



Truancy Plan

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Introduction

State law requires that any person having a child under their control who is between the ages of 6 and 18, shall cause the child to regularly attend school. The state law now also requires the parent or guardian of a child who is enrolled in a 5-year-old kindergarten class to cause the child to attend school regularly until the end of the school term. Any student who misses a part of any day of school without an acceptable excuse is truant. If a student misses all or part of 5 or more days during a school semester without an acceptable excuse, they are considered to be a habitual truant.

In addition to legal requirements, truancy results in significant consequences for students who miss school as well as for the community as a whole. The economic prosperity of the county, its crime rate and the general quality of life are all greatly impacted by truancy. Fond du Lac, Winnebago, and Green Lake Counties compete economically, in the state and nationally and internationally. An educated work force that can understand and perform tasks beyond the simplest levels is critical to local economic success. Criminal justice issues and the need to protect our community are also significantly influenced by truancy. Experts in the juvenile justice field overwhelmingly recognize that one of the greatest predictors of a young person's committing delinquent or criminal acts is a history of truancy. However, the biggest victims are the truants themselves. Statistics of the U.S. Census Bureau show that a person who graduates from high school can earn almost twice as much as someone who does not. An education will help students be informed citizens and have a better quality of life.

Truancy has significant consequences for the young person making the decision to be truant as well as for the entire community. [Wisconsin State Statute 118](#) states that each school board shall adopt a plan to address truancy. Therefore, the Ripon Area School District (RASD) adopts the following plan to address truancy.

Section A

Wis. Stats §118.162(4)(a)

Procedures to be followed for notifying the parents or guardians of the unexcused absences of habitual truants under §118.16(2)(cr) and for meeting and conferring with such parents or guardians.

State law requires that a school district notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of an absence by the end of the 2nd school day after the absence. Notice may be by personal contact, phone, or mail, but notice by personal contact or phone shall be attempted before notice by mail may be issued. The Ripon Area School District will attempt to notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student's truancy on the day the unexcused absence occurred. A written record will be kept of all notices.

When the school notifies the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child's truancy, it will direct the parent(s)/guardian(s) to return the child to school or provide a written request that the absences be excused under §118.15 by no later than the next day on which school is in session.

In the event that the district does due diligence in the truancy process and has circumstantial data that verifies the student is no longer residing within the Ripon Area School District (RASD), the student can retroactively be end dated in the district's student information system as of the last day the student was documented to have been in attendance in the school district. This process would be applicable in a situation such as (but not limited to) when a student/family no longer resides within the school district boundaries and no known forwarding address has been provided to the district.

Due diligence shall include (but is not limited to):

- telephone call
- follow-up mailed letter summarizing telephone communications
- certified letter and regular mail
- welfare visit made to the last known home address

(School Attendance Officer and Police Liaison Officer)

When a student meets the criteria to be considered a habitual truant (any part of five days of a semester), the school official will schedule a truancy conference pursuant to Wis. Stats. §118.16(2)(cg) with the parents/guardians and the child. Notice shall be by certified mail, restricted delivery. (There is also an option to refer the student who is habitually truant to municipal court in the city of Ripon for a pre-conference trial with the Police Liaison Officer.)

If a student continues to be truant, after the truancy conference has been attempted or held, a truancy referral may be submitted to the Fond du Lac, Winnebago, or Green Lake County Department of Human/Social Services Juvenile Intake Office. It is important to note that truancy referrals are not submitted on all habitual truants. School officials assess each case and determine the most appropriate way to address the truancy problem. Other options are considered and may be pursued.

In certain cases when it is determined by school personnel that the parent or guardian is contributing to the truancy of the child, a referral must be done through the Police Liaison Officer. Wis. Stats. §118.15.

Section B

Wis. Stats §118.162(4)(b)

Plans and procedures for identifying truant children of all ages and returning them to school, including the identity of school personnel to whom a truant child shall be returned.

The Ripon Area School District believes that the primary purpose of schooling is for students to learn and be successful. In order for students to learn, they must attend school and attend school on a consistent basis. We also believe that all students can learn given sufficient time and appropriate support. School failures are often created by students not having sufficient time to master essential skills due to numerous hours and days away from the learning environment. Major gaps in learning are created by this lack of exposure to new materials and lack of sufficient time to process the new information.

