

*Regional Office
of Education*

LAKE COUNTY, IL

**LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION –
ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY DIVISION (ATD)**

Roycealee J. Wood – Lake County Regional Superintendent of Schools

(10/1/2020)

Truancy Manual

Lake County Regional Office of Education Attendance & Truancy Division

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Introduction

The goal of the Attendance & Truancy Division (ATD) of Lake County – The Regional Office of Education is to provide support, and services when necessary, to all Lake County students in order to have them achieve to the best of their educational ability.

Communication, prevention, and intervention are just a few of the key components that the division holds as ideals as they work to inspire students to remain dedicated to their education.

The Truancy Officer and Outreach Specialists work diligently with schools and local service providers to ensure students are given the proper services to fit a variety of needs, in order to best serve the student and their parent/guardian.

Contact Sheet

Lake County Regional Office of
Education

Phone: (847) 543-7833

Website:

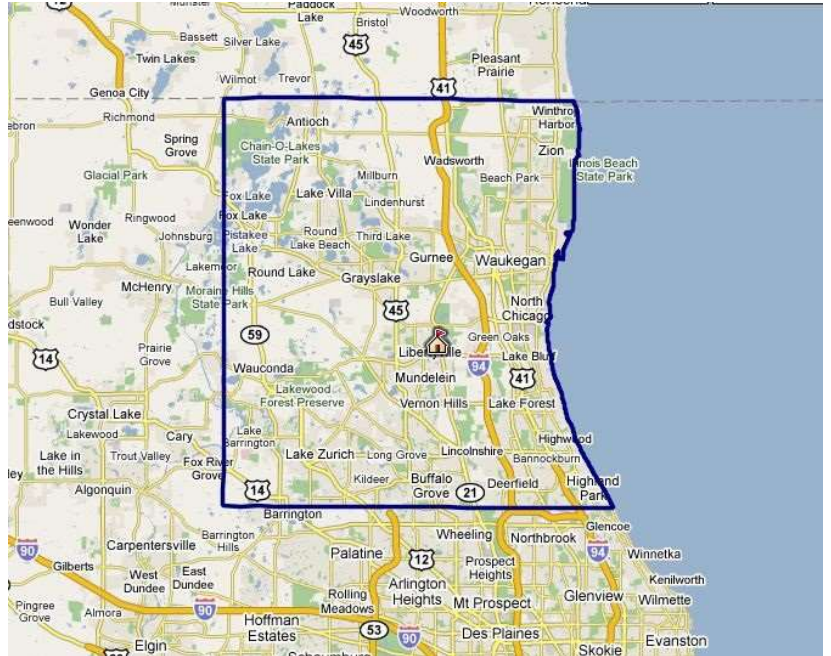
<https://www.lake.k12.il.us/>

Lake County Truancy Officer

Molly Ryan

Phone: (224)504-2370

Email: mryan@lake.k12.il.gov



Districts/Schools We Serve

Elementary School Districts

WINTHROP HARBOR SCHOOL DIST 1

Westfield School

North Prairie Jr. High

BEACH PARK C.C. SCHOOL DIST 3

Howe Elementary School

Kenneth Murphy

Newport Elementary

Oak Crest School

Beach Park Middle School

ZION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIST 6

Lakeview School

Shiloh Park Elementary School

Beulah Park Elementary School

East Elementary School

Elmwood Elementary School

West Elementary School

Zion Central Middle School

MILLBURN C.C. SCHOOL DIST 24

Millburn Elementary School

Millburn Middle School

EMMONS SCHOOL DIST 33

Emmons Grade School

ANTIOCH C.C SCHOOL DIST 34

Mary Kay McNeill Early Learning Center

Hillcrest Elementary School

Oakland Elementary School

W.C. Petty Elementary School

Antioch Upper Grade School

GRASS LAKE SCHOOL DIST 36

Grass Lake Elementary School

GAVIN SCHOOL DIST 37

