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## Child Welfare & Attendance

A specialized student support service that combines counseling and legal remedies to resolve complicated or persistent student attendance or behavior problems.

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Child Welfare and Attendance is a specialized student support service that covers compliance with compulsory education laws, student admission and enrollment procedures, student discipline procedures, transfers to alternative programs, and school climate and safety. Child welfare and attendance combines the knowledge and skill of counseling with knowledge of education and the law to resolve complicated situations involving school choice, student discipline, campus safety, and programs for high-risk youth.

## Expanded Duties of Attendance Supervisors

Under Assembly Bill 2815, which became law on January 1, 2017, the role of attendance supervisors has been expanded to include more effective practices to address chronic absenteeism and truancy.

Reducing California's high chronic absenteeism rates is a priority in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). This update to California *Education Code* sections 48240–48244 can be a tool for meeting local goals to reduce chronic absenteeism rates. These changes in attendance supervision practices help promote a culture of attendance and improve local systems to accurately track pupil attendance by grade level and pupil subgroup.

Districts may find it helpful to review the effective practices described in this legislation when considering the duties of attendance supervisors and assistant attendance supervisors.

Identified duties for attendance supervisors in this legislation include the following:

- Raise the awareness of school personnel, parents, guardians, caregivers, community partners, and local businesses of the effects of chronic absenteeism, truancy, and other challenges associated with poor attendance.
- Identify and respond to grade level or pupil subgroup patterns of chronic absenteeism or truancy.
- Identify and address factors contributing to chronic absenteeism and habitual truancy, including suspension and expulsion.
- Ensure that pupils with attendance problems are identified as early as possible to provide applicable support services and interventions.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies implemented to reduce chronic absenteeism rates and truancy rates.

An attendance supervisor may refer chronic absentees and truants to critical support services and interventions which will help them get back on track with their education. Examples of these key services and interventions benefiting high risk youth listed in the legislation are as follows:

- ☒ A conference between school personnel, the pupil's parent or guardian, and the pupil.
- ☒ Promoting co-curricular and extracurricular activities that increase pupil connectedness to school, such as tutoring, mentoring, the arts, service learning, or athletics.
- ☒ Recognizing pupils who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance.
- ☒ Referral to a school nurse, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, and other pupil support personnel for case management and counseling.
- ☒ Collaboration with child welfare services, law enforcement, courts, public health care agencies, or government agencies, or medical, mental health, and oral health care providers to receive necessary services.
- ☒ Collaborating with school study teams, guidance teams, school attendance review teams, or other intervention-related teams to assess the attendance or behavior problem in partnership with the pupil and his or her parents, guardians, or caregivers.
- ☒ In schools with significantly higher rates of chronic absenteeism, identify barriers to attendance that may require schoolwide strategies instead of case management.
- ☒ Referral for a comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment.
- ☒ Referral to a school attendance review board.
- ☒ Referral to a county truancy mediation program.

## California Definition of Chronic Absentee

A "chronic absentee" has been defined in *California Education Code (EC) Section 60901(c)(1)* as "a pupil who is absent on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year when the total number of days a pupil is absent is divided by the total number of days the pupil is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular day schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays."

## California Definition of Chronic Absenteeism Rate

The "chronic absenteeism rate" has been defined in *California Code of Regulations Title 5, Section 157497.5 appendix*:

(a) "Chronic absenteeism rate" shall be calculated as follows:

(1) The number of pupils with a primary, secondary, or short-term enrollment during the academic year (July 1 – June 30) who are chronically absent where "chronic absentee" means a pupil who is absent 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year when the total number of days a pupil is absent is divided by the total number of days the pupil is enrolled and school was actually taught in the total number of days the pupil is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular day schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays.

(2) The unduplicated count of pupils with a primary, secondary, or short-term enrollment during the academic year (July 1 – June 30).

(3) Divide (1) by (2).

The above definition is used in California for Local Control and Accountability Plans and differs from the chronic absenteeism rate definition used in accordance with the data collection conducted pursuant to section 203(c)(1) of the Department of Education Organization Act (20 U.S.C. 3413(c)(1)) for Title I schools. The federal definition for chronic absenteeism counts students who have missed 15 days of school for any reason during one school year rather than students who have been absent 10 percent or more of the school days.

## Publications

[Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism](#) [↗](#) (PDF)

Offers information, suggested action steps, and lists of existing tools and resources—including evidence-based resources—for individuals, leaders, and systems to begin or enhance the work of effective, coordinated community action to address and eliminate chronic absenteeism.

[Make Everyday Count Toolkit](#) [↗](#) (PDF)

Communicates the importance of regular school attendance to parents and students.

[Present, Engaged, and Accounted For](#) [↗](#)

Focuses on the critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades.

[School Attendance Review Board Handbook and Forms](#)

This Web page includes resources to improve school attendance.

## Resources

[Attendance Works](#) [↗](#)

A national and state initiative that promotes awareness of the important role that school attendance plays in achieving academic success starting with school entry.

[Every Student, Every Day: A National Initiative to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism](#) [↗](#)

Supports coordinated community action that addresses the underlying causes of local chronic absenteeism affecting millions of children in our public schools each year.

[Reporting Requirements for Severance of Attendance](#)

Information on *EC* Section 48203, which requires the superintendent of a school district or the principal of a private school to report the severance of attendance of children with exceptional needs or handicapped children.

## Sample Forms

Sample forms are taken from Appendix A of the [School Attendance Review Boards Handbook](#). Appreciation is extended to staff members of the San Juan Unified School District who permitted the California Department of Education to adapt and translate their Chronic Illness Verification Form for statewide use.

[Chronic Illness Verification Sample Form \(English\)](#) (DOC)

[Available Translations of Chronic Illness Verification Sample Form](#)

The Chronic Illness Verification Sample Form allows parents to excuse absences due to a specific medical condition with the same authority as a medical professional.

**Questions: Educational Options, Student Support, and American Indian Education Office |**  
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Last Reviewed: Wednesday, November 15, 2017

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