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## Policy 5113

### Attendance, Truancy, and Chronic Absenteeism

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education (the “Board”), through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement this policy.

In addition, the Board takes seriously the issue of chronic absenteeism. To address this issue, the Board, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures regarding chronic absenteeism in accordance with state law.

- Legal Reference:
- Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-186
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198a
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198b
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198c
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198d
  - Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198e
  - Public Act No. 21-46
  - June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-2
  - Public Act No. 21-199
  - Connecticut State Department of Education. *Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System* (January 2008)
  - Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, *Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences* (June 27, 2012)
  - Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)
  - Connecticut State Department of Education, *Reducing Chronic Absence in Connecticut’s Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts* (April 2017)
  - Connecticut State Department of Education Memorandum, *Youth Service Bureau Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules* (February 22, 2018)
  - Connecticut State Department of Education, *Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide* (February 2018)



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Policy adopted:	June 15, 1992
Policy revised:	March 1, 1993
Policy revised:	August 21, 2017
Policy revised:	February 5, 2018
Policy revised:	August 19, 2019
Policy revised:	May 16, 2022



### I. Attendance and Truancy

#### A. Definitions for Section I

1. “Absence” - any day during which a student is not considered “in attendance” at the student’s assigned school, or on a school sponsored activity (e.g. field trip), for at least one half of the school day.
2. “Disciplinary absence” - any absence as a result of school or District disciplinary action. Any student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. Such absence is not considered excused or unexcused for attendance and truancy purposes.
3. “Educational evaluation” - for purposes of this policy, an educational evaluation is an assessment of a student’s educational development, which, based upon the student’s presenting characteristics, would assess (as appropriate) the following areas: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.
4. “Excused absence” - a student is considered excused from school if the school has received written documentation describing the reason for the absence within ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school, or if the student has been excluded from school in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-210 (regarding communicable diseases), and the following criteria are met:
  - a. Any absence before the student’s tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence is considered excused when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.
  - b. For the student’s tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence and all absences thereafter, a student’s absences from school are, with appropriate documentation in accordance with this regulation, considered excused only for the following reasons:
    - i. student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);
    - ii. religious holidays;
    - iii. mandated court appearances (documentation required);
    - iv. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family;



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- v. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the District administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation; or
  - vi. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a District other than the one the student attends.
- c. A student, age five (5) to eighteen (18), inclusive, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parent's leave or deployment. In the case of such excused absences, the student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to the student's return to school.

"Excused absence" excludes a student's engagement in (1) virtual classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged electronic systems, and (4) the completion and submission of assignments, if such engagement accounts for not less than one-half of the school day during remote learning.

- 5. "In Attendance" - any day during which a student is present at the student's assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, for at least half of the regular school day.
- 6. "Mental health wellness day" – a school day during which a student attends to such student's emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school.
- 7. "Remote learning" means instruction by means of one or more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model as may be authorized by the Clinton Board of Education (the "Board") in accordance with applicable law.
- 8. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Clinton Public Schools (the "District").
- 9. "Truant" - any student **five (5) to eighteen (18)** years of age, inclusive, who has **four (4)** unexcused absences from school in any one month or **ten (10)** unexcused absences from school in any school year.
- 10. "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day for at least one half of the school day, which is not excused or considered a disciplinary absence. The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building



principal or designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or designee, whose decision shall be final.

“Unexcused absence” excludes a student’s engagement in (1) virtual classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged electronic systems, and (4) the completion and submission of assignments, if such engagement accounts for not less than one-half of the school day during remote learning.

### **B. Mental Health Wellness Days**

Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall be permitted to take two mental health wellness days during the school year, during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school days.

### **C. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences**

1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school. Consecutive days of absence are considered one incidence of absence.
2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note from the student’s parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.
3. For the student’s tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence, and all absences thereafter, documentation of the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and must also include the reason for the absence and the following additional information:
  - a. student illness:
    - i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse, who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return date; or
    - ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student’s medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and location of the consultation.
  - b. religious holidays: none.
  - c. mandated court appearances:



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- i. a police summons;
    - ii. a subpoena;
    - iii. a notice to appear;
    - iv. a signed note from a court official; or
    - v. any other official, written documentation of the legal requirement to appear in court.
  - d. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family: a written document explaining the nature of the emergency.
  - e. extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the District administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this policy: written pre-approval from the administration, in accordance with this regulation.
  - f. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a District other than the one the student attends: none.
4. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written documentation. In rare and extraordinary circumstances, a building administrator may, in the administrator's own discretion, accept the delivery of written documentation through a scanned copy sent by e-mail.
5. The District reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received, through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.
6. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building principal may, at the principal's own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.

#### **D. Extraordinary Educational Opportunities**

1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:
  - a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the student's course work or plan of study;



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- b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;
  - c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and
  - d. include content that is highly relevant to the student; while some opportunities will be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that would limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.
2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.
3. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:
  - a. be submitted to the building principal in writing prior to the opportunity, but no later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;
  - b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;
  - c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include detail as to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study; and
  - d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.
4. The building principal shall provide a response in writing and include the following:
  - a. either approval or denial of the request;
  - b. brief reason for any denial;
  - c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;
  - d. the specific days approved as excused absences for the opportunity; and
  - e. the understanding that the building administrator may withdraw its approval if the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon requirements of the approval.
5. All decisions of the building principal relating to extraordinary educational opportunities shall be final.
6. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other students and/or school staff when they return.



7. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-case basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for one student may not be approved for another.

#### E. Truancy Exceptions

1. A student **five (5) or six (6) years of age** shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the District office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five (5) or six (6) years of age.
2. Until June 30, 2023, a student **seventeen (17) years of age** shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents to such student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the District office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the District provided the parent (or person having control of the child) with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.
3. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student who is eighteen (18) years of age or older may withdraw from school. Such student shall personally appear in person at the school District office and sign a withdrawal form. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the District provided such student with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.
4. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student seventeen (17) years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over such child withdraws such child from school and enrolls such child in an adult education program pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-69. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school District office and sign an adult education withdrawal and enrollment form. Such adult education withdrawal and enrollment form shall include an attestation (1) from a school counselor or school administrator of the school that the District has provided such parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and in the community, and (2) from such parent or person that such child will be enrolled in an adult education program upon such child's withdrawal from school.
5. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be "truant."





**F. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal**

1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from school (in accordance with Section E.2 or E.4, above) and subsequently seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student's withdrawal from school.
2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with Section E.2 or E.4, above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of the student's withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests readmission.

**G. Determination of Whether a Student in "In Attendance":**

1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as absent unless the student receives an alternative educational program for at least one half of the regular school day. In any event, the absence is considered a disciplinary absence, and will not be designated as excused or unexcused.
2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours in order to be considered "in attendance."
3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being "in attendance" for every day that they receive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher for an amount of time deemed adequate in accordance with applicable law.

**H. Procedures for Students in Grades K-8**

1. Notification
  - a. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent or other person having control of the student enrolled in grades K-8 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to ensure that such a student attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the District.
  - b. Annually at the beginning of the school year, or upon the enrollment of a student during the school year, the building principal or his/her designee will request from the parent/guardian or other person having responsibility for the



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student a telephone number of other means of contacting the parent/guardian or other person during the school day.

#### 2. Monitoring

- a. Each school will maintain a system of monitoring student absences and tardies.
- b. Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal or his/her designee will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent/guardian or other person having responsibility for the student unless the parent/guardian or other person has already notified the school and the reason for the absence.
- c. Unless mitigating circumstances exist, unsatisfactory attendance shall occur after five or more absences per term. When a student's attendance (absences and tardies) is considered unsatisfactory, the student will be referred to the school's Student Assistance Team for review.

