



Truancy Intervention Program Guidelines for Schools

FY16 Release

Primary Objective: To work cooperatively with schools and families to reduce and eliminate chronic truancy, therefore increasing student attendance resulting in greater student achievement. The Truancy Intervention Program focuses on the use of **early intervention** strategies.

Mandatory Attendance: ILCS Section 26-1 mandates that all children between the ages of 6 and 17 attend school. ILCS also mandates that all children enrolled in school (regardless of age) attend school while it is in session.

Truant: Defined by ILCS Section 26-2a as a child subject to compulsory school attendance who is absent without valid cause (**unexcused absences**) on a given school day or portion thereof.

Valid Cause: Illness, observance of religious holiday, death in immediate family, family emergency, and includes other situations beyond control of the student as determined by the school district, or other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student.

Chronic Truant: A child subject to compulsory attendance who is absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 school days (9 or more unexcused absences in the past 180 days).

Pre-Referral Actions

Prior to a referral to the ROE, ISBE recommends that at least three (3) school interventions occur. These should be documented since dates and intervention types are required on referral forms. Some examples of appropriate attendance interventions are as follows (not all-inclusive):

- Conversations/conferences with student and/or parents
- Phone calls home to discuss attendance
- Attendance concern letters
- School staffing re. student and attendance concerns
- Student meetings with counselor/school interventionist
- Home visits
- Referral to social service agency/agencies
- Attendance incentives/contracts

****Truancy tickets are not considered acceptable interventions to list on referral forms.**

Once referred to the ROE for intervention, a student should have appropriate medical documentation required to excuse future absences. The only exception should be in a case where the student is chronically absent without parent contact (and thus truant on all those days).

Referral Process and Procedures

Initial Referral (recommend at 3-5 unexcused absences)

1. Student not making adequate progress after minimum of 3 school interventions
2. School - fully complete the Referral Form 1
 - a. Include student's current attendance
 - b. Circle "M-V" if student is homeless and/or qualifies for McKinney-Vento assistance
 - c. Scan and email these documents to your ROE truancy caseworker
3. Assistant Regional Superintendent sends out initial truancy notice to parent/guardian
4. Case Manager monitors student attendance and attempts to contact family
**Case Manager may place student on caseload on discretionary basis.*

Second Referral (case-by-case basis – consider student progress)

1. Student not making adequate progress after the first referral and interventions
2. School – fully complete and submit Referral Form 2
**Must be at least 7 school days following the first referral*
3. Assistant Regional Superintendent sends out second truancy notice to parent/guardian.
4. Case Manager monitors student attendance and attempts to contact family
**Case Manager may place student on caseload on discretionary basis (if not already on caseload).*

Third Referral (case-by-case basis – consider student progress)

1. Student not making adequate progress after second notice and interventions
2. School – fully complete and submit Referral Form 3
**Must be at least 7 schools days following the second referral*
3. Assistant Regional Superintendent sends out third truancy notice to parent.
**Case Manager will put student on caseload (if not already on caseload).*

Truancy Hearing (last formal step for the ROE)

1. If student does not make adequate progress after the notices and interventions and has accumulated at least 9 days of unexcused absences within the past 180 school attendance days.
2. Regional Superintendent sends out hearing notice to parent.
3. Regional Superintendent conducts truancy hearing and orders student to return to school immediately without any additional unexcused absences
4. School monitors student's attendance
5. Case Manager monitors and works with student and family as necessary
6. Future referrals from the school will be passed on to the States Attorney for court intervention

Court Involvement

1. Student has not made adequate progress since truancy hearing – referred to State's Attorney's Office
2. State's Attorney's Office takes court action for neglect-related issues (on discretionary basis)
3. Each county court (and judge) determines their own criteria and approach and it does vary

When caseworker puts student on caseload...

1. Case Manager attempts to meet with student and parent/guardian to discuss attendance concerns
2. Case Manager constructs individual attendance improvement plan and details plan with student and parent/guardian
3. Case Manager regularly monitors student attendance, work with the family and conduct interventions
4. Case Manager makes referrals to outside agencies as necessary
5. Case Manager may ask school to complete and submit second and/or third referrals, or school may submit on their own