

Duval County Public Schools Philosophy

Everyday, over two million students are absent from school in America. Students cannot learn if they are not in school. Personnel in the Duval County Public Schools believe children have a right to a quality education. Consequently, many programs and services are offered to meet the unique needs of students, and to make their school experiences as rewarding as possible.

In Duval County, education is considered a family affair. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged, as students' attitudes toward school are usually reflective of their parents'. The most damaging problem resulting from irregular school attendance is that it often leads to academic failure, which ends in grade retention. Research shows that students who are absent two or more days from school each month achieve 25% less than their classmates.

Non-attendance or truancy problems are not just problems for the school district. These problems, which influence the dropout rate, permeate the entire community and create a social and economic dilemma that affects all aspects of our society. Through the collaborative efforts of the home, school, and community, a greater contribution can be made to keep students in school regularly so that they can learn the skills necessary to become self-reliant and productive citizens.

What is compulsory school attendance?

Florida Statute 1003.2 states that all children who have reached the age of six years or who will reach six years of age by February 1 of any school year but have not yet attained the age of 16, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term.

What is the legal responsibility of a parent / guardian for his/her child's school attendance?

Florida Statute 1003.24 states that each parent of a child within the compulsory attendance age shall be responsible for such child's school attendance. The absence of a child from school shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of this law.

Florida Statute 1003.27 (7) (9) states that the parent who refuses or fails to have a child under his/her control attend school regularly shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable by law.

What is the role of the school when a child is truant?

Contact the parent to determine the reason(s) for the absences. Require the parent to justify each absence.

Talk with the student to determine if there are school-related reasons for absences.

Use school-based resources to try to solve truancy problems and document all attempts to assist the student.

Refer the student to the school-based Attendance Intervention Team when she/he accumulates 5 unexcused absences within a calendar month or 10 unexcused in any 90-day period. For all additional follow up, a complete referral form will be forwarded to the District-Level Attendance Office through the school mail.

What is the role of the attendance social worker?

Once a referral is received from a school, the Attendance/Social Worker:

Acknowledges receipt of the referral.

Makes contact with the parent/guardian (home visit or phone contact) to assist in solving the truancy problem.

Makes the parent(s) aware of the compulsory school attendance law and consequences for violations.

Makes referrals to community agencies, if needed.

Provides feedback and appropriate interventions to schools.

Monitors the student's attendance progress.

Notifies the parent that court action may be taken for non-compliance.

Makes referrals to the State Attorney's Office Truancy Arbitration Program (TAP) if the parents do not comply.

Makes referral to the Youth Crisis Center if the student does not comply with the school attendance agreement.

What can schools do to improve student attendance?

Encourage regular or improved attendance by awarding certificates, T-shirts, etc.

Send commendation letters to students and parents for improved attendance records.

Review student's attendance records frequently and request interventions when needed.

Educate parents about school attendance laws.

Initiate a peer-counseling program for students with poor attendance.

Create public awareness of attendance problems in the community through the news media.

What can parents do to improve student attendance?

Emphasize the connection between regular school attendance and getting good grades.

Visit the school periodically and become involved.

Have teacher conferences regularly.

Monitor attendance by contacting the school.

Make education a family priority.

For more information please contact (904) 390-2093

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Attendance Services

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