

## **Attendance & Truancy FAQ's**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences.

### **What is Truancy or "failure to attend school" charges?**

An offense of Failure to Attend School is charged based upon:

- The requirement to attend school under Section 25.085; and
- If a student fails to attend school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, and the absences are unexcused

### **What does the law say?**

Texas requires a child who is at least 6 years of age, or who is younger than 6 years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday to attend school unless exempt by law. Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten shall attend school.

Under **Texas Education Code 25.094**, a student is in violation of the **Compulsory Attendance** law if the student is absent **3 days or parts of days in a four week period** or **10 days or parts of days in a six month period**. Tardiness is considered part of a school day. It is the responsibility of the parent to monitor their child's attendance. As a reminder, according to **Texas Education Code 25.093**, a parent is subject to prosecution when his/her child fails to attend school regularly.

### **How many unexcused absences will trigger truancy charges?**

Once the student accumulates 10 UNEXCUSED incidents within a 6 month period, or 3 or more consecutive incidents in a 4 week period, Truancy Charges SHALL be filed. Filing with the court system is mandatory by state law.

### **If I have a doctor or parent note, does that count towards my 10 days?**

Medical and excused absences do not count towards the 10 days for filing. Emails or written notes from doctors/dentists or parents must be received within 3 days of the absence in order for it to be excused. **Phone calls do not** excuse absences- a written note or email must be sent in. Notes after 3 days will not be accepted.

### **Can I excuse a tardy?**

Tardies are not excused unless it is for a medical appointment. Lateness due to student medical appointments made in the morning are considered excused with a written doctor or dentist note. These appointments will not be counted as a tardy to school.

Lateness for any other reason is considered being tardy. Tardies are marked as missing part of a school day and count towards the unexcused absences trigger. The elementary school day starts at 7:50 am.

### **What if I check my child out early?**

Checking your child out of school before 2:50pm counts as a "Leave Early" entrance on your child's truancy record. It is considered unexcused unless a medical note is provided from a doctor or dentist stating your child had a medical appointment during a time period that warranted leaving early.

Unexcused "Leave Early" entries are considered missing part of a school day and count towards the unexcused absences that triggers a filing.

### **Why do I get those attendance letters?**

Letters will be sent to parents once a student has reached 3 unexcused absences and again at 7 unexcused absences. The letters serve as a reminder of state law and a warning that charges will be filed once a student gets 10 unexcused absences. Remember, non-medical tardies and "leave early" entries count as unexcused absences as the students are missing a part of the school day.

### **I filled out the vacation form, why are those absences unexcused?**

Forms for vacations serve as a notification to schools that your child will be gone and allows your child to make up missed work. Vacations or family trips will not be counted as excused, even with parent notification. The days missed for a family trip will count towards the 10 days that trigger a truancy filing.

If your child will be gone for a period of more than 10 consecutive school days, they will be automatically un-enrolled on day 10 and truancy charges will be filed.

The extended absence notification form can be located at:

<http://www.friscoisd.org/ly/admin/docs/104844080911.pdf>