

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

F1 Procedures: Student Attendance

The Colchester School District believes that regular attendance is critical to the academic, social and emotional growth of all children. Regular attendance is essential if a student is to receive maximum benefit from instructional programs and to assure the development of responsible and effective work and study habits.

Vermont law requires regular school attendance by students. Parents and guardians of students enrolled in school (regardless of their age) are required by law to ensure their children's attendance at school. If a student will not be in attendance, the family is asked to call the school or fill out the online absence form before the start of the school day and state the reason for the planned absence.

Each school will have a designated team that tracks attendance, interventions, chronic absenteeism and truancy on a regular basis. This team will communicate and collaborate with families to provide support to increase student and family engagement to prevent truancy. Each school shall support families when absenteeism becomes chronic. Schools can also provide support for families prior to the absences becoming excessive.

NOTIFICATION

Daily Notification:

Families are asked to notify the school in advance when a student is going to be absent. When notification isn't provided, these procedures are followed:

- In kindergarten through grade 2, the family will be called to verify the absence.
- In grades 3 through 8, notification will go out through email, text and voicemail, typically by 9:15 AM.
- In grades 9 through 12, when a student is absent from one or more class mods, the automated system will inform families at the end of the day, typically by 3:00 PM.

If a reason for the absence is not provided, the student will be marked as absent.

Regular Monthly Notification:

Beginning in October of each school year, families will be notified of their child's attendance record (including absences and tardies) on the first Monday of each month with an email. If there is a discrepancy, they are encouraged to contact the school's main office to resolve the issue.

Report Card Notification:

For students in kindergarten through grade 8, their official attendance record is included on their report card.

Truancy Notification:

Truancy letters will be sent when the student has 11 and 16 unexcused absences in kindergarten through grade 8. For grades 9 through 12, where attendance is taken by class mod, please refer to the Colchester High School Student Handbook.

ARRIVING LATE/LEAVING EARLY

Missing school for any amount of time can have a negative impact on a student's academic performance. Families are asked to minimize instances of students arriving at school late and/or leaving school early. Knowing there are legitimate, unavoidable reasons (e.g. medical appointments) for a student to be late or leave early, families are asked to follow the following procedures:

- When arriving late, report to the main office or attendance office so there is an accurate attendance record.
- When leaving early, send in written documentation beforehand. At the time of dismissal, check in with the main office and wait for the student to be called to the designated waiting area.

No student may leave school grounds during the school day, unless they are picked up by an authorized adult, without the approval of the administration.

EXTENDED LEAVES AND MAKING UP WORK

From time to time, students take extended leaves from school. Pending administrative approval, leaves of this nature are considered excused. Here is the process to request each type of leave:

- **Activity Participation** – If a student is enrolled in an educational setting outside of the district for a regular, on-going program (e.g. every Tuesday) or participates in an activity not run by the school that occurs during the school day, the family must request approval from the superintendent or their designee. This includes, but is not limited to programs such as Crow's Path, Olympic training/competition, National Spelling Bee, etc.
- **Family Vacation** – If a student will be absent from school for 1-5 days, no written notification is required. If a student will be absent 6-10 consecutive days due to a vacation, the family should inform the principal in writing of the dates the student won't be in attendance. If the vacation is longer than 10 consecutive days, the family must receive approval from the superintendent.
- **Medical Leave** – If a student needs to be absent from school due to a medical procedure, recovery from a procedure or extended illness, the family must provide the school's nurse with documentation from the student's doctor.

If a student takes an extended leave for any reason other than being homebound or hospitalized for a medical disability or pregnancy (see Homebound and Hospitalized Students section), families are encouraged to contact the school for assignments and books. Keep in mind that while teachers have a general course of study, it is not possible to anticipate the specifics of what will be covered and the student may be required to make up work when they return from the absence.

HOMEBOUND AND HOSPITALIZED STUDENTS

According to state regulations, students are eligible to receive instruction at home or in a hospital whenever they are unable to attend school for 10 or more consecutive days because of a medical disability or pregnancy. Families should reach out to their child's school when this is needed. The school will work with the Director of Student Support Services to develop a plan that meets the needs of the student and their ability to engage in learning.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

A student is considered chronically absent when they are absent 10% or more school days during the school year for any reason, excused or unexcused. For example, in a 60 day trimester, a student is considered chronically absent after 6 absences. Research shows a student is at academic risk when absenteeism reaches this level. Chronic absenteeism is also a leading indicator and cause of educational inequality. When chronic absenteeism occurs, especially in large numbers, it is a sign of challenges both outside and inside school.

Two to four missed days of school in the first month of school can be a predictor of chronic absence throughout the year. Our focus is to look at each student and whether their absences have an impact on the academic performance and/or social emotional well-being.

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT CLINICIAN

The School Engagement Clinician (SEC) promotes student/family engagement for students experiencing chronic absenteeism and/or truancy by connecting with families and offering proactive, intensive support based on need. Families who need support with school attendance should contact their student's school. The SEC will work to strengthen strategies that encourage family involvement in school. The SEC will assist in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of systems to enhance communication and relationships between families, school personnel and community resources.