Gavin Central Elementary School

Gavin South Middle School

BIG HOLLOW SCHOOL DIST 38

Big Hollow Primary School

Big Hollow Elementary School

Big Hollow Middle School

LAKE VILLA C.C. SCHOOL DIST 41

B. J. Hooper School

William L. Thompson School

Olive C. Martin School

Peter J. Palombi Middle School

COMMUNITY CONS. SCHOOL DIST 46

Grayslake Early Childhood Center

Avon Center Elementary School

Meadowview School

Park East School

Prairieview School

Woodview School

Frederick School

Park West School

Grayslake Middle School

WOODLAND C.C. SCHOOL DIST 50

Woodland Primary School

Woodland Elementary East

Woodland Elementary West
Woodland Intermediate
Woodland Middle School
GURNEE SCHOOL DIST 56
Spaulding School
Prairie Trail School
River Trail School
Viking Middle School
LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL DIST 65
Lake Bluff Elementary School
Lake Bluff Middle School
LAKE FOREST SCHOOL DIST 67
Cherokee Elementary School
Everett Elementary School
Sheridan Elementary School
Deer Path Middle School East
Deer Path Middle School West
OAK GROVE SCHOOL DIST 68
Oak Grove School
LIBERTYVILLE SCHOOL DIST 70
Butterfield School
Adler Park School
Copeland Manor Elementary School
Rockland Elementary School
Highland Middle School
RONDOUT SCHOOL DIST 72
Rondout Elementary School
HAWTHORN C.C. SCHOOL DIST 73
Lincoln Early Learning Center
Hawthorn Townline Elementary School

Hawthorn School of Dual Language
Hawthorn Elementary South
Hawthorn Elementary North
Hawthorn Aspen Elementary School
Hawthorn Middle School North
Hawthorn Middle School South
MUNDELEIN SCHOOL DIST 75
Lincoln Early Learning Center
Washington Elementary School
Mechanics Grove Elementary School
Carl Sandburg Middle School
DIAMOND LAKE SCHOOL DIST 76
Diamond Lake School
West Oak Intermediate School
West Oak Middle School
FREMONT SCHOOL DIST 79
Lincoln Early Learning Center
Fremont Elementary School
Fremont Intermediate School
Fremont Middle School
KILDEER COUNTRYSIDE C.C. SCHOOL DIST 96
Willow Grove Early Learning Center
Prairie Elementary School
Kildeer-Countryside Elementary School
Country Meadows Elementary School
Ivy Hall Elementary School
Twin Groves Middle School
Woodlawn Middle School
APTAKISIC-TRIPP C.C. SCHOOL DIST 102
Pritchett Elementary School

