



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN**

TITLE: Attendance Policy for Elementary and Secondary Schools

NUMBER: BUL-4926.0

ISSUER: Judy Elliott, Chief Academic Officer

DATE: February 22, 2010

ROUTING
 Local District Superintendents
 LD Directors of School Services
 Operations Administrators
 Principals
 Assistant Principals
 Dropout Prevention and Attendance Coordinators
 PSA & Diploma Project Counselors
 Deans
 Academic Counselors
 Outreach Consultants
 School Administrative Assistants

POLICY: The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) School Board, Superintendent, and staff recognize the importance of the Compulsory Attendance Law, Education Code (E.C.) 48200 that underscores each student’s right and obligation to receive an education by attending school daily. Therefore, it is the District’s policy that all staff adhere to the guidelines included in this Bulletin and further detailed within the newly developed *Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual* dated February 2010. Every school will develop programs and practices that demonstrate a strong commitment to improve student attendance, decrease student dropouts, and thereby increase student achievement and graduation rates.

PHILOSOPHY

Student attendance and student achievement are closely intertwined. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are much more likely to be successful both academically and socially than students who develop patterns of poor attendance. We recognize that a high school diploma will provide our students the opportunity to become productive and contributing members of society. Each school shall work collaboratively with the entire school community to maintain and create a school culture and climate where students feel safe, welcome, and connected. A positive school environment, conducive to regular daily attendance and learning will result in increased attendance and improved academic achievement. Parents, staff, community, and school leadership are vital in supporting all students to graduate. Parents can be empowered, engaged in, and responsible for the successful completion of their children’s education. Each student can graduate from high school given the appropriate coordinated services and resources necessary to meet individual needs.

MAJOR CHANGES: This Bulletin replaces BUL-1292.0, *Attendance Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools*, dated July 28, 2005 and BUL-1287, *Student Attendance Policy*, dated February 1, 2005.



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The accompanying *Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual* has been developed to assist school personnel to understand and put into practice procedures consistent with Federal, State, and District attendance policy and procedure requirements. It provides information on roles, tasks that must be assigned, procedure requirements to follow, and forms to utilize in accordance with State regulations and LAUSD policies. Consistent with its mission, the District is committed to ensure compliance with such policies and procedures. It is expected that District personnel will serve students and their families in a manner consistent with this manual.

The Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual is designed to be used as a:

- Structured process for implementing attendance policies
- Reference for answering questions
- Staff development tool
- Source for resources of support and assistance

GUIDELINES: Every school within the LAUSD must develop programs and practices consistent with the following guidelines:

- I. Enforcement of Compulsory Education Laws and Mandated School Organization
 - A. Every principal is responsible for school staff to enforce mandated Compulsory Education Laws and to follow the policies that ensure students are punctual and attend the full length of the school day as stated in E.C. 48200.
 - B. Every school shall organize school offices in such a way that the Main/Attendance Office is open during all school hours to serve students and parents/guardians. Each school shall have posted school hours and shall notify parent/guardian of school hours twice a year (via opening school bulletin, monthly school newsletter, etc.).
- II. School Attendance and Dropout Prevention Plan
 - A. Every school shall have a formal, written, proactive Attendance and Dropout Prevention Plan. E.C. 48340 encourages school districts to adopt student attendance policies based on the active involvement of parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and community members. The principal shall designate an Attendance and Dropout Prevention Team and convene with them twice a year to develop, review, and implement a school-wide Attendance and Dropout Prevention Plan consistent with the policies set forth in this Bulletin and the *Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual*. This plan shall be incorporated with the Coordinated Safe and



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Healthy School Plan.

- B. Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) provides a framework for schools to provide integrated tiers of student support for attendance, attitude (behavioral/social emotional learning), and academic achievement. A multi-tiered system of supports and structures, also known as RtI², should be seen as a “reframing” of best practices involving successful student support efforts. RtI² emphasizes a tiered intervention model that blends school-wide support systems, targeted intervention, data analysis, comprehensive assessment and intervention, and on-going outcome evaluation into a continuum of student focused support. In practice RtI² involves the assessment of student school progress (response) in relation to the instructions and additional assistance provided by schools to support student success (intervention). The results of this evaluation are used to fine-tune instruction and intervention and determine the additional supports necessary to meet each student’s needs.

Every school shall develop a system to identify and provide interventions to high-risk students and potential dropouts. Students identified as needing assistance will be assessed and referrals to support services both in-school and in the community will be documented. Interventions provided to individuals and groups of students not attending school regularly will be tracked and monitored to reinforce positive attendance behaviors.

