities:

Parents/Guardians:

Will notify the school, in writing, in advance of a student's absence, whenever possible.

School Principal/Attendance Officer:

Shall determine if it is a valid absence and attempt to contact a parent or guardian by telephone to confirm the cause of absence. However, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school in advance if the student is going to be absent. An absence will be considered unexcused unless the school hears from the parent. Inability by the school's attendance officer or his/her designee to reach the parent does not alter the absence being excused.

Building Administrator:

Shall be notified daily of student absences.

School:

Shall annually document the cumulative absences on each student, as the number of absences will determine the thresholds for intervention as described in these procedures.

5 days absent

After 5 cumulative unexcused absences during any school year, the building administrator or designee shall make reasonable attempts to make telephone or personal contact with the parent/guardian to inquire about excessive absences.

If appropriate, support services shall be offered (e.g. social work, guidance, student assistance program services).

This contact will be followed up with the 5-day unexcused absence form letter, which outlines the consequences for subsequent unexcused absences and the warning of the possible prosecution for truancy.

If telephone or personal contact is not successfully made, the 5-day unexcused absence letter will still be sent to the parents/guardian by postal mail.

The building administrator or designee will maintain documentation of all oral and written contacts regarding unexcused absences for each student. Such documentation may be used to support any filings pertaining to truancy, child in need of care and supervision, or other matters.

10 days absent

After 10 cumulative unexcused absences during any school year, the building administrator shall again make contact with the parents/guardians, preferably in person, to inquire about the unexcused excessive absences.

If appropriate, support services shall be offered (e.g. social work, guidance, student assistance program services).

The parent/guardian must be reminded of the consequences for subsequent unexcused absences and the warning of the possible prosecution for truancy.

This contact shall be documented and put in the student's truancy file.

15 days absent

After 15 cumulative unexcused absences during any school year, the building administrator shall require that the parent/guardian attend a school conference attended by representatives from the school, including school resource officers where appropriate.

The conference may also be attended by the Washington County State's Attorney's Office, DCF, and other appropriate community or independent resources as deemed appropriate by the school. This meeting may be facilitated by an independent/neutral person.

The student's unexcused absences will be addressed and a plan that may include supportive services such as prevention, diagnostic, intervention, and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources will be developed for ensuring the student's future attendance.

A person will be identified who will follow up with the family and student as to any problems they have following through on the plan as outlined.

The conference shall be followed up by a letter which outlines the plan agreed to for the student to return to school, and of the action to be taken or home visit if the student has subsequent unexcused absences as outlined in these procedures. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the Superintendent of Schools.

Parent/Guardian do not attend 15-day meeting

If the parent/guardian fails to attend the conference, the school resource officer or other school personnel will make a home visit or other contact with the parent/guardian.

If the school resource officer or other school personnel determines that there was no valid reason for missing the conference, an affidavit regarding the unexcused absences will immediately be filed by the school with the Washington County State's Attorney's Office and a copy will be sent to the Superintendent of Schools. The Washington County State's Attorney can pursue the matter as truancy or as a child in need of care and supervision.

20 or more days absent

After 20 cumulative unexcused absences during any school year but before 30 cumulative unexcused absences, the school will, at its discretion based on its dealings with the student and parents/guardian, file an affidavit concerning the absences with the Washington County State's Attorney's Office.

The building administrator shall notify the parent/guardian that the filing has been made with the Washington County State's Attorney's Office and the possibility of criminal prosecution for truancy or a petition to determine if the student is a child in need of care and supervision.

The court could determine that the child is in need of care or supervision under 33 V.S.A. §§5517 and 5528 could potentially result in loss of custody as the most serious consequence.

WASHINGTON WEST SUPERVISORY UNION ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Staying in school is the first step to a good education. Students cannot learn if they are not in school. Absences from school for any reason (illness, vacation, religious holidays, family deaths and others) affect a student's ability to learn and succeed. A student shall be declared truant if he/she has had any unexcused absence from school for more than 20 days. After five absences, the following procedures will be followed.

PROTOCOL:

