



Chronic Absenteeism at the High School Level

What?

Chronic absenteeism is typically defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year -- approximately 18 days a year, or just two days every month.

In accordance with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), schools are now required to capture the exact amount of instructional time that a student is missing throughout the day. The OCR deems a student to be defined as “chronically absent” when meeting the following:

Students are considered chronically absent if/when:

1. Any student in grades K-12 who **misses 50 percent or more of the instructional day** for any reason for 10% or more of the enrollment period
2. **ANY and ALL** absences contribute to chronic absenteeism (lawful, unlawful, or suspensions)

As a result, all elementary schools will track the exact minutes students are on campus. Therefore, it is imperative that students are on time to school and remain at school, when possible, for the entire instructional period.

Why does it matter?

According to Powerschool Resources

(<https://www.powerschool.com/resources/blog/chronic-absenteeism-matters-2016/>):

Students who are chronically absent from school are less likely to be reading at grade level, preventing them from reaching early learning milestones. Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

It is often seen that chronic absenteeism is a better predictor of a student's likelihood to graduate than test scores. And this directly impacts a student's future.

A high school dropout, a student who most likely was chronically absent, is more likely to suffer from poverty, diminished health, and involvement in the criminal justice system. Some of the exact reasons to why they may have been missing school in the first place.

How do I support parents?

1. Encourage parents/guardians to schedule appointments after school
2. Encourage parents to plan for vacations on the weekend or during the summer
3. Remind them during sign in/sign out process that every minute in the classroom counts!
4. Remind parents to visit the District 5 website to obtain further information on Chronic Absenteeism
5. Support administration if he/she chooses to hold a Chronic Absenteeism conference with the family