School attendance and engagement will be a major focus for the Ripon Area School District. We know that without these features, students may not learn to their potential. Students who have high rates of nonattendance or truancy issues do not feel connected to the school. Without this engagement, students are at greater risk of not graduating from high school which can minimize their future potential and success.

The Ripon Area School District plan is a collaborative model. It includes the students, parents, administrators, faculty, staff, and student services team. Teachers will take attendance every day in each class. The student information system reports allow school personnel to monitor student attendance patterns. Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's absences. School staff will attempt to contact them by phone and inform them of their child's absence(s). Telephone, text, or email messages will be left with parent regarding the absence. Letters may be mailed to the home when parents/guardians are not directly contacted. Parents must notify the school of their child's absence, by calling the school or by sending a note to school regarding their child's absence(s).

The school administrators are the fulcrum of this collaborative model. They will maintain contact with the students and parents regarding their absences. The school administrator or Police Liaison Officer may make home visits to see if the family has special needs that need to be addressed. If the absences do not decrease or cease, the school administrator may implement a truancy referral.

If social and/or learning problems are identified, the school must see that services are made available to the family to address these problems. Services may be provided on campus or the student and/or family may be referred to outside counseling agencies. Where appropriate, the school district will offer

counseling services, which are not of a clinical nature, through the school counselors, and at times, the school psychologist.

The relationship between the school and the home should be a shared, collaborative effort, which is focused on keeping the student in school, with consistent school attendance and with academic success.

Section C

Wis. Stats. §118.62(4)(c)

Methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the School District.

The Ripon Area School District, in conjunction with the appropriate county Truancy Committees, will, as a part of the Truancy Plan, at least once per year prepare and submit for publication in the district newsletter information to build public awareness of truancy issues such as: truancy statistics, court procedures, the consequences of truancy, and intervention options.

The Ripon Area School District shall provide each student and their parents with an attendance plan that includes the school's response to the truancy contained within each school's handbook.

The Ripon Area School District, in conjunction with the county truancy committees, will engage school staff and/or students in educational programming designed to teach them about the legal system's response to truancy. The goal of all of these efforts is to increase and maintain public awareness and involvement in truancy issues within the school district. It is ultimately intended to reduce truancy in the RASD by making students aware of the negative impact truancy has on the student's education as well as the consequences of violations of state and local laws related to truancy.

Section D

Wis. Stats §118.162(4)(d)

The immediate response to be made by school personnel when a truant child is returned to school.

Every possible attempt will be made by the school district to eliminate the barriers to the student's education and his/her engagement with the school.

The schools may use a transitional process to re-engage the student. A review of familial, psychosocial, academic and other special needs will be conducted. The school team responsible for completing the review may include the counselor, administrator, Police Liaison Officer, school psychologist, nurse, teachers, and where appropriate, the county human services agent.

Mentoring or tutoring programs may be used to help minimize the academic gaps. The student may be given informal assessments to measure academic progress.

All students who have truancy issues will be discussed at a school's student support team (SST) meeting. The SST may develop academic alternatives and/or an intervention plan and/or a health plan to help the student become successful. If the student continues to have academic distress and to be truant, the SST may make a referral for further assessment which may include the school psychologist. This assessment, along with other school data, will advise the parents and the school officials if the student may have any learning, health, or emotional needs.

Any student services staff member, i.e., school counselor, or school psychologist, may provide counseling services. If more intense psychosocial services or family counseling is needed, a referral may be made to the appropriate agency.

Section E

Wis. Stats. §118.162(4)(e)

The types of truancy cases to be referred to the District Attorney for the filing of information under §938.24 or prosecution under §118.15(5) and the time periods within which the District Attorney will respond to take action on the referrals.

Where appropriate, the school district will refer habitual truancy cases to the appropriate county's department of human/social services juvenile intake office pursuant to §938.24 after the school has completed the requirements under §118.15(5).

The school district will use forms as directed by the district attorney for the student's county of home residence. This will ensure that the necessary information for successful prosecution of the case is provided to the district attorney's office.

An intake worker reviews the referral and decides initially how to best address the situation. A decision may be made to close the case, to handle the matter informally, or to send the matter on to the district attorney's office so that court action can be pursued. Upon receipt of a request for prosecution of a habitual truancy case from an intake worker, the representative of the district attorney's office may file a JIPS petition under §938.13(6), or otherwise act upon the request. The final decision whether or not to file a JIPS petition shall be at the discretion of the assistant district attorney (ADA) assigned to this case.