### I. Procedures in Grades 9-12

#### 1. Intervention

- a. Attendance will be reviewed at the midpoint of each quarter for all students. The principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian in writing if the student is at risk of losing credit or exhibits a pattern of inconsistent school attendance.
- b. After nine (9) absences in a class in a semester, credit will be suspended for that class pending a review by the Attendance Review Board.
- c. The Attendance Review Board, upon review of the circumstances surrounding the absences and within the confines of policy 5113, will exercise one or more of the options listed below and inform the parent/guardian of the decision rendered.
  - i. Restore credit for the course
  - ii. Impose social probation (no participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics)
  - iii. Impose attendance probation (attendance required for the remainder of the course would be specified in order to retain credit)



- iv. Uphold suspension pending specified work completion credit
- v. Refer to the Student Assistant Team or school social worker
- vi. Deny course credit

#### **J. Attendance Records**

All attendance records developed by the Board shall include the individual student's state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

### **II. Chronic Absenteeism**

#### **A. Definitions for Section II**

1. "Chronically absent child" - a child who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Board and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.
2. "Absence" - an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-198b and these administrative regulations.
3. "District chronic absenteeism rate" - the total number of chronically absent children under the jurisdiction of the Board in the previous school year divided by the total number of students under the jurisdiction of the Board for such school year.
4. "School chronic absenteeism rate" - the total number of chronically absent students for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of students enrolled in such school for such school year.

#### **B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams**

If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the District.

If a school under the jurisdiction of the Board has a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for that school.



If the Board has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the District or at each such school.

If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the District or at each such school.

#### **C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams**

Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined under I.A.9, and chronically absent students and their parents or guardians.

Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent students, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent students and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

#### **D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Board and its attendance review teams, if any, will consider any chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

### **III. Reports to the State Regarding Truancy Data**

Annually, the Board shall include information regarding the number of truants and chronically absent children in the strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the District as a whole submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Measures of truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken by the Board to reduce truancy in the District.

### **IV. Evolving State Department of Education and State Board of Education Guidance**

The Board will comply with any and all guidance issued by the State Department of Education and/or State Board of Education regarding attendance requirements, including during periods of remote learning.



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#### V. Make-Up Work

Upon return to school, students shall request missed assignments from the teacher. Except for extended absences, all missed work, including tests, assessments, and quizzes, will be made up with a period not longer than twice the length of the absence unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.

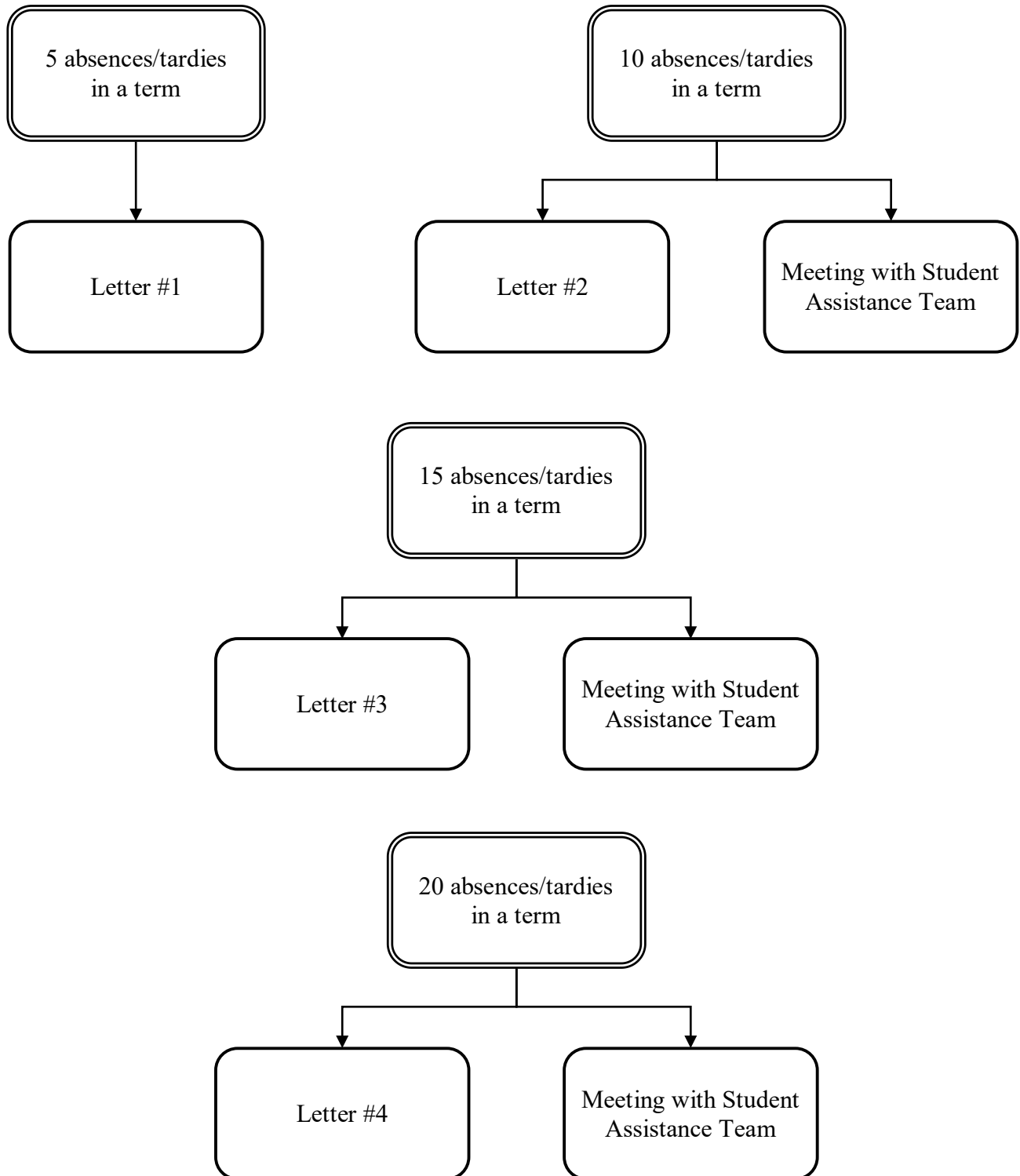
Legal Reference:	Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220
	Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184
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Regulation revised:	August 19, 2019
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#### Administrative Letters for Grades K-8

