

*Regional Office  
of Education*

LAKE COUNTY, IL

# Attendance & Truancy Division – Lake County Regional Office of Education

# What is Truancy?

- "*Chronic or habitual truant*" shall be defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days. (A minimum of 10 unexcused absences must be met per the updated school code).
- "*Valid cause*" for absence shall be illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and shall include such other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the board of education in each district, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.
- A "*truant*" is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

# Changes in the IL School Code

## New Truancy Laws

- Amends the School Code. Requires that each school district, charter school, or alternative school or any school receiving public funds ***develop an absenteeism and truancy policy to be communicated to students and their parents or guardians on an annual basis. Sets forth the minimum elements that must be included in the policy. Requires the policy to be updated every 2 years and filed with the State Board of Education.*** Effective July 1, 2021.
- “Prior to the implementation of any truancy intervention services pursuant to subsection (d) of this Section the principal of the school attended by the pupil or the principal's designee **SHALL** notify the pupil's parent or guardian by personal visit, letter, or telephone of each unexcused absence of the pupil. ***After giving the parent or guardian notice of the tenth unexcused absence of the pupil, the principal or the principal's designee SHALL send the pupil's parent or guardian a letter, by certified mail, return receipt requested, notifying the parent or guardian that he or she is subjecting himself or herself to truancy intervention”.***

Lake County  
ROE  
Website

<https://www.lake.k12.il.us/>

# Early Prevention is KEY!



<https://www.attendanceworks.org/>

**The best way to combat truancy is PREVENTION & EDUCATION!**

\*Click to play video clip



- **Prioritize Attendance:** Make clear that improved student attendance is one of your top priorities. Ask your teachers and school leaders to make it one of theirs as well. Designate a senior member of your staff to oversee implementation of an attendance team
- **Mobilize the Community:** Engage parents, civic and elected leaders, local businesses, clergy members and the libraries, museums and service providers
- **Drive with Data:** Use data to raise public awareness, establish targets and goals, track progress and assure accountability
  - Which students are impacted the most? Track them with data!

# Common Misconceptions

- Students from the ages of 6-17
  - If a 6 year old is in a half day program, they cannot be referred
  - Unexcused absences can only be counted after 6<sup>th</sup> birthday
  - Referring a student who is about to turn 17 will not allow ample time to make change
- **Unexcused vs. Excused**
- Unexcused is a FULL day
  - This is true of both in-person & remote-learning
    - Unresponsive student that logged in
    - Tardy student/student that leaves during the day
    - Referred student struggling to complete schoolwork
- Referrals cannot be made for excessive excused absence days

# Referral Process in ATD

- The student must have a minimum of ten unexcused absences
- A school must make three attempts at intervening a chronically truant student before referral:
  - Legal Documentation
    - Who/what/where/when
    - School letterhead
  - Progressive
    - Letters, phone calls, home visits, school conferences, etc.
- ILCS Legal mandate that family is informed they are being referred
  - Letter in certified mail with return receipt
  - Documents every unexcused absence
    - Copy of Attendance
      - Must **clearly** reflect the total amount of excused, unexcused and total days in session
- **A family that goes into the process distrustful will not be as receptive!**

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. This letter is to inform you that we are concerned about your student's attendance. Your student has been unexcused without a valid reason this school year on the following dates: 10/19, 10/20, 10/21, 10/22, 10/25, 10/26, 10/27, 10/28, 11/8, 11/9, 11/10, 11/11 and 11/12.

With that being said, we recognize that the current COVID pandemic may be impacting attendance. Therefore, we encourage parents and guardians to keep students home if they are not feeling well and call the Attendance Office to record this as an excused absence.

As a school, we are here to support your students and improve their attendance. Each student has their support team, including the school counselor, to provide resources and services to help them work through issues that keep them from attending school regularly. The following interventions have been implemented for your student:

Teacher Outreach Email/Phone Calls	Attendance Letters
Counselor Email/Phone Calls	Referral to Student Services Team
Counseling with SST Member	Home Visit(s)
Solution Focused Goal Setting	Disciplinary Conference
Parent/Student/Teacher Conference	Career/Vocational Counseling
Community Resource Referral	

Although many interventions were implemented, we have been unable to improve attendance. Therefore, your student will now be referred to the **Truancy Department at the Lake County Regional Office of Education**. A truancy worker will contact you and provide further support for your student and family.