III. Registration and Enrollment

- A. The principal is responsible for the timely registration and enrollment of all students under his/her supervision. School personnel shall without delay register and enroll all known non-enrolled students residing within the school’s attendance boundaries and those with special circumstances.
- B. Homeless Students must be properly identified and enrolled immediately. To meet the student’s needs, the District must either continue the student’s education in the school of origin, or enroll the student in the public school serving the attendance area where the student is temporarily residing. Refer to BUL-1570.1 titled Enrollment/Support of Homeless Children and Youth in Schools dated March 5, 2008 for additional information.
- C. Out-of-Home Placement Students, who present a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Notification to School of Minors Placement Status (Form 1399), shall be immediately enrolled,



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regardless of the availability of school records, immunization records, school uniforms or the existence of fines or materials from a prior school. Refer to BUL-787.0 titled Guidelines for School Enrollment of Student in Out of Home Care dated July 1, 2004.

- D. School personnel may not delay registration or enrollment to students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for any reason. If a school is unable to determine the appropriate placement based on the student's IEP, school personnel should contact the Special Education Support Unit servicing the Local District.
- E. For students who reside outside of the school boundaries, principals must ensure that appropriate permits are submitted and approved. Refer to BUL- 4374.0, *Permits and Student Transfers in Elementary and Secondary Schools*, dated August 18, 2008.
- F. All year-round schools shall place newly enrolled students on tracks that will, as nearly as possible, ensure the students' completion of a full school year. District policy does not allow the establishment of track waiting lists.

IV. Record Keeping

- A. The principal is responsible for the daily attendance accounting of all students under his/her supervision and shall establish clear marking procedures. Absences, tardies, early leave times, and reasons for absences are to be recorded. All teachers are mandated by E.C. 44809, California (CA) Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the UTLA contract, and District policy to take attendance. Every school shall have an official, daily attendance-reporting time which shall be during the first fifteen minutes of each class period. Teachers who habitually do not submit attendance records are to be reported to their principal for guidance and assistance in meeting this required duty. Continued failure to comply with the attendance accounting requirements shall result in disciplinary action. The principal is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and monitoring of attendance records.
- B. The principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Enrollment/Norm Day procedures in order to obtain accurate Norm Day counts. The Annual School Program Survey, also known as the CA Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), is the means by which the CA Department of Education (CDE) allocates funds to districts and calculates school enrollment, high school graduation, and dropout rates.



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- V. Absences and Notifications
- A. Every principal shall require satisfactory explanation from the parent/guardian of a student, either in person or by written note, whenever the pupil is absent a part or all of a school day as per California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 5, section 306. Absences are defined as excused or unexcused. In either case, when students are absent from school, they miss valuable instructional time and the District does not earn revenue.
 - B. Every effort shall be made by the school staff to notify parents/guardians of students' unexcused absences and to clear these and all absences. If attempts are made to clear absences with sufficient due diligence, yet no excuse is provided, these absences may be converted to truancies after ten school days. This policy is also included in the Parent Student Handbook.
 - C. Every principal or designated school staff shall establish notification procedures for irregular attendance, tardies, and early leaves. It is the legal responsibility of the school to notify parents/guardians of their children's absence according to E.C. 46011.
 - D. All extended student absences (five or more consecutive days) shall be investigated. At each school, the principal shall designate a school administrator to be responsible for the verification of the reasons for extended absences.
 - E. LAUSD authorizes secondary schools, in collaboration with the local district staff, to develop and implement a system of progressive consequences related to grades for students who are excessively absent or tardy without valid excuses.
 - F. When students are absent, they may be provided with make-up work based upon the reason for the absence. Teachers shall advise their students at the beginning of each semester of the opportunity to complete missed classroom work, homework, or test.
 - G. A commitment to excellent attendance is expected from school staff in order to comply with the District's Employee Attendance policy. The District acknowledges that there is a strong correlation between teacher attendance and student performance. Administrators shall provide Appendix P, Employee Attendance Policy (included in the manual), to all employees under their supervision at the beginning of each school year.



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VI. Mandated Truancy Notification and Interventions

- A. It is District policy that principals establish a system for sending Initial and Habitual Truancy Notifications. Truancy notifications are a core responsibility for school staff and shall be sent to the parents/guardians of students by first class mail or other reasonable means upon the student's initial truancy and habitual classification. Initial truancy status is defined as any student between the ages of 6-18 years old who has accumulated three full days of unexcused absences or unexcused tardies of more than 30 minutes or any combination thereof in one school year. These students shall be classified as truant (E.C. 48260). School staff shall classify students who have previously been reported as truant, as Habitual Truant when the student has been absent without a valid excuse five or more days or tardy for more than any 30 minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on five days or occasions (or any combination thereof). An administrator, designated staff or the PSA Counselor shall make a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent/guardian and the student prior to being reclassified as a Habitual Truant (E.C.48262).
- B. The Truancy Mandate applies to all school district. E.C. section 48260.5 requires them to notify the student's parent/guardian by first class mail or other reasonable means, that the student is truant, upon a student's initial truancy classification. The District is limited to claiming one Initial Truancy Letter per student per school year. Each school shall submit a copy of all Initial Truancy Letters to the Local District Pupil Services Attendance (PSA) unit on a monthly basis.
- C. Truancy has long been identified as an early warning sign of potential delinquent behavior, social isolation, and educational failure. District policy mandates that school staff adhere to the full extent of E.C. 48263.5 to ensure that students comply with regular attendance in order to achieve academic success.

