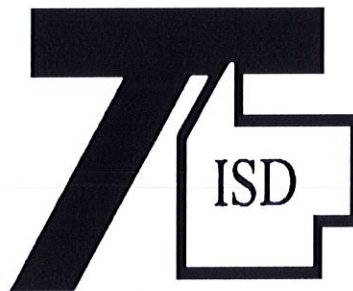


TUSCOLA ISD

2023 - 2024

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY HANDBOOK



“IT’S THE LAW”



Consistent Attendance = Positive Academic Performance

Introduction:

Each year Tuscola County Truancy Services works with truant students and their families due to excessive absences and tardies. Truancy is often the beginning of a lifetime of problems for students. Each day a student is absent, she/he miss out on valuable instructional time in the classroom. This results in poor academic performance which hinders educational growth.

Truancy is a stepping stone to delinquent and criminal activity. Truant students are at a higher risk of being drawn into behavior involving drugs, alcohol, or violence. High rates of truancy are linked to high rates of daytime burglary and vandalism. Truancy has been clearly identified as an early warning sign that students are headed for potential delinquent activity, social isolation, or educational failure via suspension and expulsion.

New Compulsory School Attendance Law Ages 6-18:

380.1561 Compulsory attendance at public school; enrollment dates; exceptions.

Sec. 1561.

Except as otherwise provided in this section, for a child who turned age 11 before December 1, 2009 or who entered grade 6 before 2009, the child's parent, guardian, or other person in this state having control and charge of the child shall send that child to a public school during the entire school year from the age of 6 to the child's sixteenth birthday. Except as otherwise provided in this section, for a child who turns age 11 on or after December 1, 2009 or a child who was age 11 before that date and enters grade 6 in 2009 or later, the child's parent, guardian, or other person in this state having control and charge of the child shall send the child to a public school during the entire school year from the age of 6 to the child's eighteenth birthday. The child's attendance shall be continuous and consecutive for the school year fixed by the school district in which the child is enrolled. In a school district that maintains school during the entire calendar year and in which the school year is divided into quarters, a child is not required to attend the public school more than 3 quarters in 1 calendar year, but a child shall not be absent for 2 or more consecutive quarters.

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TUSCOLA COUNTY TRUANCY PROCEDURES

Truancy: ***“Absences exceeding 10 percent of scheduled days of instruction.”*** This is equivalent to nine absences per semester or six absences per trimester. Both excused and unexcused will be considered by the Court.

School Responsibility: The following interventions **must** be completed by school staff before sending a truancy referral. See attached forms for Truancy Referral and Record of Interventions. These steps must be completed if future court proceedings occur.

- Absence letter sent to parent
- Phone call to parent
- Referral to school counselor/outside agency
- Administrative face-to-face meeting with parent and student at school
- Referral to Truancy Services at the Tuscola Intermediate School District
 - Referral form
 - Record of Interventions
 - Attendance record
 - Absence letter(s)
 - Documentation of School Attendance Meeting Form

Parental Responsibility:

- Providing an attitude at home that school attendance is important and valuable to the student
- Being sure their children will be in school every day that is possible
- Cooperating with the schools by making contact when absence is a must
- Providing a united front with the school in correcting any problem dealing with attendance
- Making appointments for their children outside of the school day if at all possible, so they can be in school as much as possible
- Turn in doctor notes/professional notes to school office

Student Responsibility:

- Making sure they attend every day and every period possible
- Providing reasons for absences immediately upon return to school if it has not been done already
- Being an example to friends and others that regular attendance in school is necessary

Truancy Services:

- Letter sent by TISD Truancy Services Office -- parents/guardians have five days to respond
- Phone contact with parent/guardian
- School meeting conducted to address excessive absences and tardies. Parent notified that further absences must be documented with a note from a licensed medical professional. Documentation must explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence.
- Regular attendance updates requested to monitor student
- Face-to-face follow up with student
- Petition/Warrant filed with Tuscola County Prosecutor’s Office if prior interventions are unsuccessful in gaining compliance

Court Petition Process: (Filed on students age 11-16)

- Petition filed with the Tuscola County Prosecutor's Office
- Petition is authorized by Prosecutor
- Parent/Guardian and Truancy Officer are notified of first court hearing
- Preliminary Hearing
- Pretrial Hearing
- Trial
- Disposition = ruling
 - House arrest
 - Formal probation
 - Intensive probation
 - Restitution
 - Juvenile placement
 - Community service
- Review Hearing every 3 months

Court Warrant Process: (Filed on parents of elementary students age 6-17)

- Warrant filed with Tuscola County Prosecutor's Office
- Warrant is authorized by Prosecutor
- Truancy Officer swears out the warrants with the Court Magistrate. Truancy Officer swears under oath that the facts presented are true.
- Magistrate authorizes the charge of truancy
- Notice to Appear
- Arraignment held
- Pretrial Hearing -- parent/guardian have the opportunity to plea, stand mute or no contest
- Trial
- Sentencing
 - 2 days mandatory minimum jail
 - Fines, costs, and fees
 - Probation
 - Community service
 - Counseling
 - Parenting classes

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“Excused Absences” means the following:

- Child’s illness/medical reason as documented by a professional health official
- Medical appointments (including but not limited to medical, counseling, dental, or optometry)
- Child’s observance of a religious holiday
- Death in the student’s family
- Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required)
- Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education guidance
- Absences related to parent or guardian’s military service
- Homelessness

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