**A Parent & Student Guide:**

**Top Ten Tips on How to Manage Attendance and Stay Out of Truancy Court**

**2012 - 2013**



**TEN TRUANCY TIPS**

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**Ten Truancy Tips**

Turn in your parent-written or official documentation within 72 hours (three school days) of your child’s return to school. This is called the 72-hour rule. Phone messages or e-mails explaining absences are not acceptable forms of documentation to excuse an absence.

Compulsory Attendance Law states that a student is in violation if she/he has 3 or more days or parts of days in a 4-week period, or 10 or more days or parts of days in a 6-month period of unexcused/undocumented absences.

Review and become familiar with the reasons acceptable by Texas law and school district policy on what can be excused. An unexcused absence occurs when the parent does not present appropriate or acceptable documentation.

Communication with your school attendance personnel is essential. It establishes a good rapport and an avenue of information for both you and the school, and they can guide you in what to do if an unusual situation should arise. Remember: they do not know what may be going on with your child and/or family *until you let them know.* Get to know the principal, assistant principal(s), attendance liaison/secretary or counselor at your school. They are all willing to assist you and your child in any way possible.

If you have an unusual or particularly sensitive situation that has affected or may affect your child’s attendance, make sure to discuss it with an administrator at the school. They are bound by confidentiality policies and can refer you for further assistance if needed. They are also the persons in authority on your campus to make decisions on exceptions should the matter warrant.

Significant Loss of Instructional Time (LOSIT) counts as the “parts of days” mentioned in the law. At the elementary schools, if a student is habitually late or leaves 15 minutes or more early, that now counts towards 3 or more days (within a 4-week period) or 10 or more days (within a six-month period) to establish a violation of Compulsory Attendance Law. A district attendance letter will be sent out to parents warning them of possible court action if the LOSITs continue. Students miss significant instructional time when they are chronically tardy.

Head Lice: Per school district policy, a student has up to three (3) days per school year to clear head lice and return to school, including the day of discovery/sent home. When the student returns to school the parent must bring the student in for the school nurse to check. After the third day, each day the parent fails to bring the student in for the nurse to check will be counted as unexcused. See the rest of the policy on the DISD website.

Religious holy days: Parents need to notify a campus administrator about how much time is needed to attend the religious holy day. Communicate clearly with campus administrator on how many days are needed to travel to, attend, and travel back from the event. It’s a parent’s responsibility to check with administrators prior to the holy day to see if the event is approved by the state.

Funeral: The school district allows for students to miss school for the death of an immediate family member (parents, grandparents, siblings, step-parents, and step-siblings, family members that take on the role of parents or legal guardians). Students have up to three (3) days total for a funeral for the entire school year.

If the school nurse excludes a student for health reasons, that sent-home day is counted as verified. Documentation is required for additional days missed and must be turned in within 72 hours (3 school days) of a child’s return to school, even if the nurse tells you not to bring your child back to school until they are better.