We appreciate your attention to this essential matter. Hopefully, by working together, we can minimize the number of times your student is absent from school in the future. Don't hesitate to get in touch with us with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



# Referral Process in ATD

- Warning letter sent to the family
  - If non-compliance continues, school is required to reach out to our office
- Conference will be held at the school or home with school representative, ATD representative, student (depending on age) and parent/guardian
  - Set time for ATD to conduct home/community visits with family during the conference
- Regional Hearing with the Regional Superintendent of Schools
- Court
  - Severe cases only
- Schools to send attendance reports to ATD staff **weekly**
  - Excused/unexcused clearly shown

NAME

Title/Position  
300 Center Drive, Suite 100  
Vernon Hills, Illinois 60061  
Phone: Desk Number  
Email Address  
www.lake.k12.il.us

**ATTENDANCE & TRUANCY OFFICE**  
**REPORT TO PARENT/GUARDIAN**  
**ALERT LETTER**

To: Parent/Guardian

CC:

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It has been brought to my attention and information has been filed with the Lake County Regional Office of Education that **STUDENT**, student at **SCHOOL**, due to an excessive amount of unexcused absences/tardies. "Chronic or habitual truant" shall be defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

The educational future of every child is a concern to me. One of the keys to receiving an education is having regular attendance in school. We would like to work together with you to see if a more positive attendance pattern can be achieved. This is done as a support to your family and to allow your child greater educational opportunities. A representative from the Attendance and Truancy Office will be in contact with your family regarding this letter if attendance does not improve.

The State of Illinois requires, "Every parent/guardian to properly care for, train, educate, discipline and control each child". To educate means to see that your child is in all classes every day, except if seriously ill or excused by the building administrator. If this does not occur, the law states that parents/guardians can be fined up to \$500.00 and/or be imprisoned up to thirty (30) days in the county jail. In addition, a Juvenile Court petition maybe filed against your son/daughter. This we would like to avoid.

Please keep in good communication with your child's building administrator. If the student is ill, please be advised that school officials may request that a doctor's note be provided for every absence from school.

Again, let's all work together to overcome this problem.

Sincerely,

NAME

Title/Position  
E: Email Address  
P: Desk Number  
C: Work Cell

# Schools Responsibilities in the Referral Process

- After referral, schools are required by law in the school code to notify our office if a student is non-compliant after receiving the warning letter. If our office doesn't hear from a school, we are under the assumption attendance improved
- *“The truant officer or, in a school district that does not have a truant officer, the regional superintendent of schools or his or her designee shall at the same time that such notice is given notify the teacher or superintendent of the proper public school thereof and **the teacher or superintendent shall notify the truant officer or regional superintendent of schools of any non-compliance therewith**”.*
- Keep a running list of students referred in order to contact ATD with any non-compliance

# Homeless Students, IEP/504 Plan, & Alternative Placements

- Schools cannot refer a homeless student until, “a meeting between the child, the person having custody or control of the child, relevant school personnel, and a homeless liaison to discuss any barriers to the child's attendance due to the child's transitional living situation and to construct a plan that removes these barriers”.
- A copy of current IEP/504 must be submitted with referral
- Students in the process of being evaluated for IEP/504 cannot be referred until the evaluation is complete
- A student attending an alternative placement must be referred by the home district
  - Both schools must be in agreement

Truancy takes TIME!  
&  
It takes a TEAM to  
accomplish our goals!

