

PROCEDURES FOR REFERRAL TO SUPERVISORS OF ATTENDANCE

This Circular reflects the Boston Public Schools' procedures for referring students to the Supervisors of Attendance (SOA). It contains guidelines on:

- Procedures for referrals and attendance cards
- Child In Need of Services (CHINS) filings
- Habitual school offenders filings

For the broad policy guidelines on attendance and punctuality, please see Superintendent's Circular ACA-18: <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/files/ACA-18%20Attendance%20policies.pdf>.

For step-by-step procedures on record-keeping and attendance, please see Superintendent's Circular ACA-18A: <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/files/ACA-18A%20Attendance%20procedures.pdf>.

BACKGROUND

Supervisors of Attendance, working in collaboration with school staff and external agencies, may, based on investigative findings, prior attendance patterns, and present problematic attendance, file a court referral. The filing of a CHINS is the last resort if other interventions by school, external agencies, and/or attendance staff fail to bring about improvement.

The SOA may file the following CHINS petitions:

Truancy

Civil charge filed on students who miss school despite the efforts of the parent.

Habitual School Offender

Civil charge filed on students who persistently violate school rules, engage in unruly or disruptive behavior, and/or place the school/community at risk.

Adult Failure to Cause

Petition filed when a student's absence is beyond his/her control but due to a caretaker's action or inaction, e.g., child is too young to get to school on his/her own.

Under M.G.L. c.119, Section 21, Section 39E, Section 39F, and Section 39G, Boston Juvenile Court may hear petitions to determine if a child is in need of services. Only the Supervisor of Attendance may file a CHINS petition on behalf of the Boston Public Schools for attendance- or behavior-related matters.

ATTENDANCE SUPERVISOR'S INFORMATION CARDS

The Attendance Supervisor's Information Card is a no-carbon-required four- (4) copy color-coded form (approximately 5" X 8") to be used as follows:

1. WHITE FORMS - HIGH SCHOOLS
2. YELLOW FORMS - MIDDLE SCHOOLS
3. BLUE FORMS - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The four (4) copies will be distributed as follows:

1. 1st copy - Attention: Director of Alternative Education
2. 2nd copy - Headmaster/Principal
3. 3rd copy - Supervisor of Attendance
4. 4th copy - Homeroom Teacher

If no card is available, the Attendance Supervisor Form may be used, and either faxed or emailed to the appropriate Supervisor of Attendance, and copies made for the other parties as described above. This form is included as attachment A and is available on the Alternative Education page on www.MyBPS.org.

Instructions for processing of the cards are as follows:

1. The homeroom teacher fills out the form completely and retains his/her copy
2. The Headmaster/Principal or designee makes contact with the home and records such contact in the space provided on the form. **THE SCHOOL MUST MAKE INITIAL CONTACT WITH THE STUDENT, PARENT OR GUARDIAN AND DOCUMENT THESE ATTEMPTS BEFORE FORWARDING THIS CARD TO THE SUPERVISOR OF ATTENDANCE.** Cards sent to the Office of Alternative Education should be recorded by the school.
3. If the Headmaster/Principal requires the services of the Supervisor of Attendance, he/she forwards the other three (3) copies of the form to the Supervisor of Attendance at the Office of Alternative Education for investigation. A record of this request will be kept at that Office at 515 Hyde Park Avenue, Roslindale, MA 02131.
4. The Supervisor of Attendance will investigate and report his/her recommendation in the space provided on the form and return to the Headmaster/Principal his/her copy.
5. The Supervisor of Attendance will keep his/her copy and file the original copy with the Office of Alternative Education at the end of each month.

The Attendance Supervisor's Information Cards may be ordered from the Materials Distribution Center.

