



## **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

### **Liberty Union High School District's Board Policy** **BP 5113 Students Absences and Excuses**

The Governing Board believes that regular attendance plays an important role in student achievement. The Board recognizes its responsibility under the law to ensure that students attend school regularly. Parents/guardians are obligated to send their students to school unless otherwise provided by law. The Board shall abide by all state attendance laws and may use appropriate legal means to correct the problems of excessive absence or truancy.

### **Truancy Laws**

California law requires that students between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school every day. California *Education Code* [48321](#) provides several organizational structures for school districts to create a safety net for students with persistent attendance or behavior problems. Although the goal is to keep students in school and provide them with a meaningful educational experience, school districts do have the power, when necessary, to refer

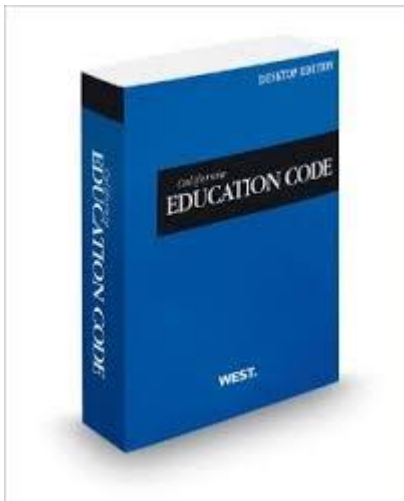


students and their parents/guardians to court.

National and local research has shown that students with frequent absences, whether excused or unexcused, have lower literacy levels, lower grades and higher dropout rates than students who attend school regularly.

It is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to ensure that his/her student gets to school every day. Legally and ethically it is the Principal's responsibility to ensure school staff enforce mandated Compulsory Education Laws and to follow the policies that ensure students are punctual and attend the full length of the school days.

Although truancy and excessive absenteeism are not new problems, they cause costly, long-term problems for the students, school, and the community.



## 10 FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (from [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org))

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year
  - Half the students who miss 2-4 days during the first month of school go on to miss nearly a month of school
- An estimated 5 million to 7.5 million U.S. students miss nearly a month of school each year
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance (that's just two days a month)
- The academic impact of missing that much school is the same whether the absences are excused or unexcused
- Suspensions also add to lost time in the classroom
- Low-income students are four times more likely to be chronically absent than others often for reasons beyond their control, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation and a lack of access to health care
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating
- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students
- Most school districts and states don't look at all the right data to improve school attendance. They track how many students show up every day and how many are skipping school without an excuse, but not how many are missing so many days in excused *and* unexcused absence that they are headed off track academically

### **Absenteeism harms our local community and society**

- High school dropouts are two-and-a half times more likely to be on welfare than high school graduates and are almost twice as likely to be unemployed, according to a U.S. Department of Education 1996 finding report
- Studies show that truancy frequently leads to criminal activity, drug use, and incarceration
- Research has found a clear link between academic failure and delinquent behavior in adolescence (Howell, 1995)
- According to recent statistics, about 50 percent of prison inmates are high school dropouts and cost society well over \$240 billion in lost wages and taxes over their lifetimes

*"The School-to-Prison Pipeline" is the "cascade of effects that occur when students are pushed out of schools and into the juvenile justice system." This pipeline exacerbates existing racial and economic disparities in the education and justice systems. Excessive absenteeism for any reason—an excused or unexcused absence, or due to suspensions—is a solvable component of this negative trajectory for our state's most vulnerable students.*

*Missing school deprives students of important developmental and learning opportunities, reducing opportunities for later success in life, and increasing the risk of later involvement in the criminal justice system.*

cited: Kamala Harris, U.S. Senator

### **Addressing Absenteeism and Equity**

During the 2017-18 school year, 8.7% of unduplicated students enrolled in the district's three comprehensive high schools were chronic absentees (missed 10% or more school days during the school year). When disaggregated amongst selected subgroups, African American, Asian, students with disabilities (Special Ed) and socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) students were disproportionately chronic absentees compared to percentage of enrollment. For more information, please review this [table](#).

### **State of California Department of Justice—Truancy Toolkit**

The California Attorney General's office, the Ad Council, and the California Endowment, in partnership with other agencies has developed an [attendance toolkit](#). The attendance toolkit was developed after seeking input from nearly 1,000 parents of school students who missed 10+ school days in the previous year. Teachers, attendance clerks, school nurses, principals, and community leaders will find resources, tips, and research addressing a critical question: What's the best way to talk to parents about absences?

## Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

# LCAP

## Local Control Accountability Plan

Every school district must adopt a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), which must specify annual goals and action plans that address all eight state priorities.

**One of the state’s eight (8) priorities is “pupil engagement,” which is to be measured by school attendance rates, chronic absenteeism rates, high school dropout rates, and graduation rates.**

LCAPs must address all 8 state priorities for the entire student body, as well as for numerically significant pupil subgroups, which include racial/ethnic groups, low-income pupils, English Learners, pupils with disabilities, and foster youth. In [LUHSD’s LCAP](#), the district’s System Annual Measurable Outcome Goal is to increase the district’s attendance rate by .2% (for more information, please review the figure below).

### Annual Update

LCAP Year Reviewed: 2016-17

Complete a copy of the following table for each of the LEA’s goals from the prior year LCAP. Duplicate the table as needed.

### Goal 1

The Liberty Union High School District (LUHSD) will provide a physically and emotionally supportive school environment which supports student learning by:

- A. Providing a safe, secure, updated, clean environment,
- B. Creating opportunities to incorporate best practices and program successes,
- C. Fostering an atmosphere of respect and civility among all students, and
- D. Aligning operating budget to the LUHSD Strategic Plan and the goals outlined in the LCAP.

State and/or Local Priorities Addressed by this goal:

STATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
COE	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	10												
LOCAL	LUHSD Strategic Plan (LUHSDSP) Goal #1															

### ANNUAL MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

#### EXPECTED

- Increased student connectedness to school by lowering chronic absenteeism rate by .2% for African American, Hispanic or Latino, ELs, SED, and Foster Youth and increasing attendance by .2%. (Priority 5A, B)
- Lower suspension & expulsion rates by .2% for African American, Hispanic or Latino, SED, ELs and Students with Disabilities. (Priority 6A,B)
- All school facilities are maintained in good repair. (Priority 1C)

#### ACTUAL

Lowered chronic absenteeism rate by:

- 2% for African American
- 2% Hispanic or Latino
- 2% for EL
- 2% for SED
- 4% Foster Youth

MET

Overall Attendance Rate is 93.38%

MET

Increased Suspension Rates by:

- 2.4% African American
- .4% Hispanic or Latino
- 0% SED
- 1% EL
- 1.3% Students with Disabilities

Not Met

All school facilities are maintained in good repair

MET

## **Attendance Revenue**

In the K-12 public education California system, every student has a value, including a monetary one. Most school districts across California receive state funding based on their average daily attendance (ADA).

When a student is absent (even if an absence is excused) from school it results in a loss of funding for our District. The State of California does not reimburse school districts for days students are absent. For 2016-2017, LUHSD lost over 3.6 million in unearned income due to absences.



## **Attendance Tracking**

The Principal is responsible for the daily attendance accounting of all students under her/his supervision and shall establish clear marking procedures. Absences, tardiness, early leave times, and reasons for absences are to be recorded. All teachers are mandated by education code [44809](#) to take attendance correctly daily. Teachers who habitually do not submit attendance are to be reported to their principal and/or assistant principal for guidance and assistance in meeting this required duty. Continued failure to comply with the attendance accounting requirements shall result with appropriate action(s). The principal is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and monitoring of attendance records.



Principals should use this sample [memo](#) intended for teachers regarding student attendance and this sample [letter](#) for parents regarding the importance of student attendance.

## **How to take attendance?**

### **Teachers**

The district's adopted School Information System (SIS), Aeries, offers an online [lesson](#) and [video](#) so teachers can easily and quickly input attendance.

### **Attendance Clerks**

LUHSD administrative regulation [5113](#) provides a list of descriptions and the verification method of what can legally be classified as an excused absence in accordance with California education code and district policy.

Please note: In accordance to administrative regulation [5113](#), when a student has had 14 absences in the school year for illness verified, any further absences for illness must be verified by a physician.

On an ongoing basis, each school's attendance clerk shall provide a list of students who have exceeded 10 excused all-day absences to the student's assigned Counselor and Assistant Principal.

Attendance procedures and how-tos videos using Aeries can be found: [Aeries Support Videos](#)

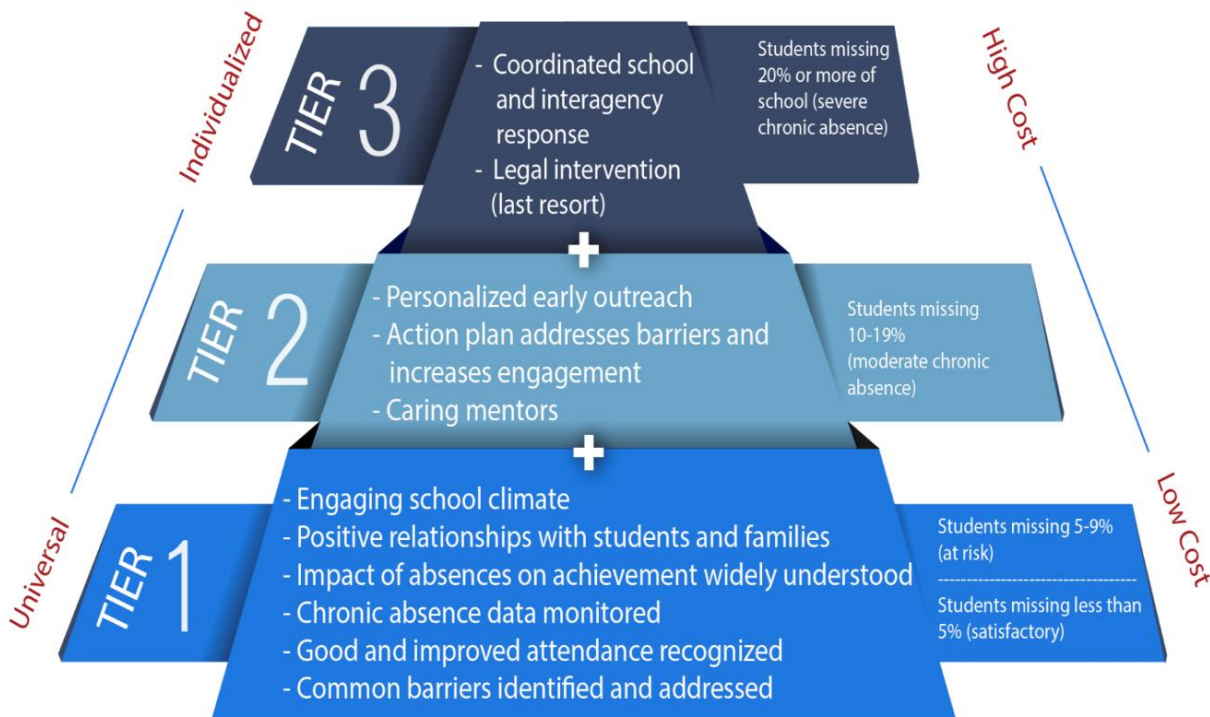
**Who (primary responsibility for attendance):**

- **Teachers**
  - Accurately and promptly enters attendance in Aeries during the beginning of each class period
- **Attendance clerk**
  - Finalize daily attendance
  - Calls homes (using auto dialer system)
  - Changes absence to tardy (for students who arrive after teacher enters attendance on Aeries)
  - Initial truancy letter (note: principal can designate to other(s))
    - Generated (via Aeries) at least monthly after three (3) all-day unexcused absences and/or [twelve (12) period cuts (unexcused period absences) / 30-minute tardies
      - Mail letter to parents; scheduling a meeting with the parents is not required. This first letter can serve as a general warning, to inform the parents that action will be taken if the attendance issue continues.
  - Second truancy letter (attendance clerk) (or as designated by the Principal)
    - Prior to sending out the letter, provide list to the Principal and/or designated AP
      - A second truancy letter is generated if there is a violation of the first truancy letters
      - Site administrator to facilitate action and team/proactive approach (e.g. Student Attendance Review Team (SART), SST)
- Referral to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
  - Violation of Second Truancy Letter
  - For more information, please download the District's [SARB Handbook](#)

Aeries offers online tutorial/guidelines on how to generate the Initial and second [truancy letters](#)



# Tiered System of Supports For Improving Attendance



All attendance intervention shall be approached utilizing a tiered system of intervention for incorporating strategies and activities for prevention and intervention to support all students with daily on-time school attendance. The tiered system allows all staff to understand the continuum of school-wide, intensive and individual intervention supports related to all social, academic and behavioral needs of the students including but not limited to attendance rates. According to the California Department of Education (CDE),

“Physical, environmental, and social aspects of a school have a profound impact on student experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and performance. School culture and climate help determine whether students are motivated to learn and stay in school. In a healthy and positive school culture, all students experience equally supportive learning environments and opportunities that help them learn and thrive.”