Tripp Elementary School

Meridian School

Aptakisic Junior High School

LINCOLNSHIRE-PRAIRIE VIEW SCHOOL DIST
103

Laura B. Sprague School

Half Day School

Daniel Wright Junior High School

BANNOCKBURN SCHOOL DIST 106

Bannockburn School

DEERFIELD SCHOOL DIST 109

Kipling Elementary School

South Park Elementary

Walden Elementary School

Wilmot Elementary School

Alan B. Shepard Middle School

Charles J. Caruso Middle School

NORTH SHORE SCHOOL DIST 112

Green Bay School

Indian Trail Elementary School

Braeside Elementary School

Oak Terrace Elementary School

Ravinia Elementary School

Red Oak Elementary School

Sherwood Elementary School

Wayne Thomas Elementary School

Edgewood Middle School

Northwood Jr. High School

FOX LAKE SCHOOL DIST 82

Lotus School

Stanton School

High School Districts

TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DIST 113

Deerfield High School

Highland Park High School

LAKE FOREST COMM. H.S. DIST 115

Lake Forest Comm. High School

COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 117

Antioch Community High School

Lakes Community High School

MUNDELEIN CONS. H.S. DIST 120

Mundelein Cons. High School

WARREN TOWNSHIP H.S. DIST 121

Warren Twp. H.S.-O'Plaine Rd Campus

Warren Twp. H.S.-Almond Rd Campus

GRANT COMM. H.S. 124

Grant Community High School

ADLAI E. STEVENSON H.S. DIST 125

Adlai E. Stevenson High School

ZION-BENTON TOWNSHIP H.S. DIST 126

New Tech High @ Zion-Benton East

Zion-Benton Township High School

GRAYSLAKE COMM. H.S. DIST 127

Grayslake North High School

Grayslake Central High School

COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 128

Vernon Hills High School

Libertyville High School

Unit School Districts

WAUKEGAN C.U. SCHOOL DIST 60
Robbie M. Lightfoot Early Learning Center
Whittier Elementary School
Carman-Buckner Elementary School
Clearview Elementary School
North Elementary School
Oakdale Elementary
John S. Clark Elementary School
Andrew Cooke Magnet Elem. School
Glen Flora Elementary School
Glenwood Elementary School
Greenwood Elementary School
Hyde Park Elementary School
Little Fort Elementary School
Lyon Magnet Elementary School
H.R. McCall Elementary School
Washington Elementary School
Robert Abbott Middle
Jack Benny Middle School
Thomas Jefferson Middle
Daniel Webster Middle School
Miguel Juarez Middle School
Waukegan High School-Washington Campus
Waukegan High School-Brookside Campus
Waukegan Public Schools-AOEC/Stephens Cntr
Waukegan Public Schools-Twilight Program
LAKE ZURICH C.U. SCHOOL DIST 95
Sarah Adams Elementary School
Seth Paine Elementary School
May Whitney School

Isaac Fox Elementary School
Spencer Loomis Elementary School
Lake Zurich Middle School-North
Lake Zurich Middle School
Lake Zurich High School
ROUND LAKE C.U. SCHOOL DIST 116
Early Education Center
Pleviak Elementary School
Raymond Ellis Elem. School
W. J. Murphy Elem. School
Round Lake Village Elementary School
Round Lake Beach Elem. School
Indian Hill Elementary School
Round Lake Middle School
Magee Middle School
Round Lake Senior High School
WAUCONDA C.U. SCHOOL DIST 118
Robert Crown Elementary School
Cotton Creek School
Wauconda Grade School
Wauconda Middle School
Matthews Middle School
Wauconda High School
NORTH CHICAGO C.U.S.D. 187
Green Bay Early Childhood Center
Evelyn Alexander School
Forrestal Elementary School
A J Katzenmaier Academy
Neal Math & Science Academy
North Chicago Comm. High School

LEARN Charter School 6
LEARN Charter School 10
BARRINGTON COMM. UNIT SCHOOL DIST 220
Barrington Early Learning Center
Barbara B. Rose Elementary School
Countryside Elementary School
Grove Avenue Elementary School
Hough Street Elementary School
Arnett C. Lines Elementary School
North Barrington Elementary School
Roslyn Road Elementary School
Sunny Hill Elementary School
Barrington Middle School-Prairie Campus
Barrington Middle School-Station Campus
Barrington High School

Charter Schools

LEARN Charter School 6
LEARN Charter School 10
PRAIRIE CROSSING CHARTER SCHOOL 900
Prairie Crossing Charter School
DISTRICT 901
Learn 9 Campus in Waukegan

Special Education Districts

EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS COLLABORATIVE
801
NORTHERN SUBURBAN SPECIAL ED. DIST. 804
Early Childhood Services
North Shore Academy Elementary
Arbor Academy/SAIL Program
Educational and Life Skills
North Shore Academy
SPECIAL ED. DIST OF LAKE 825
Laremont School
Gages Lake School
John Powers Center/Transition
Cyd Lash Academy
South School

Alternative School

REGIONAL SAFE SCHOOL PROGRAM
Regional Safe School Program
Vocational School
LAKE CO. H. S. TECH. CAMPUS 849
Lake County Tech Campus

Community College

COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY 532

Illinois Compulsory Attendance Law and Definitions

Parents/guardians need to know that **all** Lake County Area students are expected to attend school every day. The Compulsory School Attendance Law states that whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of **6-17** years old must send the child to a public or private day school on a regular basis. The child can only be truant for 5% of the previous 180 academic school days, which equates to **9** full days.

(105 ILCS 5/26-1) Compulsory school age-Exemptions.

Sec. 26-1. Compulsory school age; exemptions. Whoever has custody or control of any child (i) between the ages of 7 and 17 years (unless the child has already graduated from high school) for school years before the 2014-2015 school year or (ii) between the ages of 6 (on or before September 1) and 17 years (unless the child has already graduated from high school) beginning with the 2014-2015 school year shall cause such child to attend some public school in the district wherein the child resides the entire time it is in session during the regular school term, except as provided in Section 10-19.1, and during a required summer school program established under Section 10-22.33B; provided, that the following children shall not be required to attend the public schools:

1. Any child attending a private or a parochial school where children are taught the branches of education taught to children of corresponding age and grade in the public schools, and where the instruction of the child in the branches of education is in the English language;

