

Overview of Maine Attendance Laws

Maine's attendance and truancy laws outline the requirements for school attendance, define truancy, and establish procedures for addressing unexcused absences. Below is a summary:

Compulsory Attendance

- Children aged 6 to 17 are required to attend school, whether public, private, or through equivalent instruction (e.g., homeschooling).
- Children aged 5 to 6 who are voluntarily enrolled in public school must also attend unless formally withdrawn.

Exceptions include graduation, homeschooling with proper documentation, or specific exemptions approved by the school board or commissioner.

Excused Absences

Absences may be excused for reasons such as:

- Physical, mental, or behavioral health
- Medical or legal appointments
- Religious holidays
- Family emergencies
- Approved personal or educational purposes
- Disruptions caused by homelessness or other emergencies.

Truancy

A student is considered truant under the following circumstances:

- Below grade 6: 7 full days of unexcused absences or 5 consecutive unexcused absences during a school year.
- Grades 7 and to the age of 17: 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive unexcused absences during a school year.

Truancy Intervention Process

When a student is identified as truant:

1. The principal notifies the superintendent within five school days of the last unexcused absence.
2. An intervention team (e.g., student assistance team) meets with the family to develop a plan addressing the causes and effects of truancy. This may include:
 - a. Counseling, mentoring, tutoring
 - b. Changes in learning environment
 - c. Attendance contracts
 - d. Referrals to external services.
3. If truancy persists, the superintendent is notified and sends or delivers a formal letter to the family.
4. The superintendent notifies the school board.
5. Law enforcement and the Department of Health and Human Services may become involved, potentially leading to court appearances and civil penalties for parents.

Other Maine Truancy Resources

[MSAD 11 Truancy Tracker for Individual Students](#)

[Truancy Letter Examples](#)

[Maine DOE Attendance Plan Template](#)

[Maine DOE Mandated Reporting Decision Tool for Truancy](#)

[Maine DOE Truancy Webinar](#)

[Maine School Management Association Sample School Board Policies](#)