

## 2019-2020 Truancy QA webinar

**Q1:** Can you upload an end

**A1:** The only time you should end a truancy for a student, is if the year is ending or they left district. This can't be uploaded though as of now.

**Q2:** Does the DOE distinguish between excused and unexcused absences because we have students that don't meet the threshold for truancy, however, it states "y" for chronically absent. Do these students need truancy record?

**A2:** Students can be chronically absent and not truant. Truancy looks at only unexcused absences while chronic absenteeism looks at ALL absences. The students will only need a truancy record if they also meet the truant guidelines posted here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/collection/helpdesk/resources/truancy>

**Q3:** What if a student is identified as truant but documentation is provided weeks later excusing the Abs and is no longer considered truant?

**A3:** You can contact the helpdesk and we can work out exiting/removing that truancy

**Q4:** Just so I am clear, 17-year old do not count as truant and we do not have to create truancy events for them?

**A5:** That is correct

**Q6:** when a student has an IEP, and has met the threshold for truancy - does the truancy meeting and the manifestation meeting have to be separate meetings?

**A6:** No, it is fine to include the truancy intervention meeting as part of an IEP meeting. Recall that superintendents (20-A Section 5051-A B-1) are to develop SAU policies regarding which personnel will carry out the intervention process. There is no reason why the IEP could not do so.

**Q7:** If a child is over the age of 17 and still enrolled in school does that mean that we don't record them as truant? I guess I misunderstood the hold 17-year age to end a truancy log entry

**A7:** Students are no longer compulsory age once they turn 17. You do not need to record truancy for students once they turn 17, but you will still need to track attendance.

**Q8:** In the past you have asked us to "pause" a truancy record if the student returns to school. So, if a student is in our district and becomes truant, our efforts to get them back in school works and they attend for a month, but then they fall truant again and we work hard to get them back again - how do we record that? In the past we would have entered the date the student first became truant, paused it when they returned, and then resumed truancy when they were absent again. When they returned the second time, we can't pause more than once, so we would have ended the truancy record. It sounds like you don't want this information reported to you - just open the truancy record once and leave it there until the end of the year or they turn 17. We just record that information locally so that we have accurate attendance information on our end. Is that correct? Same district

**A8:** You are correct. Once a truancy record is opened in a given year for a student, it remains open until the student exits. If the student returns then goes out again, the DOE just needs a record of the steps taken to address the additional absences. That could be simply reactivating the intervention team if appropriate or moving on to more additional steps. You can include notes in the truancy module to provide details.

If a student exits the SAU, the truancy record should close automatically. You would have to open a new record if the student re-enrolled in your SAU.

**Q9:** can you define chronic absenteeism vs truancy?

**A9:** Truancy looks at only unexcused absences while chronic absenteeism looks at ALL absences. CA is students who are enrolled at least 10 days and miss 10% or more of those days. Truancy is for students who meet the age/grade specific guidelines presented here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/collection/helpdesk/resources/truancy>  
Additionally, truancy does pertain to lawful obligations.

**Q10:** School Board Notified- In Statute it is listed Last (after Law Enforcement), why is it required prior to Parent Meeting?

A. Unfortunately, the statutory steps are not written chronologically, so the order can be confusing. School boards are to be notified when the SAU has made a good faith effort to carry out the intervention process and feels there is a need to move beyond that process to additional steps. The purpose is to alert the board that more serious steps are going to be taken.

Because these steps occur at essentially the same point in the process, the DOE loosened the date requirements in the module. You should be able to submit these steps in either order.

**Q11:** as I understand it, chronic is two days within a quarter, but when they hit 10 it is truancy, correct?

**A11:** Chronic Absenteeism is 10% or more of their days enrolled. These absences don't have to be consecutive and does not matter if they're excused or not. Truancy only looks at unexcused absences, but there are different truancy laws/guidelines setup for specific age groups which can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/collection/helpdesk/resources/truancy>

**Q12:** Will we Ever be able to End the Truancy when they turn 17 via the upload?

**A12:** We'll look into that. Synergy is aware we want this change, but it will require further discussion with them.

**Q13:** So if I have recorded students truant and they are above the age of 17 years of age do I need to call the help desk in order to have them removed?

**A13:** Depends. If the student met truancy prior to that age, we do not want to delete the truancy record. The record will remain open until the end of the school year or if they leave the district, but if all the days accumulated were after the student was 17, you can give the helpdesk a call.

