California Education Codes

2019
Compulsory Attendance Education Code

Schools are required to enforce compulsory attendance law. Pursuant to Education Code § 48200:

Each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years not exempted under the provision of this chapter or Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 48400) is subject to compulsory full-time education. Each person subject to compulsory full-time education and each person subject to compulsory continuation education not exempted under the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 48400) shall attend the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes and for the full time designated as the length of the schoolday by the governing board of the school district in which the residency of either the parent or legal guardian is located and each parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the pupil shall send the pupil to the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes and for the full time designated as the length of the schoolday by the governing board of the school district in which the residence of either the parent or legal guardian is located.

Unless otherwise provided for in this code, a pupil shall not be enrolled for less than the minimum schoolday established by law.
Determining Excused Absences (Ed Code § 48205)

Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

1. Due to the pupil’s illness.
2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered.
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of the pupil’s immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California.
   a. “Immediate family” shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister, or any relative living in the student’s immediate household (Ed Code § 45194).
5. For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
6. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor.
7. For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil’s religion, attendance at religious retreats, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil’s absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board.
8. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.
9. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil’s immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district.
10. For the purpose of attending the pupil’s naturalization ceremony to become a United States Citizen.
11. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.
   b. A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of the class from
which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

c. For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed four hours per semester.

d. Absences pursuant to this section are deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance and shall not generate state apportionment payments.

e. “Immediate family,” as used in this section, means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.
Truancy

Pursuant to California Education Code § 48260 (a): “A pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the schoolday without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, shall be classified as a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.”

First Notification Mandate (Ed. Code § 48260.5):

Upon a pupil’s initial classification as a truant, the school district shall notify the pupil’s parent or guardian using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include electronic mail or a telephone call:

a. That the pupil is truant.
b. That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.
c. That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290).
d. That alternative educational programs are available in the school district.
e. That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil’s truancy.
f. That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264.
g. For a pupil under 18 years of age but 13 years of age or older, that the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil’s driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.
h. That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.

Subsequent report of truancy (Ed. Code § 48261):

Any pupil who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be reported as a truant to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the district.

Habitual Truant (Ed. Code § 48262):

Any pupil is deemed an habitual truant who has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year, provided that no pupil shall be deemed an habitual truant unless an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil himself, after the filing of either of the reports required by Section 48260 or Section 48261. For
purposes of this section, a conscientious effort means attempting to communicate with the parents of the pupil at least once using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include electronic mail or a telephone call.

**Irregular Attendance, Habitually Insubordinate or Disorderly During School Attendance (Ed. Code § 48263):**

If a minor pupil in a school district of a county is a habitual truant, or is a chronic absentee, as defined in Section 60901, or is habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at school, the pupil may be referred to a school attendance review board, or to the probation department for services if the probation department has elected to receive these referrals. The school district supervisor of attendance, or any other persons the governing board of the school district or county may designate, making the referral shall provide documentation of the interventions undertaken at the school to the pupil, the pupil's parents or guardians, and the school attendance review board or probation department shall notify the pupil and parents or guardians of the pupil, in writing, of the name and address of the school attendance review board or probation department to which the matter has been referred and of the reason for the referral. The notice shall indicate that the pupil and parents or guardians of the pupil will be required, along with the referring person, to meet with the school attendance review board or probation officer to consider a proper disposition of the referral.

If the school attendance review board or probation officer determines that available community services can resolve the problem of the truant or insubordinate pupil, then the school attendance review board or probation officer shall direct the pupil or the pupil’s parents or guardians, or both, to make use of those community services. The school attendance review board or probation officer may require, at any time that it determines proper, the pupil or parents or guardians of the pupil, or both, to furnish satisfactory evidence of participation in the available community services.

If the school attendance review board or probation officer determines that available community services cannot resolve the problem of the truant or insubordinate pupil or if the pupil or the parents or guardians of the pupil, or both, have failed to respond to directives of the school attendance review board or probation officer or to services provided, the school attendance review board may, pursuant to Section 48263.5, notify the district attorney or the probation officer, or both, of the county in which the school district is located, or the probation officer may, pursuant to Section 48263.5, notify the district attorney, if the district attorney or the probation officer has elected to participate in the truancy mediation program described in that section.

**Chronic Truant (Ed. Code § 48263.6):**

Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the schooldays in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date, is deemed a chronic truant, provided that the appropriate school district officer or
employee has complied with Sections 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 48262, 48263, and 48291.

**Criminal Complaint Against Parent (Ed. Code § 48291):**
If it appears upon investigation that any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child has violated any of the provisions of this chapter, the secretary of the board of education, except as provided in Section 48292, or the clerk of the board of trustees, shall refer such person to a school attendance review board. In the event that any such parent, guardian, or other person continually and willfully fails to respond to directives of the school attendance review board or services provided, the school attendance review board shall direct the school district to make and file in the proper court a criminal complaint against the parent, guardian, or other person, charging the violation, and shall see that the charge is prosecuted by the proper authority. In the event that a criminal complaint is not prosecuted by the proper authority as recommended, the official making the determination not to prosecute shall provide the school attendance review board with a written explanation for the decision not to prosecute.

**Filing and Prosecution of Complaint by Attendance Supervisor (Ed. Code § 48292):**
In counties, cities, and cities and counties, and in school districts having an attendance supervisor, the attendance supervisor shall make and file the complaint provided for by this article and shall see that the charge is prosecuted by the proper authorities.

**Chronic Absentee (Ed. Code § 60901[c][1]):**
For purposes of this section, “chronic absentee” means a pupil who is absent on 10 percent or more of the schooldays in the school year when the total number of days a pupil is absent is divided by the total number of days the pupil is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular day schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays.