



Attendance /Truancy Policy

Louisiana State Law mandates compulsory school attendance and students are expected to be in attendance every school day scheduled by the local school board until their eighteenth (18th) birthday.

Elementary students shall be in attendance a minimum of 167 days a school year.

Truancy is defined as any student having either 5 unexcused tardies or 5 unexcused absences within a school semester per RS 17:233. The school year is split into 2 equal parts, each being a semester. Elementary students, Kindergarten through 8th grade, shall not exceed 10 days per year of absences or tardies.

School hours begin at 7:45am; a child not in class by 8:00am is considered tardy. Dismissal is at 3:30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (2:45pm for Kindergarten) and 2:30pm for all students on Wednesday; a child checked out of school unexcused before dismissal is considered tardy.

The only exception to the attendance regulation shall be extenuating circumstances that are verified by the Principal and School Counselor. Only the following shall be considered extenuating circumstances under which absences and tardies shall be exempt from provisions of compulsory attendance laws:

1. Personal illness
2. Death in family (not to exceed one week)
3. Natural catastrophe and/or disaster
4. Participation in school-approved activity which necessitates student being away from school (These activities will be reviewed by personnel for educational appropriateness)
5. Absence for the observance of recognized holidays of the child's own faith
6. Any of the extenuating circumstances listed below:
 - Extended personal illness of a child whose attendance in school would endanger his/her own health or that of his/her classmates, as verified by a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner licensed to practice in Louisiana
 - Extended hospital stay as verified by a physician or dentist licensed to practice in Louisiana
 - Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician or dentist licensed to practice in Louisiana
 - Extended contagious disease within the family as verified by a physician or dentist licensed to practice in Louisiana
 - Children exempt by R.S. 17:226
 - Other extenuating circumstances approved by the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance (i.e. School Counselor) in consultation with the principal or his/her designee

For any other extenuating circumstances, parents must make a formal appeal in accordance with the due process procedures established by the school system.

All excuses, including original doctor/dentist verification, for a student's absence or tardy must be presented to the school within five (5) days of the student's return to school to be considered for extenuating circumstances.

**Louisiana Revised Statutes
Title 17: Education**

§221. School attendance; compulsory ages; duty of parents; excessive absences

A.(1) Every parent, tutor, or other person residing within the state of Louisiana having control or charge of any child from that child's seventh birthday until his eighteenth birthday shall send such child to a public or private day school, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his eighteenth birthday. Any child below the age of seven who legally enrolls in school shall also be subject to the provisions of this Subpart. **Every parent, tutor, or other person responsible for sending a child to a public or private day school under provisions of this Subpart shall also assure the attendance of such child in regularly assigned classes during regular school hours established by the school board and shall assure that such child is not habitually tardy from school** pursuant to the provisions of R.S. 17:233.

(2) Whoever violates the provisions of this Subsection...shall be fined not more than two hundred and fifty dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both. The court shall impose a minimum condition of probation which may include that the parent, tutor, or other person having control or charge of the child participate in forty hours of school or community service activities, or a combination of forty hours of school or community service and attendance in parenting classes or family counseling sessions or programs approved by the court having jurisdiction, as applicable, or the suspension of any state-issued recreational license.

(3) Whoever violates any other provision of this Subpart or any other provision of law which provides for the penalty provided for in R.S. 17:221 shall be fined not more than fifteen dollars, and, for such violations, each day the violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

(4) Visiting teachers or supervisors of child welfare and attendance, with the approval of the parish or city superintendents of schools, shall file proceedings in court to enforce the provisions of this Subpart.

§233. Cases of habitual absence or tardiness referred to juvenile or family court

A. **Any student who is a juvenile and who is habitually absent from school or is habitually tardy shall be reported by visiting teachers and supervisors of child welfare and attendance to the family or juvenile court of the parish or city as a truant child**, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 2 of Title VII of the Louisiana Children's Code relative to families in need of services, there to be dealt with in such manner as the court may determine, either by placing the truant in a home or in a public or private institution where school may be provided for the child, or otherwise.

B.(1)(a) A student shall be considered habitually absent or habitually tardy when either condition continues to exist after all reasonable efforts by any school personnel, truancy officer, or other law enforcement personnel have failed to correct the condition after the fifth unexcused absence or fifth unexcused occurrence of being tardy within any school semester.

(b) The parent or legal guardian of a student shall enforce the attendance of the student at the school to which the student is assigned.

(c) The principal of the school, or his designee, shall notify the parent or legal guardian in writing upon a student's third unexcused absence or unexcused occurrence of being tardy, and shall hold a conference with such student's parent or legal guardian. The student's parent or legal guardian shall sign a receipt for such notification.

(d) The parent or legal guardian of any student in kindergarten through grade eight who is considered habitually absent or habitually tardy pursuant to the provisions of this Section shall be in violation of the provisions of Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph and shall be punished as follows:

(i) A first offense shall be punishable by a fine of not more than fifty dollars or the performance of not less than twenty-five hours of community service.

(ii) Any subsequent offense shall be punishable in accordance with R.S. 17:221(A)(2).

(iii) For purposes of this Subparagraph, an offense means a violation of this Subsection by the parent or legal guardian of a child who is habitually absent or habitually tardy; multiple offenses may result from violations involving different habitually absent or tardy children of that parent or legal guardian.

(iv) In any case where the child is the subject of a court ordered custody or visitation plan, the parent or legal guardian who is lawfully exercising actual physical custody or visitation of the child shall be responsible for the child's attendance at school on those days and shall be solely responsible for any absence or tardiness of the child on such days. The parent or legal guardian not exercising actual physical custody or visitation on the day of the absence or tardiness shall not be in violation of this Section.

D. For purposes of this Section, the term "tardy" shall include but not be limited to leaving or checking out of school unexcused prior to the regularly scheduled dismissal time at the end of the school day but shall not include reporting late to class when transferring from one class to another during the school day.

Acts 1990, No. 158, §2, eff. July 1, 1990; Acts 1994, 3rd Ex. Sess., No. 103, §1, eff. July 7, 1994; Acts 2008, No. 688, §1, June 1, 2009; Acts 2009, No. 224, §6, eff. June 1, 2009; Acts 2009, No. 305, §1.

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