**Q14:** Do you have to record the steps taken to resolve a truancy - either in Synergy or somewhere else?

**A14:** You would report the steps within Synergy.

**Q15:** What is the law around contacting DHHS regarding truancy? When I contacted DHHS recently to report truant students, they said that they would record the information but that they wouldn't assign a caseworker to these students.

**A15:** The statute in Title 22 governing DHHS's response to truancy only defines truancy as a form of neglect or abuse for children who have not yet completed grade 6. If a school reports truancy for a child who hasn't completed grade 6, that report should be reviewed for action like any other report alleging potential abuse or neglect.

At this time, DHHS cannot respond to a simple report of truancy for older students because of this definition. Our colleagues at DHHS understand that sometimes truancy is the primary sign of other

issues in a child's life that may constitute abuse or neglect. Please do report truancy situations for older students if you are concerned that this is the case. It is important to share those underlying concerns explicitly when you make the report, because a report of truancy alone will not trigger a review.

**Q16:** Would the many parent notifications (attendance and truancy letters) that occur once a student is identified, while working on creating an intervention plan be documented in the Truancy Note until the Official Parent Notification if the Intervention Plan fails?

**A16** Many schools have local intervention procedures that involve sending parent notification when a child is at risk for truancy, has reached one of the truancy thresholds, to invite parents to intervention meetings, etc. You should feel free to make note of those communications in your notes about the intervention process.

The only notification that must be documented in the truancy module is the official notice that gets sent if the intervention process fails. This is also the notification that the district attorney will be looking for should the case get referred to court.

**Q17:** If we are working with students and their families of partial and non-attenders who have physical or mental health diagnoses and we're helping them get to school but have more than 10 cumulative days of unexcused absence, should we still be classifying them as truant?

**A17:** Yes, if the student meets the truant definition. Schools have the ability to set different schedules for their students based on their needs. For example: if the student is special needs and is only required to attend 3 days a week instead of 5 like the other students, you would just have 3 days enrolled and 3 days present as opposed to 5 days enrolled and 3 days present. But if the student accumulates unexcused absences on days when they are supposed to be present, those unexcused absences count toward truancy.

**Q18:** My position is in Title I and we're using truancy data to complete our Comprehensive Needs Assessments, and it's always really hard to get our hands on. To see results of this data, would we have to log into Synergy to run a report, or is it available on Focal Point or could it be imported into Power School, where much of our other data is? (Sorry for such a basic question, I'm just at a different position than most here.)

**A:** The easiest way to review your high level truancy data is to check what's in your NEO Truancy Certification Report. Once you open that report, just click on "View details" in the far right hand corner. You won't be able to see full details about the actions taken by the school, but it's an easy way to see how many kids are truant and how many unexcused absences they've accumulated.

**Q19:** I couldn't join til now. Is this being recorded so I can see the whole thing.

**A19:** Yes, all webinars and QAs will be posted here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/collection/helpdesk/resources/webinars-and-presentations>

**Q20:** We do truancy letters that are sent home to parents and to administration for all student's truant, should we still send these home to kids over the age of 17.

**A20:** You should not send the parent notification described in statute.

**Q21:** Hi, we have a 4-year-old registered for Pre-K that has been out of school since September. We were not informed by the guardian that they moved yet were informed by housing that they did. The phone is disconnected, and the email is returned. We have no way to get a hold of them. They have been marked as unexcused. Do we keep this as unexcused or is there anything else we can do?

**A21:** You can end the enrollment. We have an exit code specific for under compulsory age students

**Q22:** The Truancy Manual Entry Guide link is dated May 2018. I have a copy of what appears to be the same doc, with a date "...last updated ...August 16th 2018". I \*think\* this doc might be from the Annual Aug 2019 training? Just want to make sure I have the most up to date doc.

**A22:** You can find the most up to date document uploaded on the webpage around noon today

**Q23:** So, do we enter the date of the initial letter to parents in synergy?

**A23:** Yes. If your initial letter is part of your local process informing parents that their child is at risk of becoming truant, has become truant, or something else related to your locally developed intervention process, you MAY include the date of your letter in your intervention plan notes. Please do not enter the date of such a letter for the Official Parent Notification step.

**Q24:** Can we get a list of validation that are in place in Synergy?

**A24:** We'd have to ask Synergy for this. It depends on what validations you're looking for. For specific fields, or just general Synergy

**Q25:** How are you able to change the number of required hours for a student who has medical/other issues documented? For example, 3 hours instead of required 5.