**Attendance & Truancy Division  
Individualized Service Plan (ISP)**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIS #:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**D.O.B:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **District & School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:** Male Female Transgender Non-binary Intersex Prefer Not To Say

**Type of Program:** \_\_\_\_\_ Special Ed \_\_\_\_\_ Regular \_\_\_\_\_ Bilingual \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Entry:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Basis for Referral:** \_\_\_\_\_ Truant \_\_\_\_\_ Chronic Truant \_\_\_\_\_

Referral Pre-Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ % Total Days Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Unex: \_\_\_\_\_ Ex: \_\_\_\_\_ Sus: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Days Enrolled \_\_\_\_\_

Post-Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ % Total Days Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Unex: \_\_\_\_\_ Ex: \_\_\_\_\_ Sus: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Days Enrolled \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendance Objective:** Increase attendance by \_\_\_\_\_ % (Tracked weekly/biweekly/monthly)

Date Letters Sent: \_\_\_\_\_ Warning \_\_\_\_\_ Conference \_\_\_\_\_ Regional Hearing \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Current Services</u>	<u>Provider</u>	<u>Services Needed</u>
____ School Counseling/Social Work	_____	_____
____ Service Team Meeting	_____	_____
____ Active IEP	_____	_____
____ Agency/Truancy Counseling	_____	_____
____ Attendance/Medical Contract	_____	_____
____ Drug/Alcohol Assessment	_____	_____
____ Probation/Court Involvement	_____	_____
____ Mentoring Program	_____	_____
____ Other (please elaborate)	_____	_____

**Service Plan Participants Signatures**

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Truancy/Outreach: \_\_\_\_\_ Truancy/Outreach: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the nature of the Student's Attendance Problem? (Please check all that apply)**

**Transportation Issue**

- Too far to go
- No money for transportation
- Misses bus
- No reliable means of getting to school

**Safety Issue**

- Surrounding neighborhood not safe
- School not safe
- School problem

**Health Issue**

- Pregnancy
- Medical
- Substance
- Handicap/Disability

**Academic/School Issue**

- Problems with teacher
- Problems with School personnel
- Poor academic performance
- School discipline problem
- Suspended from school

**Home Issue**

- Tending to younger siblings
- Parent/Guardian not well
- Physical, sexual, or substance abuse in the home
- Student is also a parent
- Homeless
- Runaway
- Neglect

