

## TTU K-12

### Attendance Requirements and Truancy Prevention

#### Compulsory Attendance

Good attendance is critical for academic success. This is true in both traditional and online schools. In an online school environment, establishing a consistent routine every day yields the maximum academic benefit.

In 2015, the Texas legislature removed the criminal offense of failure to attend school from the Texas Education Code. Instead, districts are required to address student truancy by implementing prevention measures, identifying circumstances contributing to a student's unexcused absences, and taking specific actions. Although truancy is no longer a criminal offense, districts may still refer a student to truancy court as an action of last resort.

#### Required Attendance at TTU K-12

The following attendance requirement applies to all full-time students who are Texas residents and who are enrolled in the tuition-free program, unless a specific exemption has been granted by a school administrator.

**Minimum Lesson/Unit Completion Requirements.** Students demonstrate attendance in TTU K-12 online school by regularly completing assignments. Attendance is directly tied to what the student accomplishes and/or produces over a given period. The assignments completed are the evidence that a student has been in attendance, and if no work is produced, then a student is not considered to be in attendance.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, attendance is required a minimum of 3 days per week. A student must complete at least 5% of course assignments in a seven-day period and in every subsequent seven-day period until the course is completed.

Course completion is required to earn course credit. No partial course credit will be granted. Course credit is earned when the student has successfully demonstrated mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the course.

Students have six months from the date of enrollment to complete each course. To remain in the program, students must be concurrently enrolled in a minimum of four courses.

Failure to meet minimum progress requirements may cause TTU K-12 to implement truancy processes and may result in your removal from the program.

### Truancy Under the Texas Education Code

Texas law requires students age 6-19 to attend school regularly. Compulsory attendance also applies to students who are younger than six who have previously been enrolled in first grade and to students below the age of six who are voluntarily enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten. For students over the age of 19, student truancy may result in revocation of enrollment.

School districts are required to notify parents of attendance requirements upon enrollment and at the beginning of the school year.

If a student has unexcused absences exceeding the maximum allowed, the district must send a warning to inform the parent that the student is subject to truancy prevention measures.

### District Actions

Districts must have a designated school attendance officer. The attendance officer has the authority to conduct investigations, home visits, and court referrals.

Districts must have a truancy prevention facilitator to implement the district's truancy prevention measures.

Districts must identify truancy prevention measures that promote consistent school attendance while addressing the underlying risk factors that may lead to truancy. At a minimum, Texas Education Code requires a district to take at least one of the following actions:

- Impose a behavior improvement plan. This plan must be signed by the student, parent, and administrator.
- Impose school-based community service.
- Refer the student to counseling, mediation, mentoring, teen court, or other service aimed at addressing the truant behavior.

### Best Practices for Truancy Prevention

The Texas Administrative Code lists several best practices that schools should consider while implementing Truancy Prevention Measures (TPMs),

- Relationships with community organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.
- Consider special circumstance, such as pregnancy, being in the state foster program, homelessness, or being the principal income earner for the student's family. Such circumstances prevent a district from filing truancy on the student.

### Parent Liability

Districts have the option of filing a complaint for criminal prosecution of a parent for contributing to a student's failure to attend school if the parent fails to require the student to attend school according to the attendance requirements set by the district. A complaint against the students' parent can be made in the county, justice, or municipal court if the district provides evidence and meets the statute's other requirements.

Adapted from Compulsory Attendance and Truancy, [Texas Association of School Boards](#)