The SEC will review monthly attendance (at minimum) on referred students and target barriers for school attendance. They will attend a weekly meeting at each school where attendance and students of concern are reviewed. The school and SEC will determine which committee/team is appropriate. The SEC will consult on students and discuss if referral is appropriate. Once a month, the SEC and school based team will review educational impact on identified students and determine if further support is needed.

The SEC will be available for rapid response in the morning hours to problem solve with families by offering strategies and act as the home to school liaison in the moment.

The SEC will collaborate regularly with referring schools to assess the family need and connect families with community agencies and support. They will aim to reconnect students and family with school support and when appropriate, will fade to monitoring attendance only.

Click [here](#) to view the School Engagement Clinician Referral Form.

TRUANCY

See Colchester School District Policy F 30: Student Attendance for the definition of "truant." When a student is absent, without a valid cause, the following process will be followed:

1. A letter will be sent to the family when a student has 11 unexcused absences.
2. A letter will be sent to the family when a student has 16 unexcused absences. Also, a meeting will be held with school personnel, Truancy Officer, School Engagement Clinician and the family at the Colchester Police Department when a student has 16 unexcused absences.
3. If a student is absent, without a valid cause, more than 20 days during the school year **and** the supportive interventions have not been successful in improving attendance, one or both of the following steps will be taken depending on what the team decides is the best course of action:

- Make a report to Vermont Department of Children and Families (802-649-5285).
- Have the Truancy Officer file Truancy petition with the state's attorney.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student Attendance Procedures

Appendix A: Attendance Codes

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following absences are considered excused and are **not** used in determining truancy:

Name	Power School Code	Definition
Activity Participation	ACT	Student is participating in an approved activity not run by the school.*
Death in Family	DIF	Student is absent due to a death in the family.
Family Vacation	FV	Student is absent due to a vacation with their family.*
Ill by Doctor	ILD	Student is absent for a medical reason, including surgery, recovery, extended illness, etc., supported by a doctor's note, and is <i>not</i> attending school in an alternate setting.*
Ill by Family	ILF	Student is absent for an illness or medical procedure that lasts a day or two and the school is notified by their family.**
Ill by Nurse	ILN	School nurse sends the student home, instructs the family to keep the student home for a period of time and/or has been in communication with the family and believes the reason and length of absence is necessary and reasonable.
In School Suspension	ISS	Student is suspended but remains in school.
Out of School Suspension	OSS	Student is suspended from school.
Religious Holiday	REL	Student is absent to observe a religious holiday.
Temporary Emergency Placement	TEP	Student is placed temporarily in a program or facility (not at home or in the hospital) and is intending on returning to the school when able (e.g. Brattleboro Retreat, Jarrett House, etc.).

*See "Extended Leave and Making Up Work" section for additional information.

**The school may request a doctor's note or nurse health check to verify illness(es) if a pattern develops. If a doctor's note isn't provided or a health check performed, the school reserves the right to code the absence as unexcused.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

The following absence is considered unexcused and **is** used in determining truancy:

Name	Power School Code	Definition
Absent	A	Student is absent for an unknown, unexcused or unverified reason.
Absence Verified	AV	Absence was verified by legal guardian. <i>Please note: the Absence Verified code should only be used if no other codes apply.</i>

OTHER ATTENDANCE-RELATED SITUATIONS

The following attendance-related codes are used and *may* be used in determining truancy:

Name	Power School Code	Definition
Early Dismissal AM	EDA	Student leaves school early and prior to the half-day point (or if a student misses less than 20 minutes of the mod at Colchester High School).
Early Dismissal PM	EDP	Student leaves school early and after the half-day point
Early Dismissal Mod	EDM	Student missed more than 20 minutes of the whole mod.
Late Arrival AM	LAA	Student arrives later than 30 minutes at the elementary level/20 minutes at the secondary level and before the half-day point.
Late Arrival PM	LAP	Student arrives after the half-day point.
Tardy	TDY	Student arrives to school late, but less than 30 minutes at the elementary level/20 minutes at the secondary level.

The following attendance situations are considered excused, used exclusively at Colchester High School and are *not* used in determining truancy:

Name	Power School Code	Definition
With Administration	ADM	Student is with an administrator.
Planning Room	PR	Student is referred by a teacher or self-referred to the planning room.
School Counseling	SC	Student is with the school counseling staff.
Senior Privilege	SP	Senior student is exempt from school attendance.
Waiver	WAI	Assigned by school counseling or administration.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student Attendance Procedures

Appendix B: Chronic Absenteeism Tiered Interventions and Tracking Form

TIERED AND SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Each school shall support families when absenteeism becomes chronic. Schools can also provide support for families prior to the absences becoming excessive. For example, support can be set up for students who enroll and have a history of excessive absences at their prior school or if a sudden change negatively affects a student's ability to attend school regularly.