SCHOOL STEPS IN THE C.H.I.N.S. PROCESS

Truancy C.H.I.N.S.:

1. After the fifth unexplained absence, schools send an Attendance Supervisor's Information Card or Form to the Attendance Office for follow-up and investigation. The appropriate Supervisor of Attendance will investigate the case, referring to the action already taken by the school to date and to the results that they have reported. The investigation may include phone calls, home/parent work-site visits, school visits and telephone calls, letters to parents where necessary and, in some cases, contact with and referral to involved agencies.
2. The Supervisor of Attendance will report the results of the investigation to the school. The supervisor will also ask that schools keep them informed of further attendance problems.
3. If attendance does not improve, schools must send additional cards/forms to the Attendance Office, alerting the Supervisor of Attendance to follow up once more. Additional cards/forms should update the Supervisor of Attendance on the school's subsequent actions and results.

4. Subsequent investigation and follow-up will occur as explained in Step 1.
5. Supervisors of Attendance, working with school staff, make decisions on future action based on investigative findings, prior attendance patterns, and correspondence with parent and school. One option is court referral. The decision to file a C.H.I.N.S. is made by the Supervisor of Attendance based on the finding and results of Steps 1-4 and only after exhausting all other possible courses of action.
6. When the C.H.I.N.S. petition is filed, the Supervisor of Attendance will notify the school of this action using the Attendance Supervisor's Information Card/Form or will make personal or telephone contact. A Probation Officer will be assigned to the child by the court.
7. If attendance does not improve following a C.H.I.N.S. filing, communication with the assigned Probation Officer and/or the Supervisor of Attendance is required.

Habitual School Offender C.H.I.N.S.:

1. After the third serious violation of school rules, the school will file an Attendance Supervisor's Information Card or Form to the Attendance Office for follow-up and investigation. The card/form must be accompanied by a behavior log briefly describing the incidents in which the student was involved and the school's interventions, **and** by at least three school incident reports.
2. The Supervisor of Attendance will investigate the case and determine whether a filing is warranted. He/she will report the decision to the school.
3. When the C.H.I.N.S. petition is filed, the Supervisor of Attendance will notify the school of this action using the Attendance Supervisor's Information Card/Form or will make personal or telephone contact. A Probation Officer will be assigned to the child by the court.
4. If the student's behavior does not improve following a CHINS filing, communication with the assigned Probation Officer and/or the Supervisor of Attendance is required, and the school should then proceed to the appropriate action under the Code of Discipline.

ADULT-FAILURE-TO-CAUSE PROCESS

These cases are criminal complaints filed against parents/guardians who willfully prevent their children from attending school. This is a serious charge, requiring the sworn testimony of the Supervisor of Attendance on the school's behalf. Courts can fine parents and, in extreme cases, further consequences can result for non-compliance.

The steps are the same as described for C.H.I.N.S. cases, except that it is filed against the parent if the investigation conducted by the Supervisor of Attendance finds evidence to justify the filing, and information about the parent is required which, in some cases, can only be obtained by school staff. For example, the complaint cannot be filed without the parent/guardian's date of birth and physical description. Therefore, if a staff member at the school is able to meet the parent/guardian, it would be extremely helpful and would assist in expediting the filing if that person were to capture this information at the time if at all possible.

For more information about this circular, contact:

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Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE SUPERVISOR INFORMATION FORM

SCHOOL: _____ Tel. #: _____ Date: _____

Student Name (last, first): _____ Student ID#: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Teacher: _____ Homeroom: _____ Date of last card: _____

No. of days: unexcused absent: _____ tardy: _____ suspended: _____ (since last card)

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ D.O.B.: _____ Phone #: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

DSS Involved/51A? Y N Employer: _____

Employer Address: _____ Work #: _____

Action of phone calls 1-4 (see attendance procedures): _____

Letters/SST Meeting Result: _____

Other pertinent Information regarding student/family /known agencies:

For Habitual School Offenders, list 3 or more brief descriptions of offenses and dates of offenses. Fax 3 or more hard copies of incident report to attendance office at 617.635.6821.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SOA Summary

Home Visit Date _____ Time _____ Result: Spoke with parent

Left letter: Contact school Contact SOA

Additional information:

Court Action

Case filed _____
date _____ Truancy _____ HSO _____ ADF _____

Case conference with PO _____ Case dismissed _____ date _____

Please fax or email to appropriate Supervisor of Attendance.