The district attorney's office is responsible for prosecuting habitual truants and/or their parents. When prosecuting parents or legal guardians of habitually truant students, the district attorney's office must look at two separate factors. Prior to commencing a prosecution, evidence must be provided to show that the school complied with all of the requirements under §118.16(5), Wis. Stats. Next, the situation must be evaluated to ensure that all of the elements of the offense can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

When prosecuting parents, the elements of the offense require that the child be 17 years of age or under when the trancies occurred, that the child was under the control of the individual charged, and that the person charged did not cause the child to regularly attend school. Here failure to "regularly attend school" means five or more unexcused absences. Failing to "cause a child to regularly attend school" includes preventing the child from attending and failing to make the child attend.

Section 118.16(5) Wis. Stats. sets forth procedural requirements a school must meet prior to referring a truancy situation for prosecution. First, a school representative must meet or attempt to meet with a parent or guardian. This meeting is designed to discuss and to try and resolve the truancy problem. For a meeting to be attempted, the school must notify the parent/guardian of the situation and establish a time and place to meet. If the parent/guardian either fails to appear or to contact the school to reschedule, or refuses to meet, the attempt is complete. State statute requires that a school send notice of this meeting, via registered or certified mail. The meeting shall be within 5 school days after the date that the notice is sent, except with the consent of the parent or guardian the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional 5 school days. Second, the school must provide an opportunity for educational counseling to determine whether a change in class schedule will resolve the truancy problem. The majority of cases involving the prosecution of parents involve elementary school children where a change in curriculum is not available. Third, the child must be evaluated to determine if a learning problem is contributing to the truancy. A new evaluation is not necessary if an evaluation was completed within the last school year. If it is determined that there are learning problems that are contributing to the truancy, the school must take steps to overcome the learning problems. Lastly, the child must also be evaluated to determine whether a social problem exists that is contributing to the

truancy. If such a problem is found, the school must take appropriate action to resolve or refer the matter to the appropriate agency for resolution.

Once all the procedural requirements under §118.16(5) are met, the matter is evaluated to determine whether the evidence will prove the elements of the offense. If the procedural requirements are not met, the matter is referred back to the school for compliance with §118.16(5).

Section F

Wis. Stats. §118.162(4)(f)

Plans and procedures to coordinate the responses to the problems of habitual truancy, as defined under 118.16(1)(a), with public and private social service agencies.

Habitual school truancy is a problem that can have a serious impact on a community. The county department of human/social services and the schools of Winnebago, Green Lake, and Fond du Lac Counties are working cooperatively to address school truancy.

The county department of human/social services is responsible to address all habitual truancy referrals received from the county school districts. This is done in accordance with and in compliance with Chapters 938- [Juvenile Justice Code](#) and 118 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The county departments of human/social services have established the following procedures to respond to the habitual truancy referrals and to service and supervise habitual truant students.

After completing all of the requirements under 118.16(5) the schools may submit a truancy referral to the Human Services Juvenile Intake Office of the student's county of residence. Once a referral is received in the Juvenile Intake office, an intake worker will be assigned to access the situation and to make an appropriate intake decision. The referral may be closed if the intake worker determines that there is not enough information in the referral to support the charge or if all of the statutory requirements have not been met. When appropriate, the intake worker will attempt to enter into a Deferred Prosecution Agreement and handle the truancy referral outside of court. In some cases the referral will have to be forwarded to the District Attorney's office so that the violation can be processed through the juvenile court system.

Whenever an intake worker determines that an attempt should be made to handle a truancy referral outside of court, an intake conference will be scheduled to discuss the situation with the student and their parents/guardians. A school representative is to attend these intake conferences. The following factors will be considered at the intake conference when determining whether or not to set up a Deferred Prosecution Agreement: prior referral history, the student's and the family's cooperation with prior services, the extent of the family's treatment needs, and the family's cooperation at the intake conference.

In some cases the Deferred Prosecution Agreement will hold the case open without services. If this should be agreed upon at the intake conference, it will be the school's responsibility to notify the juvenile intake office of further problems. Depending on the circumstances, the Deferred Prosecution Agreement can be amended or the original referral can be processed through court.