2. Any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school, such disability being certified to the county or district truant officer by a competent physician licensed in Illinois to practice medicine and surgery in all its branches, a chiropractic physician licensed under the Medical Practice Act of 1987, a licensed advanced practice registered nurse, a licensed physician assistant, or a Christian Science practitioner residing in this State and listed in the Christian Science Journal; or who is excused for temporary absence for cause by the principal or teacher of the school which the child attends; the exemptions in this paragraph (2) do not apply to any female who is pregnant or the mother of one or more children, except where a female is unable to attend school due to a complication arising from her pregnancy and the existence of such complication is certified to the county or district truant officer by a competent physician;

3. Any child necessarily and lawfully employed according to the provisions of the law regulating child labor may be excused from attendance at school by the county superintendent of schools or the superintendent of the public school which the child should be attending, on certification of the facts by and the recommendation of the school board of the public school district in which the child resides. In districts having part-time continuation schools, children so excused shall attend such schools at least 8 hours each week;

4. Any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in attendance at confirmation classes;

5. Any child absent from a public school on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day for the reason that he is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirements on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day, because the tenets of his religion forbid secular activity on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day. Each school board shall prescribe rules and regulations relative to absences for religious holidays including, but not limited to, a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse a child; but nothing in this paragraph 5 shall be construed to limit the right of any school board, at its discretion, to excuse an absence on any other day by reason of the observance of a religious holiday. A school board may require the parent or guardian of a child who is to be excused from attending school due to the observance of a religious holiday to give notice, not exceeding 5 days, of the child's absence to the school principal or other school personnel. Any child excused from attending school under this paragraph 5 shall not be required to submit a written excuse for such absence after returning to school;

6. Any child 16 years of age or older who (i) submits to a school district evidence of necessary and lawful employment pursuant to paragraph 3 of this Section and (ii) is enrolled in a graduation incentives program pursuant to Section 26-16 of this Code or an alternative learning opportunities program established pursuant to Article 13B of this Code;

7. A child in any of grades 6 through 12 absent from a public school on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in this State for a deceased veteran. In order to be excused under this paragraph 7, the student shall notify the school's administration at least 2 days prior to the date of the absence and shall provide the school's administration with the date, time, and location of the military honors funeral. The school's administration may waive this 2-day notification requirement if the student did not receive at least 2 days advance notice, but the student shall notify the school's administration as soon as possible of the absence. A student whose absence is excused under this paragraph 7 shall be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district. A

student whose absence is excused under this paragraph 7 must be allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed during the absence. If the student satisfactorily completes the school work, the day of absence shall be counted as a day of compulsory attendance and he or she may not be penalized for that absence; and

8. Any child absent from a public school on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day for the reason that his or her parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. Such a student shall be granted 5 days of excused absences in any school year and, at the discretion of the school board, additional excused absences to visit the student's parent or legal guardian relative to such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of excused absences pursuant to this paragraph 8, the student and parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school from such period of excused absence.

Roles of the Truancy Officer

Truancy Officer

105 ILCS 5/26-5

Sec. 26-5. Duties of truant officers.

The truant officer of the school district, whenever notified by the Superintendent, teacher, or other person of violations of this Article, or the county truant officer, when notified by the County Superintendent, shall investigate all cases of truancy or non-attendance at school in their respective jurisdictions, and if the children complained of are not exempt under the provisions of this Article, the truant officer shall proceed as is provided in this Article. The county truant officer, within the county and the district truant officers, within their respective districts, shall in the exercise of their duties be conservators of the peace and shall keep the same, suppress riots, routs, affray, fighting, breaches of the peace, and prevent crime; and may arrest offenders on view and cause them to be brought before proper officials for trial or examination.

Definition of Truancy

105 ILCS 5/26-2A

A “truant” is defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause, as defined in the Article, from such attendance for more than 1% but less than 5% (between 2 full days and 8 full days) of the past 180 days

*A student must be absent without valid cause for the entire day for the day to count towards truancy. A student who is absent without valid cause for only a portion of a school day can only be disciplined under the student handbook, but the day would not count towards truancy.

“Valid cause” for absence shall be illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the 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 safety or health of the student.

“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.

“Truant minor” is defined as a chronic truant to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic intervention and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy, or have been offered and refused.