Tier 1/Universal Interventions:

- Maintain personalized and positive communication with the family when student is absent.
- Meet with the student.
- Meet with the family to:
 - Raise awareness, build a relationship and review impact of absenteeism, tardiness, etc.
 - Relay clear, concise and consistent communication about schedules and expectations.
 - Review routines, rituals and celebrations related to attendance reviewed.
 - Acknowledge recognition of good/improved attendance.
 - Ensure the impact of attendance on the whole child is widely understood.
- Create an incentive-based plan.
- Involve the School Counselor.
- Have the Nurse do a health check.
- Request medical documentation. Any prior “Ill by Family” absences that are included in the medical documentation should be changed to “Ill by Doctor” in *Power School*.
- Make a connection to a caring adult in the school.
- Schedule a consultation with the School Engagement Clinician.

Tier 2/Targeted Interventions:

- Continue more frequent, personalized, positive communication to families when student is absent.
- Assign a point person to do a regular check-in with the student.
- Meet with the family to identify and address community and school barriers and possible ways to mitigate them.
- Create a more intensive incentive-based plan (e.g. Check-in, Check-out (CICO) with a cheerleader/mentor).
- Involve the Social Worker.
- Make a referral to School Engagement Clinician.
- Conduct a home visit by School-Engagement Clinician (CPD only if there is an accompanying safety concern).
- Request medical documentation.
- Schedule a health team meeting to discuss the possible development of a Health Plan.
- Create a Student Success Plan.
- Add attendance strategies to an existing plan (e.g. IEP, §504, EST plan, etc.)
 - Explore remediation options during and/or in addition to the regular school day
 - Small intervention group
- Have student attend Summer School (if available).

Tier 3/Intensive Interventions:

- Hold an inter-agency meeting:
 - Act 264
 - Care Team
 - Kid Safe Chittenden County Child Protection Team
- Potential loss of credit (Colchester High School only).
- Meet with Truancy Officer, School Engagement Clinician, school personnel and family at the Colchester Police Department.
- Develop an alternative/flexible pathway.

If the tiered interventions do not result in improved attendance *and* the student reaches 21 or more unexcused absences in a school year, the procedures outlined in the Truancy section will be followed.

Demographics	Student	Grade	School Year
	Teacher	School	
	Parent/Guardian Contact	Parent/Guardian Phone Number	

Tier 1/Universal Interventions	Date:	Excused Absences:	Unexcused Absences:	Tardies:
	☐ Communication with family		Date:	NOTES
	☐ Met with the student		Date:	
	☐ Met with the family		Date:	
	☐ Created an incentive-based plan		Date:	
	☐ Involved the School Counselor		Date:	
	☐ Nurse performed a health check		Date:	
	☐ Requested medical documentation		Date:	
	☐ Made a connection with a caring adult		Adult:	
	☐ School Engagement Clinician consultation		Date:	
	☐ Other:			
	☐ Other:			

Tier 2/Targeted Interventions	Date:	Excused Absences:	Unexcused Absences:	Tardies:
	☐ Communication with family		Date:	NOTES
			Date:	
			Date:	
			Date:	
	☐ Regular check-in with the student		Adult:	
	☐ Met with the family		Date:	
	☐ Created a more intensive incentive-based plan		Date:	
	☐ Involved the Social Worker		Date:	
	☐ Referred to School Engagement Clinician		Date:	
	☐ Home visit by School Engagement Clinician		Date:	
	☐ Nurse performed a health check		Date:	
	☐ Requested medical documentation		Date:	
	☐ Health Team meeting held		Date:	
	☐ Developed a Health Plan		Date:	
	☐ Created a Student Success Plan		Date:	
	☐ Added attendance Strategies to existing plan		Plan:	
	☐ Recommended Summer School			
	☐ Other:			
	☐ Other:			

Tier 3/Intensive Interventions	Date:	Excused Absences:	Unexcused Absences:	Tardies:
	☐ Inter-Agency meeting: - o Act 264 - o Care Team - o Kid Safe Chittenden County Child Protection Team - o Other: _____			Date: In Attendance:
	☐ Loss of credit - o Course: _____ - o Course: _____ - o Course: _____ - o Course: _____ - o Course: _____ - o Course: _____			
	☐ Met with Truancy Officer Meeting notes:			Date: In attendance:
	☐ Developed an alternative/flexible pathway Brief description:			Date:

Truancy	Date:	Excused Absences:	Unexcused Absences:	Tardies:
	☐ 11-day letter sent			Date:
	☐ 16-day letter sent 16-day meeting with: - o Truancy Officer: _____ - o School Engagement Clinician: _____ - o Family Member(s): _____ - o School Personnel: _____ - o Other: _____ - o Other: _____			Date: Date: NOTES
	☐ Report to Vermont Department of Children and Families			Date: Intake #:
	☐ Truancy petition filed with the state's attorney, including: - o Contact information - o School student attends - o Attendance report, including prior years, if relevant - o Explanation of what, specifically, needs to be addressed - o Interventions that have been tried - o The specific action the school thinks the Court can take that the school is unable to take - o Previous filing(s), if applicable - o Vermont Department of Children and Families intake number, if applicable			Date: NOTES