When services are provided as part of the Deferred Prosecution Agreement or when a student is placed on a JIPS Court Order for habitual truancy, the following plan of action is implemented by the county department of human/social services:

1. A case manager is assigned to work with the family and the school.
2. The case manager will complete a thorough assessment of the family situation so as to identify the needs of the family and the issues that are contributing to the student's truant behavior.

3. The case manager will formulate a case plan with the family and the school that addresses the identified needs and establishes outcome objectives.
4. The case manager will make appropriate referrals to outside resources to address the identified needs. These community service providers will provide a variety of services that might include counseling, family support, tutoring, mentoring, life skills, AODA treatment, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, and psychotherapy and psychiatric care.
5. The case manager will monitor the family's progress in meeting their case plan and will maintain regular contact with the family, school staff, and community service providers. To assist in monitoring the student's attendance, the school will send weekly attendance reports to the case manager.
6. The case manager will notify the court or the juvenile intake worker of the family's progress and any problems the family had complying with the Court Order or the Deferred Prosecution Agreement.

Section G

Wis. Stats §118.162(4)(g)

Methods to involve the truant child's parent or guardian in dealing with and solving the child's truancy problem.

It is Ripon Area School District's belief that parental involvement in solving a child's truancy problems is critical. Where appropriate, the truant child's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be asked to be an active participant in solving the child's truancy problem. That involvement may include weekly checks with the school to make sure the child is attending school as required as well as doing the work and avoiding behavior problems, all of which are important elements in the child's educational success.

The school district's goal is to increase student engagement. Engagement increases attendance and academic success. In order to increase the student's engagement and thereby his/her attendance, there must be a collaborative relationship between the school and the parents/guardians of the students.

The school district must help the parent to understand the importance of regular school attendance. Parents must also understand how important their support is in getting the student to attend school.

A school official will contact the parents regarding attendance infractions. Home visits may be made to help the family minimize or eliminate barriers to regular attendance. Referrals may be made to social service agencies to assist the families with other needs that may be causing an attendance issue.

Parent/teacher conferences will be held so that the parent and the school may discuss the student's needs. The purpose of the meeting will be to formulate an action plan that the family may use to encourage and increase school attendance. Parents will be asked to help the school better understand their child. It is believed that this collaborative approach will enhance the student's future and his/her level of excellence.

Truancy Quick Reference Guide

Overview

A student shall not be expelled for truancy. A habitual truant is a student who is absent from school without valid excuse for all or part of five days in one school semester or one-half of the school year. The period during which a student is absent from school due to a suspension or expulsion is neither an absence without an acceptable excuse nor an absence without legal cause under the compulsory attendance law.

Truancy means any absence for part or all of one or more days from school during which the school attendance officer, principal or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent or guardian of the absent student, and also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of §118.15.

The superintendent has designated that a school administrator will serve as the school attendance officer.

The school attendance officer:

- Shall determine daily which students enrolled in the school district are absent from school and whether that absence is excused under §118.15, Wis. Stats.
- Annually, on or before July 1, shall determine how many students enrolled in the school district were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused under §118.15, Wis. Stats., and shall notify the State Superintendent of the determination.
- A student may be excused in writing by his or her parent or guardian for not more than ten school days in a school year and shall be allowed to complete any missed coursework.
- Except as provided under §118.16(2)(cg) and (cr), Wis. Stats., shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who has been truant of the child's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the child to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse under §118.15, Wis. Stats. The notice under this paragraph shall be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence. The notice may be made by personal contact, mail, electronic correspondence, or telephone call of which a written record is kept. Notice by personal contact or telephone call shall be attempted before notice by mail may be given.
- Shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who is a habitual truant, by registered or certified mail, when the child initially becomes a habitual truant. The notice shall include all of the following:
 - ✓ A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility, under §118.15(1)(a), Wis. Stats., to cause the child to attend school regularly.
 - ✓ A request that the parent or guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy. The notice shall include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent or guardian should meet, a date, time and place for the meeting and the name, address and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place. The date of the meeting shall be within five school days after the date that the notice is sent, except that with the consent of the child's parent or guardian the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days.
 - ✓ A statement of the penalties, under §118.15(5), Wis. Stats., that may be imposed on the parent or guardian if he or she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required under §118.15(1)(a), Wis. Stats.
- After the notice required under §118.16(1)(cg), Wis. Stats., has been given, shall notify the parent or guardian of a habitual truant of the habitual truant's unexcused absences as provided in the plan under §118.162(4)(a), Wis. Stats.