A “dropout” is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district enrollment roster for any reason other than the student’s death, extended illness, removal for medical non-compliance, expulsion, aging out, graduation, or completion of a program of studies.

School Interventions

The Attendance and Truancy Division of the Lake County Regional Office of Education is dedicated to serving students in Lake County, Illinois. In order to best benefit students and educators alike, it is important that school districts attempt to intervene early when addressing a minor's truant behavior.

A continuum of school services, while utilizing a variety of methods, may work best in many situations to remedy issues of truancy.

Below are some examples of ways that schools can attempt to facilitate better school attendance. **Please note that these interventions should always be documented by the school in the event a referral is sent to the ATD.**

- ❖ Letters to parent/guardian at 3, 6, and 9 unexcused absence days
 - Consider including in the 3rd letter after 9 days that a copy of the letter will be sent to the Regional Office of Education
- ❖ Assessment of school climate
- ❖ Universal screening practices
- ❖ Phone calls to parent/guardian
- ❖ Zoom calls with parent/guardian & student
- ❖ Informational attendance letters
- ❖ Home visits
- ❖ Parent/guardian in-person conference
- ❖ Attendance contract to be signed by parent/guardian & student
- ❖ Use of community based services
- ❖ Visit with school social worker, guidance counselor, psychologist, etc.
- ❖ Mentoring
- ❖ Academic counseling
- ❖ Alternative school programs

Recent Law Changes in Illinois

Effective on January 1st, 2019, the following changes were made regarding truancy in Illinois.

(105 ILCS 5/26-12) (From Ch. 122, par. 26-12) Sec. 26-12. Punitive action.

(a) No punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action, shall be taken against truant minors for such truancy unless appropriate and available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 10-22.6 of this Code, a truant minor may not be expelled for nonattendance unless he or she has accrued 15 consecutive days of absences without valid cause and the student cannot be located by the school district or the school district has located the student but cannot, after exhausting all available supportive services, compel the student to return to school.

(b) A school district may not refer a truant, chronic truant, or truant minor to any other local public entity, as defined under Section 1-206 of the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, for that local public entity to issue the child a fine or a fee as punishment for his or her truancy.

(c) A school district may refer any person having custody or control of a truant, chronic truant, or truant minor to any other local public entity, as defined under Section 1-206 of the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, for that local public entity to issue the person a fine or fee for the child's truancy only if the school district's truant officer, regional office of education, or intermediate service center has been notified of the truant behavior and the school district, regional office of education, or intermediate service center has offered all appropriate and available supportive services and other school resources to the child. Before a school district may refer a person having custody or control of a child to a municipality, as defined under Section 1-1-2 of the Illinois Municipal Code, the school district must provide the following appropriate and available services:

(1) For any child who is a homeless child, as defined under Section 1-5 of the Education for Homeless Children Act, 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.

(2) For any child with a documented disability, a meeting between the child, the person having custody or control of the child, and relevant school personnel to review the child's current needs and address the appropriateness of the child's placement and services. For any

child subject to Article 14 of this Code, this meeting shall be an individualized education program meeting and shall include relevant members of the individualized education program team. For any child with a disability under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), this meeting shall be a Section 504 plan review and include relevant members of the Section 504 plan team.

(3) For any child currently being evaluated by a school district for a disability or for whom the school has a basis of knowledge that the child is a child with a disability under 20 U.S.C. 1415(k) (5), the completion of the evaluation and determination of the child's eligibility for special education services.

(d) Before a school district may refer a person having custody or control of a child to a local public entity under this Section, the school district must document any appropriate and available supportive services offered to the child. In the event a meeting under this Section does not occur, a school district must have documentation that it made reasonable efforts to convene the meeting at a mutually convenient time and date for the school district and the person having custody or control of the child and, but for the conduct of that person, the meeting would have occurred.

Referral Guidelines

Illinois School Code defines habitual truancy as: a student that misses 5% (9 days) unexcused of the previous 180 regular attendance days. This changed from 10% on July 1, 2011. Also, SB1307 was approved and took effect as of July 1, 2014 the compulsory school age in Illinois has changed from 7-17 to 6-17 (if the student has turned 6 by September 1st each year).

Note that during a pandemic, school policies and procedures regarding attendance may differ. Refer to page 23 in the manual on the Illinois State Board of Education's recommendations on attendance.