VII. Withdrawal Procedures and Dropouts

- A. Schools shall not finalize grades and withdraw students prior to the end of the school year or semester due to the following reasons: discrepancies with the chronological age calculator, before testing, discipline, etc. These practices are against District policy, CA Education Code, reduce the revenue of per pupil Average Daily Attendance for the District, and are harmful to students.
- B. Principals shall establish a system of due diligence for students with ten or more absences or who have been withdrawn from school. Students



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who withdraw without enrolling in another school, increase the District's dropout rate and lower the enrollment of the last school of attendance. Therefore, it is imperative that schools maintain a system of accurate data collection.

- C. Principals shall include specific dropout prevention, intervention, and recovery procedures in their Attendance and Dropout Prevention Plan. Students who withdraw without enrolling in another school increase the District's dropout rate and lower the enrollment of the last school of attendance.

VIII. Confidentiality and Document Retention

- A. School employees are obligated under Federal and State laws to maintain pupil records in a manner that protects and maintains the records' security and confidentiality. Pupil records are legal documents. These include enrollment, attendance, withdrawal, emergency, and other records or reports. For additional information regarding the maintenance and distribution of pupil records, refer to BUL-2469, *Pupil Records: Access, Confidentiality Notice of Educational Rights*, dated April 24, 2006 and BUL- 1077.1, *Information Protection Policy*, dated December 11, 2006.
- B. All auditable documents shall be retained and stored in a place known to the principal and the custodial staff. The documents shall be securely stored and clearly marked with a "destroy date" on the box as appropriate.

IX. Audits

- A. Student enrollment and attendance accounting records and procedures are subject to audit by the District's Internal Audit Branch, Contract Auditors, and State agencies such as the Office of the Auditor General. Principals are responsible for maintaining enrollment and attendance accounting records in accordance with District policy to ensure their availability for audits.
- B. Principals shall ensure self-audits are conducted twice a year.

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the California State Superintendent of Schools. The following legal standards are applied to this policy:

- California Education Code 48200 Compulsory Full-Time Education
- California Education Code 48260, 48261 Truancy
- California Education Code 48260.5 Truancy Notification



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- California Education Code 48262 Habitual Truant
- California Education Code 48340 Pupil Attendance Policies
- California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sec. 405 Actual Attendance Counted
- California Education Code 44809 Teacher Responsibility
- California Education Code 49064-49078;49602 Pupil Records and Confidentiality
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 FERPA

RELATED RESOURCES:

- Attendance Policy and Procedures Manual
- ISIS Phase I Attendance Procedures Handbook for Secondary Schools dated July 22, 2009
- ISIS Phase I Attendance Procedures Handbook for Elementary Schools dated June 30, 2009
- BUL-787.0, *Guidelines for School Enrollment of Student in Out of Home Placement*, dated July 1, 2004
- BUL-1077.1, *Information Protection Policy*, dated December 5, 2006
- BUL-1570.1, *Enrollment/Support of Homeless Children and Youth in Schools*, dated March 5, 2008
- BUL-1660.3, *Immunization Guidelines for School Admission*, dated April 7, 2008
- BUL-2060.0, *Pregnant and Parenting Students Educational Rights*, dated October 25, 2005
- BUL-2197, *Open Enrollment Transfers for Elementary and Secondary Students*, dated January 30, 2006
- BUL-2469, *Pupil Records: Access, Confidentiality, and Notice of Educational Rights*, dated April 24, 2006
- BUL-3720.0, *Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Strategies*, dated May 23, 2007
- BUL-4374.0, *Permits and Student Transfers in Elementary and Secondary Schools*, dated August 18, 2008
- BUL-3819, *Guidelines for Student Suspension*, dated August 21, 2007
- BUL-4478.0, *Opportunity Transfers*, dated December 15, 2008
- BUL-4655.0, *Expulsion of Students - Policy and Procedures*, dated March 13, 2009

ASSISTANCE: For assistance or further information, please contact Debra Duardo, Director of Pupil Services, or your Local District Dropout Prevention and Attendance Coordinator.