Formal Truancy Procedure

1. When a student is absent from school, the school office telephones or sends an electronic message to the parent/guardian the morning of an absence if the parent/guardian has not already notified the school via the attendance reporting line to determine the reason for the absence.
2. If the school office is unable to reach a parent to confirm an excused absence, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and a letter to confirm a student absence will be sent to the parent requesting information which could lead to the absence being excused.
3. If the absence is determined by school personnel to be an unexcused absence, the parent/guardian will be notified within 48 hours. Keep a record of communication. A letter of concern documenting the unexcused absence will be sent to the parent.
4. When a child is truant from school (an unexcused absence), one or more of the following actions shall be taken by RASD: a. A letter of concern is mailed to the parent b. Police Liaison Officer and School Attendance Officer may make a home visit. One time transportation to school may be offered. A plan may be developed to provide support systems that facilitate positive school attendance. c. Meet with parent or guardian
5. Citation may be issued by local law enforcement official (Citation fines range from \$200 to \$300.)
 - a. For students 12 years of age or older, the student may receive a citation as well as the parent.
 - b. For students under 12 years of age, the parent may receive a citation.
6. Legal truancy is defined as any unexcused absences for all or part of a day on which school is held during a semester (part of a day is 15 minutes after school has begun). When the student reaches a minimum of five documented unexcused absences in a semester/half school year, the next step is to set up the Habitual Truancy Meeting. To meet requirements, the habitual truancy letter must be sent through certified mail and designate a date and time for a parent meeting. It is also strongly suggested that regular mail delivery also be used. Documentation of this mailing should also be maintained. The parent meeting needs to be set up within five school days of sending out the certified letter. Keep all copies of the certified letter and receipts, as this will need to be sent along with the paperwork to Juvenile Intake. If the parent fails to attend the meeting, document that they did not participate. You must allow them the opportunity to reschedule and wait at least 10 school days after the initial notice before proceeding.
7. After the Habitual Truancy meeting, a court referral can be submitted if the student has one more unexcused class period. The truancy referral begins with the RASD Truancy Referral Form. The principal sends the completed Truancy Referral Form to the Police Liaison Officer. Police Liaison Officer then issues a city ordinance citation where applicable to student, parent or both. If necessary/appropriate truancy paperwork may be submitted to Juvenile Intake in the student's county of residence, which would be submitted by the School Administrator (Principal).
8. Student Services Director or designee runs a monthly attendance report to determine if patterns of concern exist.

Agenda for Truancy Meeting

Date: _____

Schedule the truancy meeting within seven days from sending the letter/date on the letter.

Copy of updated attendance for student.

Copy of truancy law given to parents

- Review definition of truant
- Refer to number of days student has been truant

Questions (these are questions that will be asked at intake):

1. **Why are you late/truant?**

2. **Are there learning problems that keep you from getting to school?**

3. **Are there social problems that keep you from getting to school?**

4. **Modifications/Accommodations to assist improved attendance.**

Plan to improve attendance (alarm(s), ride to school, etc.)

“Our purpose in working together is to avoid a referral to juvenile intake. If there is one more unexcused absence, by law I am obligated to make a referral to the county juvenile intake office



Truancy Referral Form

Ripon Area School District

Reporting Official:			
STUDENT INFORMATION			
Student Last Name:	First Name:	Student ID Number:	Date of Birth:
PRIMARY RESIDENCE INFORMATION			
Parent/Guardian Names:			
Primary Street Address:		City, State Zip:	
SECONDARY RESIDENCE INFORMATION			
Parent/Guardian Names:			
Secondary Street Address:		City, State Zip:	
TRUANCY INFORMATION			
Truant: Unexcused part or all of 5 days in a semester Excused part or all of 10 days in a school year			
Dates and periods missed (attach current attendance summary report and any letters sent to the family):			
NOTIFICATION PROCESS			
Date Parents were Notified:			
Method Parents were Notified:			

Signature of Reporting Official: _____

Date: _____

CC: School Resource Officer
 School Attendance Officer
 Parent
 Student File