

EUT POLICY ON TRUANCY

A student is habitually truant if the student:

- A. Is subject to the compulsory attendance law; and
- B. Has attained the equivalent of 10 full days of non-excused absences or seven consecutive school days of non-excused absences during a school year.

The Director of State Schools-EUT shall be the attendance coordinator for purposes of this policy.

As required by law, the following procedure shall be followed when a student is habitually truant:

- A. If the principal determines that a student is habitually truant, the principal shall inform the Director. The principal shall first try to correct the problem informally. Informal attempts to correct the problem must include meeting with the student and the student's parents to identify possible causes of the habitual truancy and to develop a plan to implement solutions to the problem. If the initial meeting does not resolve the problem, the principal shall implement interventions that best address the problem including but not limited to:
 - 1. Frequent communication between the teacher and the family;
 - 2. Changes in the learning environment;
 - 3. Mentoring;
 - 4. Student counseling
 - 5. Tutoring, including peer tutoring;
 - 6. Placement into different classes
 - 7. Evaluation for alternative education programs;
 - 8. Attendance contracts;
 - 9. Referral to other agencies for family services; and
 - 10. Other interventions.

Failure of the student or the student's parents or legal guardians to appear at scheduled meetings does not preclude school administrators from implementing a plan to address a student's truancy.

As part of correcting the problem informally, the principal shall require the student and his/her parents/legal guardians to attend one or more meetings with the student's teacher or other school personnel designated by the principal. The purpose of the meeting(s) is to reinforce the plan reference in paragraph A or to develop an alternative plan. Such meetings may involve others including but not limited to case managers, therapeutic treatment providers, and representatives of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services, and the Department of Corrections. The principal shall schedule the meeting(s) at mutually convenient times.

- B. If the principal is unable to correct the student's truancy, the Director shall serve or cause to be served upon the parent in-hand or by registered mail a written notice that the student's attendance is required by law. The notice shall:
 - 1. State that the student is required to attend school pursuant to 20-A M.R.S.A. §5001-A (the compulsory attendance law);

2. Explain the parent's right to inspect the student's attendance records, attendance coordinator's reports, and principal's reports
 3. Explain that the failure to send the student to school and maintain the student in regular attendance is a civil violation in accordance with 20-A M.R.S.A. §5053-A and explain the possible penalties;
 4. State that the Director may notify local law enforcement authorities of a violation of the habitual truancy statute; and
 5. Outline the plan developed to address the student's habitual truancy and the steps that have been taken to implement that plan.
- C. Prior to notifying local law enforcement authorities, the Director shall schedule at least one meeting as required by law and paragraph B of this policy.
- D. If after three school days after the service of the notice described in paragraph C of this policy the student remains truant and the parent and student refuse to attend the meeting referred to in paragraph D, the Director shall report the facts of the unlawful absence to local law enforcement authorities.
- E. After this notification, a local law enforcement officer who sees the truant student may transport the student to the appropriate school if the truant student is off school grounds during school hours and not under the supervision of school personnel.

The Director shall submit an annual report regarding habitual truancy to the Commissioner by October 1. The report must identify the number of habitual truants in the Unorganized Territory unit in the preceding school year; describe the unit's efforts to deal with habitual truancy; account for actions brought to enforce the habitual truancy law; and include any other information on truancy requested by the Commissioner.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. §§5001-A; 5051-A-5054

Adopted: May 2022