## Universal-Tier I:

Begin by implementing school-wide practices to create positive school cultures that include:

- Define and teach positive behavioral and social practices (including a focus on attendance)
- Acknowledge desired expectations (including a focus on attendance) using a school wide acknowledgement/reward system
  - For example, systemically acknowledge students for both good and improved attendance
- On-going collection and use of data for identification of school site/student need and decision-making (attendance data)
- Implementation of the school-wide systems that support effective practices

- High quality instructional strategies/delivery and academic expectations
- Identify alternatives to suspensions to restore relations and teach the student replacement behavior strategies
- Arrange consistent consequences for problem behavior
- Proactive parent engagement and communication
  - Involve students and families in recognizing good or improved attendance

### **Selected Supports-Tier II, III :**

Once a student has been identified as at-risk or high risk, the team would identify the most appropriate course of action using the multi-tiered system of support.

- Use data to determine potential patterns or functions (reasons why) of the absenteeism
- Identify the most appropriate course of action given the data analysis
- Provide the identified interventions for the student(s) not meeting attendance expectations
- Monitor and document intervention efforts and effectiveness
- Collaborate with students and families regarding selected interventions and consequences of poor attendance

### **Steps/Approaches for Attendance Intervention through a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework:**

- Tier 1 (80% of Students should be attending 91% of the time or higher)
    - Teach Importance of Regular Attendance
    - Communicate School Site Attendance Goals
    - Reinforce good Habits—Reward System
    - Develop Positive School climate that engages students
    - Conduct ongoing review and monitoring of school-wide attendance data to increase rates of student attendance via Aeries
  - Tier 2 (At-Risk, students who are between 81% - 90% attendance)/ (and/or for students who have violated the First Truancy Letter)
    - Review of student attendance data
    - Call Home - identify possible barriers impeding regular attendance
    - Provide student/family outside supports if appropriate
    - Documentation & Monitoring
    - Multidisciplinary Team Meeting (e.g. SST or School Attendance Review Team (SART))
    - Consider use of the included “[Poor attendance Behavior Intervention Plan](#)”
  - Tier 3 (High Risk, Students below 80% attendance or below)/ (and for students who have violated the Second Truancy Letter)
    - Individualized Intensive Interventions (continued use of [Poor attendance Behavior Intervention Plan](#))
    - Referral to the district’s School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
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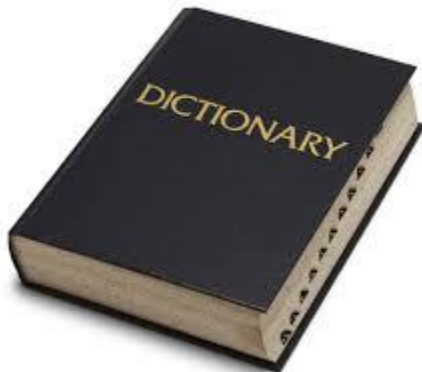
## **District Attorney's office**

Following a violation of a SARB contract the SARB Coordinator may refer a student and parent(s) to the [District Attorney's Truancy program](#).

Note: In accordance with 49076 subsection (G), a school district may provide access to particular records relevant to the legitimate educational interests of the requester shall be permitted to...A district attorney who is participating in or conducting a truancy mediation program pursuant to Section 48263.5, or Section 601.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or participating in the presentation of evidence in a truancy petition pursuant to Section 681 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.



## **KEY TERMS**



### **AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE (ADA)**

ADA is the number of days of school a student attends divided by the total number of days of instruction. A student attending every day would equal one ADA. ADA is typically calculated at the school-, rather than student-level.

### **TRUANCY**

In California, a student is truant if he/she is absent or tardy by more than 30 minutes without a valid excuse on 3 occasions in a school year.

### **HABITUAL TRUANCY**

A student is habitually truant if he/she is absent without a valid excuse for 5 days during a school year.

### **CHRONIC ABSENTEE**

In California, chronic absence is defined as being absent for any reason (excused or unexcused) for at least 10% of the school year. Thus, in a 175- or 180-day school year, a student who misses 18 days of school or more is chronically absent.