**A25:** You will have to look into your local system for that. Your data specialist may know where it is

**Q26:** Can we go back to the date of the last day of them being in school?

**A26:** You can move the end date back.

**Q27:** We have a student that has moved out of town and no longer with us. She is in the 6th grade and is being marked absent each day, are you saying we should exit them moved out of district vs. marking them absent every day? We do not have a request for records.

**A27:** If the student left district and you have documentation, you can exit them. If you are unsure if they left the town or not without documentation, you should keep open the truancy and enrollment.

**Q28:** Follow up on previous question: If we know a student has moved out of state but DO NOT have formal documentation, we are able to end the truancy and withdraw them?

**A28:** If there is no documentation proving the student left, then they must stay enrolled. Either letter from the parent or their new school requesting records is enough to exit them. We recommend reaching out to the district you believe the student to be residing in and ask if they can confirm they have the student.

**Q29:** What if student is truant, we have gone through all steps, letters and phone calls with NO response from student. Student is over 17. Can we withdraw student? from school?

**A29:** If they were 16 at the start of the year, you'll just need to keep it open until the end of the school year. Next year, you won't need to create a new one. You can withdraw students who are 17 or 18 if either the student or parent signed notification that the student is withdrawing.

**Q30:** Where is the list of steps to take when trying to resolve a truancy? I didn't see it in Synergy.

**A30:** The list of truancy steps can be found on the Helpdesk's truancy webpage here:  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/collection/helpdesk/resources/truancy>

**Q31:** The synergy validation question: On the upload what field validations are in place. This goes back to the order of operations question.

**A31:** Please refer to our Truancy Upload Data Dictionary:

[https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Truancy\\_3.xlsx](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Truancy_3.xlsx)

**Q32:** We have a 9th grade student who told us they were moving to Florida. This was two weeks ago. We have not received any record requests yet. I have tried reaching out to the mother to no avail. He is being marked unexcused. We do not know the town/city in Florida they moved to.

**A32:** If there is documentation that a move has taken place, that'll provide enough reason, but unless there's that, or a request for records, then the student must remain enrolled and unexcused for the remainder of the year. Gayle is available if you'd like to reach out on locating a student.

**Q33:** I have a student who enrolled at my school and then moved to another town. We have confirmed that he has moved to another town, but he has not enrolled at that school. Can I exit him? Or, do I need to keep him and continue to count him as truant for us?

**A33:** If the student's new school sent a records request, but have not enrolled the student, you should contact that school to get them to enroll the student. If there is no avail to that, you may contact the helpdesk and we'll go about getting that enrollment created for you.  
If there are no records request and there is no documentation of the move, you must keep the student enrolled.

**Q34:** Can a parent withdraw a student who is younger than 17th from a district without any plans for enrolling into a different school.

**A34:** A student under 17 may only be withdrawn from school if they met all the guidelines and criteria stated here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ApprovedCompulsoryAgeDropouts.pdf>

**Q35:** If I have a records request for a student (high school) who has moved out of state, but never received a request for their younger siblings, can I use the same end date for the siblings as the high school student? We have confirmed (sheriff's office) that the family moved out of the local residence. The family documents had only the mother listed as a guardian.

**A35:** You would need assurance that the younger siblings had moved out of state in order to exit them. This does not have to include a request for records but should at least be written documentation from the parent. You may want to reach out to the school district where the older sibling is enrolled.

**Q36:** Back to my question about the 4-year-old Pre-K student, if we un-enroll her, can we go all the way back to the last day she was here (September) or unenroll her as of today?

**A36:** You may go back to a previous date to unenroll a student, HOWEVER in this case, the student was originally shown as being enrolled on October 1<sup>st</sup>, which contributes to the subsidy/funding received. You may not go back and put in an end date before October 1<sup>st</sup> if the student was originally counted on October 1<sup>st</sup>. You will need to use October 2<sup>nd</sup> as the exit.

**Q37:** Enrollment Dates- If a student transfers out before we upload all the truancy information, we get an error. End Date is required due to inactive enrollment. But End date is not part of the upload file any longer. Is this an error in the validation or in the upload file? Either way will this be corrected soon so that we can upload Truancy information for a student that has transferred out.

**A37:** Yes, right now you'll have to do it manually. We're working with Edupoint to get upload working.