

Truancy Frequently Asked Questions

The state of Tennessee defines truancy as a student who has five (5) undocumented or unexcused absences. Continued undocumented absences is educational neglect. Children who are eleven (11) or older are deemed responsible enough to get to school without a parent's help unless that child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). If a child has an IEP or is under the age of 11, the court files a warrant against the parent for that misdemeanor.

The school sends out an automated call every time my child is absent. Why do they also send an email, Dojo message, or call me again? School personnel are trying to remind parents that the state of Tennessee regards five (5) unexcused absences as being truant. They want to remind parents of the county's attendance policy and find out what can be done to help improve attendance.

How can I check my child's absences? You can check your child's absences by using the Skyward program. If you have not set up an account, please contact your child's school or the Attendance Office to begin this process. The parent will need to have an email address to simplify the process, and this will also help you check your child's grades.

What should I do if I know my child was at school and the school has marked him or her absent? We ask that you contact the school as soon as you can, and during the school day would be best. This allows us to see the child and verify how he or she was counted absent for the day or for a class period.

What do I do if my child has a medical condition that will keep him or her out of school for at least 10 days? Students with medical conditions can be considered for homebound services. The parent should contact Tiffany Swain at 931-684-3284 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM to find out how to qualify for this assistance.

What do I do if my child is sick but not sick enough to go to the doctor? A parent's note will excuse up to seven (7) absences if it is received in the school within seven (7) days of the absence.

Why did the school not excuse a note for being at the hospital or doctor's office? If the medical visit was not for that specific student, the absence or tardy will be unexcused. To be excused, the absence must be related to the child's health.

How many days will be excused for a death in the family? Up to three (3) days will be excused for a death in the family. We ask that you provide an order of service for the deceased.

How many days do I have to get a note turned into my child's school? You have seven (7) school days to get the notes (parent and medical notes) turned in to the EIS clerk at your child's school.

What should I do if my child's school is not recording the notes? Check with the school's EIS/enrollment clerk, who can double check to see if a note was misplaced. Check your child's backpack, and make sure the note was turned in. Message the teacher to verify that the note is no longer in the classroom. If the seven-day window has not expired, you may email or write a note for the absence(s), or you may bring in a hard copy to the school's office.

What is the three-tier system for attendance? The three-tier system is a process to make parents aware that their child is not at school. The three-tier system was put into place by the state of Tennessee as a way for parents and schools to work together to keep students from being truant.

Here is a chart to show the number of unexcused absences and the result of those absences.

Tier Level	Number of Absences	Result	
Tier 1	0 – 5 unexcused absences	Call or message from the school.	If seven (7) days have not passed, the parent may turn in the doctor's note or a

			parent note for the absence(s).
Tier 2	6 – 9 unexcused absences	School will call to set up a meeting to discuss causes of absences and brainstorm ways to prevent future absences.	(Same as above)
Tier 3	10 – 15 unexcused absences	Students may be referred to Truancy Board. If the student has previously attended Truancy Board or has had past Truancy issues, the school will call to set up a meeting to discuss ways to support the family to prevent future absences.	
	16 + absences	A student who is in sixth grade or above will have a petition filed against them. The parents of students below sixth grade or those who have an IEP will have a warrant filed on them for educational neglect.	

Why does the school want to set up another conference with me if my child has 10 or more absences? Since our last plan to prevent truancy was not successful, we want to develop a new plan. We will include any new information that the parent or student shares with the school system.

Why did I have to go to Truancy Board? Truancy Board is an informal court hearing to address any truancy issues before the case goes before the judge for educational neglect. This hearing has the same meaning as a court case and can access other resources that the school system does not have access to give to parents.

Why didn't my child(ren) go to Truancy Board before we went to court? When a student has 15 or more absences, Truancy Board is no longer an option for that child. Students who have already been to Truancy Board are not eligible for a second Truancy Board hearing for the rest of their school career.

Why did the attendance officer come to my home? There are many reasons why the attendance officer may visit a student's home. If the school has been unable to contact the family, the attendance officer may visit the home to ensure that everyone is okay.