The Illinois school code allows Truancy Officers to work with students between the ages of 6-17.

If a student is under 6 years **or** over 17, consequences must be handled at the school level. Refer to page 14 for examples of interventions that can be used in a school setting.

The Lake County Attendance and Truancy Division receives over 900 truancy referrals each school year. Please note that due to the large volume of referrals, unexcused absences take precedence. Visit our website for information and resources that can help address excused absences and excessive tardiness. <https://www.lake.k12.il.us/brochures>

Upon receipt of a referral and if appropriate, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, signed by the Director, apprising them of the law and the consequences that could occur if attendance does not improve. In addition, an Outreach Specialist will be assigned to the case and a truancy assessment will be conducted.

Recommendations as a result of the assessment will be tailored to the individual need of the student. If the attendance issues continue, a hearing at the Regional Office of Education may be held followed by a court referral, if necessary. The goal of the Attendance and Truancy Division is to assist students and families before court involvement becomes necessary.

Please remember that truancy investigations require patience from everyone involved – things cannot and will not change overnight!

Instructions for Completing a Truancy Referral Form

It is extremely important to complete all information on the Lake County truancy referral form. Excluding any data may delay the processing of the truancy referral and the assignment of an outreach specialist.

- ❖ **Student Data:** Please complete with all known phone numbers (home, work, and cell phone numbers). If student lives with one parent/ guardian, include both parents/guardians addresses and phone contact numbers.
- ❖ **Student Identification System (SIS):** The SIS number that is needed is the state-issued, 9-digit unique number that follows the student throughout their educational career. Please do not enter the district student id number here. If you are unaware in your schools system where to find the SIS number, please ask your Information Technology department where to locate the number.
- ❖ **School History:** Attach a copy of the current school attendance, grades to date and prior school history, including cumulative card. This will allow us to understand when the attendance problem began as well as identify attendance patterns.
- ❖ **Interventions Attempted:** Please indicate specific interventions attempted including dates and outcomes. This will enable the outreach specialist to assess the appropriate level of intervention. Provide an attachment of a minimum of three documented attempts the school made to intervene.
- ❖ Please indicate if the student currently has contact with probation and/or court.

In order to successfully submit a referral, there must be a minimum of **three** attempted interventions on behalf of the school in order for the investigation process to begin (proof of these interventions need to be attached with the referral form).

Note that the division primarily works with students that have unexcused absences. If the Truancy Officer is unable to differentiate types of absences on current attendance forms, there may be a delay in the process.

Sample Letters – Initial Contact

LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION – TRUANCY OFFICE REPORT TO PARENT/GUARDIAN

To: Parents

CC: School Contact

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It has been brought to my attention and information has been filed with the Regional Office of Education in Lake County that **STUDENT**, student at **SCHOOL**, has been unexcused absent for # days during the 2020/2021 school year.

When a truancy case is referred to the Regional Superintendent's Office, it is an extremely serious matter. Very few times do attendance problems become so great that this office is asked to take action. Truancy is defined as being absent from school without valid cause for a school day or portion thereof.

The purpose of this letter is to help you prevent further action by our office. The State of Illinois law requires any person having custody or control of a child 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 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. To avoid this action, you must see that your child is in school continuously from now until the end of the school year. It will be important for you to keep in close communication with your local school officials.

The school personnel have been instructed by this office to report to us if your child's attendance does not improve. I do not want to initiate the first steps that could lead to court action against you or your family.

Sincerely,

Molly Ryan
Lake County Truancy Officer
P: (224) 504-2370

Sample Letters – Conference Letter

LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION – TRUANCY OFFICE

CONFERENCE LETTER

To: Parents/Guardian

CC: School Contact

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The State of Illinois requires every parent to properly educate their child/children to educate means to see that your child be in all classes every day and on time, except if seriously ill and excused by a Medical Doctor or by the school nurse.

If this does not occur, the law states that the parent(s) can be fined \$500.00 or be imprisoned up to 30 days in the county jail, or both. In addition, a Juvenile Court petition may be filed against your son/daughter. To avoid this action, the law states that your child must return to school immediately and continue to attend consecutively during the remainder of the school year.

