

House Bill 410 Excessive Absence and Habitual Truancy Reminder

As we begin the year, please be reminded that state law requires all schools to report student absences. This law is meant to address student truancy and excessive absenteeism but applies to all Ohio students. According to the law, schools may not suspend or expel students for chronic absenteeism or habitual truancy, and instead must provide other ways, such as community service, to promote compliance and school attendance. Additionally, schools must develop Absence Intervention Plans for students who exceed the absence limits outlined in the law.

The goal of the law is well intentioned: Require schools to do everything in their power to ensure students attend school, since good attendance is key to students' academic success. However, in practice, the requirements will be very apparent to families whose students miss school with any regularity. Families will receive warning notifications from the school if their children reach the absence thresholds, which must now be reported in hours, not days.

This is not a change sought by schools, but we must comply with the requirements of the law.

All of the time out of school – including time missed for coming in late and early dismissals – is included in student attendance totals. Limiting scheduled appointments to before or after school and weekend hours will help students avoid reaching the new absence limits. Please be sure to report absences to the school office (attendance line) each day, as well as submit a doctor's excuse for verification of any student absence for medical reasons.

Families will receive an Excessive Absence Notification when a student misses:

- 38 or more hours in one school month (with or without a legitimate excuse)
- 65 or more hours in one school year (with our without a legitimate excuse)

The law also requires schools to address Habitual Truancy, which occurs when a student misses:

- 30 or more consecutive hours without a legitimate excuse
 - If absences continue after students reach the above threshold, the school will invite families in for a conference to create an Absence Intervention Plan to help improve student attendance.
- 42 or more hours in one school month without a legitimate excuse
- 72 or more hours in one school year without a legitimate excuse

Thank you for your support for the state-mandated attendance reporting requirements.