**Letter #1:** Our records indicate that [Student Name] has accumulated # absences and # tardies to date. Since regular student attendance at school is critical to student achievement, I would like to offer our assistance to improve [Name]'s attendance. Someone from our school will be contacting you directly. Chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness, whether excused or unexcused, will result in a referral to our school's Student Assistance Team or Attendance Review Board. For your convenience, I have added our school's attendance policy for your review. You can find this information in the student planner and on our school website. Please contact me if you have any questions.

**Letter #2:** Our records show that [Student Name] has accumulated # absences and # tardies to date. All previous interventions have been unsuccessful in improving [Student Name]'s attendance. We request your presence at a meeting which has been scheduled for [Date] [Time] [Location] to discuss your child's attendance. You have already received a copy of Clinton Public School Attendance Policy # 5113, which outlines the statutory requirements for student attendance. Please contact me immediately at [Phone Number] to confirm your attendance at the meeting. If this is not convenient we will work to reschedule to a date and time when you are able to attend.

**Letter #3:** Our records show that [Student Name] has accumulated # absences and # tardies to date. All previous interventions have been unsuccessful in improving [Student Name]'s attendance. We request your presence at a meeting which has been scheduled for [Date] [Time] [Location] to discuss your child's attendance. You have already received a copy of Clinton Public School Attendance Policy # 5113, which outlines the statutory requirements for student attendance. Please contact me immediately at [Phone Number] to confirm your attendance at the meeting. If this is not convenient we will work to reschedule to a date and time when you are able to attend.

**Letter #4:** Our records show that [Student Name] has accumulated # absences and # tardies to date. All previous interventions have been unsuccessful in improving [Student Name]'s attendance. We request your presence at a meeting which has been scheduled for [Date] [Time] [Location] to discuss your child's attendance. You have already received a copy of Clinton Public School Attendance Policy # 5113, which outlines the statutory requirements for student attendance. Please contact me immediately at [Phone Number] to confirm your attendance at the meeting. If this is not convenient we will work to reschedule to a date and time when you are able to attend.

**Letter #5:** Our records show that [Student Name] has [4 / 10] unexcused absences [this month / this school year] which identifies him/her as truant per Connecticut State Statute. We request your presence at a meeting which has been scheduled for [Date] [Time] [Location] to discuss your child's attendance. You have already received a copy of Clinton Public School Attendance Policy #5113, which outlines the statutory requirements for student attendance. Please contact me immediately at [Phone Number] to confirm your attendance at the meeting. If this is not convenient we will work to reschedule to a date and time when you are able to attend.