A conference at the school has been scheduled for you regarding your child's attendance:

DATE: (_____)

TIME: (_____)

SCHOOL: (_____)

The purpose of this letter is to avoid further action by this office. If you have any questions, you may contact me directly at (224) 504-2370.

Sincerely,

Molly Ryan

mryan@lake.k12.il.gov

Lake County Truancy Officer

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Sample Letters – Regional Hearing

**LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION – TRUANCY
OFFICE**

REGIONAL HEARING LETTER

To: Parent

CC: School Official

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

A truancy report has been filed with this office by **SCHOOL** school district concerning

STUDENT. The information received indicates **STUDENT**, being of school age and under your control, is chronically Truant from school. I am requesting that you and your child attend a Regional Hearing. Please bring all copies of medical records with you to the conference.

DATE: (_____)

TIME: (_____)

PLACE: (_____)

The state law of Illinois requires that the parent or legal guardian must see that his/her children are in all classes every day, from the ages of 6-17. If this does not occur, the law states that the legal guardian can be fined up to \$500.00 or be imprisoned up to 30 days in the county jail, or both.

The purpose of this hearing is to discuss **STUDENT'S** future and to avoid any further legal action.

If you do not attend this hearing or respond to this letter, further legal action will be taken involving the Lake County State's Attorney's office. If you have any questions, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

Molly Ryan

Lake County Truancy Officer

(224) 504-2370

Predictors of Future Truancy

- ❖ Attendance patterns – frequent absences, suspicious excused, frequent tardies.
- ❖ Poor classroom performance in general
- ❖ Peer relationship – loner, fights, not chosen for games, shy
- ❖ Limited participation in extracurricular activities and physical education
- ❖ Physical appearance – dress, personal hygiene, size, health
- ❖ Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia, obesity
- ❖ Frequent change of schools; grief and loss issues for child
- ❖ Sibling performance in school was negative or sibling dropped out or truant.
- ❖ Family environment reveals problems, e.g. Overprotective
- ❖ Two or more years behind in reading and/or mathematics
- ❖ Failure of one or more school years in elementary school
- ❖ Friends not school oriented or dropouts/truants
- ❖ Friends much older or substance abusers
- ❖ Feelings of not belonging/social isolation
- ❖ Behavior problems requiring disciplinary measures
- ❖ Recent divorce in the home or single parent home
- ❖ Recent death in the home or terminally ill parent
- ❖ Alcohol and/or drug abuse and/or child of alcoholic family system
- ❖ Emotional problems/psychosomatic illness; asthma, colitis, ulcers, eczema, enuresis, encopresis
- ❖ Absent from home without parental consent
- ❖ Lack of parental supervision before and/or after school
- ❖ Abused and/or neglected (Spouse and/or child)
- ❖ Disconnected or no phone during the last school year
- ❖ ED or LD placement
- ❖ Moved four (4) or more times in elementary school
- ❖ Twenty (20) or more absences in kindergarten or 1st grade
- ❖ Separation issues of parent/child

Attendance During A Pandemic

Per the Illinois State Board of Education, published on May 4, 2020:

“The preferred method of collecting attendance is always a one-to-one daily connection between the teacher and the student. However, we recognize that this method is not available or practical for all districts and student scenarios under the COVID-19 conditions. We encourage and suggests several ideas for how classroom teachers can collect and count a student as present when the one-to-one daily connection is not practical:

- Video conference “check-ins.”
- Wellness checks coupled with a question on student engagement/participation in lessons.
- Phone calls coupled with a question on student engagement/participation in lessons.
- Text messages or email communications coupled with a question on student engagement/participation in lessons.
- Packet collections by school personnel.

For example:

- If the attendance method covers a week timespan (e.g., a weekly packet), then once the packet comes back completed the student should be marked present for each of the days the work packet was intended to cover.
- If the phone call or text message occurs every other day and the interaction is coupled with a question on student engagement/participation in lessons covering the same timeframe, then attendance should be recorded for the same number of days.

If schools cannot ensure student attendance through supportive measures, it is recommended that school personnel follow the normal procedures of referring students to your school’s regional truancy officer as outlined in the Illinois School Code, Section 26-2a: “A ‘truant’ is defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause, as defined under this Section, from such attendance for more than 1% but less than 5% of the past 180 school days.”

We also recommend continued efforts to note when students are engaging with the school. This can be used as a means to record attendance, interaction with the school, or both”.