

Leland and Gray Union Middle and High School
Truancy Policy F25.1
August 10, 2010

Policy

F25.1

It is the policy of the Leland and Gray School District to maintain a truancy prevention and response system that involves school personnel in collaboration with social service agencies, and/or the Windham County Family Court. In coordination with these partners, school administration support students under 16 years old and their families to provide a quality education. Leland and Gray seeks to bridge its multiple pathways of learning, such as classroom and online courses, alternative education programs, coop, independent studies, Act 176, and/or the Windham Regional Technical Center, as well as co-curricular options, with individual students' academic interests and needs, in order to prevent and respond to truancy.

School administration will develop procedures to prevent and address truancy.

Date Adopted: 9/14/10

Date Reviewed: 7/8/2014

Legal Reference(s): 16 V.S.A. §1121 §212(a)(5) and Act 44 (2010)

Description of Truancy in the 2010-11 Student Handbook

Truancy

6 V.S.A. § 1121- F25

A student is considered truant when s/he exceeds 10 unexcused absences in a quarter and is under 16 years old. The Leland and Gray principal and truant officer coordinate services and reporting to support truant students and their families, and to provide a quality education. This may include home visits and referrals to the police, social service agencies, and/or the Windham County Family Court.

WINDHAM COUNTY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Revised February 7, 2011

Purpose To assure that the students and their families in Windham County Pre-K-12 schools have support in ensuring attendance at school. The intent is to ensure that students are in school and learning. Daily school attendance is critical to successful school performance. Being present on time is a life skill to be cultivated. The long term goal is for all students to gain an education and all that it makes possible. Measurable outcomes include an increase in attendance rates, a reduction of the drop-out rate and the number of juveniles on the Department of Children and Families (DCF) caseload.

Process School District expectations of families regarding tardiness and truancy:

TRUANCY

It is our shared responsibility to be sure that every child is safe and accounted for on every school day. If your child is absent from school, it is essential that you notify the school within 30 minutes of your school's start time.

The school will contact the parent/guardian at home or at work, but please note the following: If a child is not in school on a given day and we have not received notification from the parent/guardian, nor are able to verify the child's whereabouts, we are required to report each unverified absence to the appropriate police agency or sheriff's department as early in the day as possible. To ensure the child's safety and to prevent truancy, the police agency will confirm the child's whereabouts.

TARDINESS

Students are expected to arrive at school no later than the stated start time for your school. Students arriving after this time are considered late and will be marked tardy. A pattern of tardiness puts a child at a disadvantage in school. Coming in late, the child regularly misses the opportunity to be greeted by everyone, settle into the day, learn the schedule for the day and generally get off to a positive start. We ask that parents work with the school to ensure that students arrive on time.

PROTOCOL APPROACH

This school attendance protocol utilizes a team approach, if necessary, to explore with the student and family what obstacles are hindering school attendance. An individualized plan will be developed to increase school attendance. Follow-up steps are set to assess if the plan is working for the student and the family. Records are kept in school files of all contacts related to this protocol made with the family of the student.

Team Membership The protocol initially relies on school staff to insure attendance. If needed at a later stage, staff from state and community agencies, as well as parent liaison supports, will assist.

Tardiness Tardiness is a disruption to the educational process. It sets a tone that de-values education. It disrupts the child's schedule for the school day.

<i>After <u>five</u> tardy days</i>	Teacher contacts family in person or by phone. Letter to go out to family from principal.
<i>After <u>seven</u> tardy days</i>	Letter to go out to family from principal. Parent meeting scheduled with counselor and teacher.
<i>After <u>ten</u> tardy days</i>	Letter to go out to family from principal. Parent meeting scheduled with principal, counselor and teacher. At the meeting, a release of information is signed by the family to allow discussion between the school and outside agencies if necessary.

Absences – both excused and unexcused

<i>After <u>five</u> absent days</i>	Phone call or letter to go out to family.
<i>After <u>seven</u> absent days</i>	Letter to go out to family, including if appropriate a request for a doctor's note for any future absences. Parent meeting may be scheduled with Educational Support Team (EST) or school personnel. At the meeting, a release of information is signed by the family to allow discussion between the school and outside agencies if necessary. Law enforcement may assist in getting release signed.

*** Copies of correspondence should be sent to DCF at seven absent days**

<i>After <u>ten</u> absent days</i>	Letter to go out to family.
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Parent meeting scheduled if appropriate with school personnel and representatives from outside agencies and programs. These could include the Youth Services, HCRS, DCF, and other community agency supports including law enforcement.

After fifteen absent days

Letter goes out to family.
Referral may be made to family physician.
Report will be made to DCF (with administrative discretion).

Dependent on the DCF assessment

Affidavit goes to Windham County State's Attorney and law enforcement

Dependent on the State's Attorney's assessment

The State's Attorney makes the decision whether the case should go to Windham County Family Court or District Court.

End of School Year Accumulation of Absences If a student misses more than 15 days of school by the end of the school year, the administrator will take these absences into account at the start of the next school year. If the pattern of absences once again occur, a report will be made to DCF.

Missed Conference Meetings If a parent misses a conference regarding tardiness or absences, a follow-up letter will be sent:

After 7 days

After 10 days

If a conference regarding absences is missed, DCF may be contacted.

Legal Definitions

16 V.S.A § 1121. Attendance by children of school age required

A person having the control of a child between the ages of six and 16 years shall cause the child to attend a public school, an approved or recognized independent school, an approved education program, or a home study program for the full number of days for which that school is held, unless the child:

(1) is mentally or physically unable so to attend; or

(2) has completed the tenth grade; or

(3) is excused by the superintendent or a majority of the school directors as provided in this chapter; or

(4) is enrolled in and attending a postsecondary school, as defined in subdivision 176(b)(1) of this title, which is approved or accredited in Vermont or another state. (Amended 1965, No. 46, § 1, eff. May 5, 1965; 1967, No. 55; 1981, No. 151 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1987, No. 97, § 2, eff. June 23, 1987; 1989, No. 44, § 5, eff. June 1, 1990; 1999, No. 113 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; 2009, No. 44, § 35, eff. May 21, 2009.)

§ 1123. Attendance may be excused.

(a) The superintendent of a public school may excuse, in writing, any pupil from attendance upon such school for a definite time, but for not more than ten consecutive school days and such excuse shall be granted only for emergencies or for absence from town.

(b) The superintendent of an elementary school held for more than one hundred and seventy-five school days in a school year may excuse, in writing, a pupil of such school from attending more than such one hundred and seventy-five days.

(c) The superintendent with the consent of a majority of the school board of the town in which the pupil resides, may excuse, in writing, a pupil who has reached the age of fifteen years and has completed the work required in the first six years of the elementary school course from further school attendance if his services are needed for the support of those dependent upon him, or for any other sufficient reason.

§ 1124. Pupils mentally or physically unfit

When a person having the control of a pupil represents to the superintendent having supervision of the school which such child should attend, that such child is mentally or physically unable to attend school, and if the superintendent has reason to believe that such representation is untrue, he shall investigate and, if he deems it advisable, shall request the health officer of the town or a competent physician to examine such child, but if there is a medical inspector in the district in which such school is located, the superintendent shall request such inspector to examine such child. The officer, physician or inspector shall examine the child and make a report of his condition to the superintendent; and the superintendent shall, if the child is found mentally or physically unable to attend school, notify the teacher of such school and the truant officer of the town of such fact. The expense of such examination shall be paid from the school funds of the town district.

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