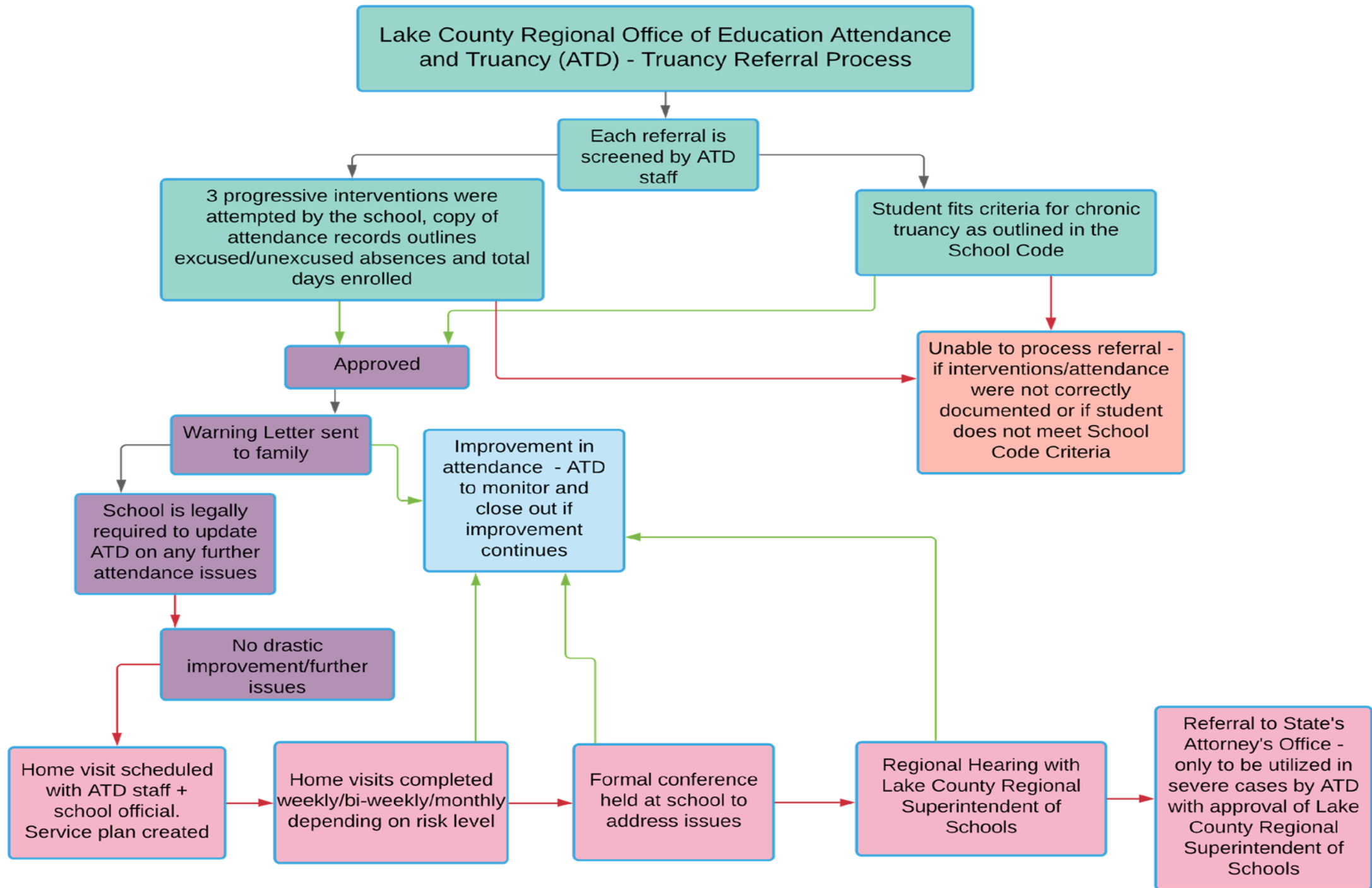
**Student Characteristics**

- Low Achievement
- Low Attendance
- High Failure Rate
- Parenthood
- Credit Deficiencies
- Drug/Alcohol Problem

**Social Issue**

- Gender Intimidation
- Gang Activity
- Financial issues
- Difficult peer relationships
- Bullying
- Personal relationship

**Other:**



# End of Year!

*All cases close at the end of each school year*



# End of Year Guidelines for Schools - ISBE

- Schools are required to provide ATD all referred students total amount of absences
  - Copy of end of year attendance must be sent
- K-12 Requirements
  - **Excused Absences**
  - **Unexcused Absences**
  - **Days Enrolled**
- This needs to be in numerical form, counted out and sent via email, along with a copy of their total attendance
- There should not be inconsistencies with the referral received and end of year data!
- 9-12 Requirements
  - a.) Number of Credits Attempted:
  - b.) Number of Credits Earned:
  - c.) Number of academic classes for which the student received academic support services:
    - (Academic support services include academic instruction, tutoring, and credit recovery program.)
  - d.) Number of academic classes in bullet (c.) that the student successfully passed/completed:

# Resources in the Community

- NICASA
- CYN
- OMNI Youth Services
- Girls on the Run
- Lake County Health Department
- Lake County State's Attorneys Office
- Zacharias Center
- United Way
- 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court
- College of Lake County
- One Hope United
- YouthBuild
- JobCorps
- Employee Connection
- Department of Children and Family Services
- Catholic Charities
- A Safe Place
- Victim's Advocacy Center
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boys and Girls Club
- Mano A Mano
- YMCA

# Contact Information

## Regional Office of Education LAKE COUNTY, IL

- Lake County Regional Office of Education – Attendance & Truancy Division

300 Center Drive, Suite 100, Vernon Hills, IL, 60061

### Truancy Staff:

- **Sean Collins – Truancy Officer**

[scollins@lake.k12.il.us](mailto:scollins@lake.k12.il.us)

(312) 209 – 5680

- **Fay Rosario – Behavioral Specialist**

[frosario@lake.k12.il.us](mailto:frosario@lake.k12.il.us)

(708) 404 – 0962

- **Rocio Diaz – Behavioral Specialist**

[rdiaz@lake.k12.il.us](mailto:rdiaz@lake.k12.il.us)

(708) 404 – 1109

- **Shannon Eady – Truancy Outreach Specialist**

[seady@lake.k12.il.us](mailto:seady@lake.k12.il.us)

(708) 404 – 2687

- **Ivan Lopez– Behavioral Specialist**

[ilopez@lake.k12.il.us](mailto:ilopez@lake.k12.il.us)

(630) 707 – 3244