

**CHRONIC ABSENCE AND TRUANCY**

The County Board of Education believes that excessive student absenteeism and tardiness, whether caused by excused or unexcused absences, may be an early warning sign of poor academic achievement and may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The County Board desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the state's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the Santa Cruz County Office of Education.

The County Superintendent of Schools shall establish a system to accurately track student attendance in order to identify individual students classified as chronic absentees and truants, as defined in law and administrative regulation.

The County Superintendent or designee may develop strategies that focus on prevention of attendance problems, which may include, but are not limited to efforts to provide a safe and positive school environment, relevant and engaging learning experiences, school activities that help develop students' feelings of connectedness with the school, school-based health services, and incentives and rewards to recognize students who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance. The County Superintendent or designee may also develop strategies that enable early outreach to students as soon as they show signs of poor attendance.

The County Superintendent or designee may work with students, parents/guardians, school staff and community agencies, as appropriate, to identify factors contributing to chronic absence and truancy. He/she also may collaborate with child welfare services, law enforcements, courts, public health care agencies, other government agencies, and/or medical, mental health, and oral health care providers to ensure that alternative educational programs and nutrition, health care, and other support services are available for students and families and to intervene as necessary when students have serious attendance problems.

Students who are identified as truants shall be subject to the interventions specified in law and administrative regulations.

A student's truancy, tardiness, or other absence from school shall not be the sole basis for his/her out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Alternative disciplinary strategies and positive reinforcement for attendance shall be used whenever possible.

*Adopted: 10/16/2014*