

EARLY WARNING TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

I. ATTENDANCE

Section 16-28-12 of the Code of Alabama requires that any parent/guardian who enrolls a student in school be responsible for the child's regular attendance and proper conduct. Parents and/or guardians must provide to the child's teacher an explanation of each absence within three days after the child returns to school. If the parent or guardian fails to provide this information to the teacher, each child's absence will be recorded as unexcused or truant. The child shall also be deemed truant for any absences determined by the principal to be unexcused based upon the State Department of Education's current School Attendance Manual. Seven unexcused absences within a school year constitute a student being truant for the purpose of filing a petition with the Court. All students, grades K-12, are subject to the provisions of this policy. Departmentalized classes will be reported as individual classes; contained classes will be reported as full-day classes.

The Interagency Committee on Youth Truancy Task Force recommendations known as the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program timeline for reporting truancy shall define the truancy status of any student as follows:

- A. **BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR:** Each student will receive a student handbook outlining the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program. Parents/guardians are required to read the handbook, sign an acknowledgement statement, and return the statement to the student's school.
- B. **FIRST TRUANCY/UNEXCUSED ABSENCE (WARNING)**
 - a. Parent/guardian shall be notified by the school principal of his/her designee that the student was truant and the date of the truancy.
 - b. Parent/guardian shall also be provided with a copy of Alabama's compulsory attendance laws and advised of the penalties that can be applied and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.
- C. **NO EARLIER THAN THE FIFTH UNEXCUSED ABSENCE (CONFERENCE)**
 - a. The parent, guardian, or person having control of the child shall (1) attend a conference with the attendance officer and principal or his/her designee and/or (2) participate in the early warning program provided by the juvenile court.
 - b. Attendance at one of these conferences shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists.
 - c. Failure to appear at the school conference and/or to appear at the early warning program shall result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent under *Code of Alabama (1975)*, Section 16-28-12(c) (failure to cooperate), or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.