

ATTENDANCE
COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

FEA
(LEGAL)

**Compulsory
Attendance**

Students who are at least six years of age, or who have been previously enrolled in first grade, and who have not yet reached their 19th birthday shall attend school for the entire period the program is offered, unless exempted as indicated below. On enrollment in prekindergarten or kindergarten, a student shall attend school. *Education Code 25.085(a)-(c)*

**Voluntary Enrollment
of Students 19 and
Over**

A person who voluntarily enrolls in school or voluntarily attends school after the person's 19th birthday shall attend school each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is offered. A board may adopt a policy requiring the student who is under 21 years of age to attend school until the end of the school year.

After the third unexcused absence of a person who voluntarily enrolls, a district shall issue a warning letter to the person that states the person's enrollment may be revoked for the remainder of the school year if the person has more than five unexcused absences in a semester.

A district may revoke for the remainder of the school year the enrollment of a person who has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, except a school district may not revoke the enrollment of a person under this provision on a day on which the person is physically present at school.

A person whose enrollment is revoked for exceeding this limit may be considered an unauthorized person on school grounds for the purposes of Education Code 37.107 regarding trespassing.

As an alternative to revoking a person's enrollment, a school district may impose a behavior improvement plan described by Education Code 25.0915(a-1)(1).

Education Code 25.085(e)-(h)

**Accelerated /
Compensatory
Programs**

Unless specifically exempted, a student must also attend:

1. An extended-year program for which the student is eligible that is provided by a district for students identified as likely not to be promoted to the next grade level or tutorial classes required by the district under Education Code 29.084 [see EHBC];
2. An accelerated reading instruction program to which the student has been assigned under Education Code 28.006(g) [see EKC];
3. An accelerated instruction program to which the student is assigned under Education Code 28.0211 [see EIE];

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4. A basic skills program to which the student is assigned under Education Code 29.086 [see EHBC]; or
5. A summer program provided:
 - a. To a student placed in in-school suspension or other alternative setting, other than a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), who has been offered the opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. *Education Code 37.021* [See FO]
 - b. To a student removed to a DAEP who has been offered an opportunity to complete coursework before the beginning of the next school year. *Education Code 37.008(l)* [See FOCA]

Education Code 25.085(d)

**Additional
Instructional Days**

Notwithstanding any other provision in Education Code 25.085, a student enrolled in a district is not required to attend school for any additional instructional days described by Education Code 48.0051 [See Incentive for Additional Instructional Days at FEB(LEGAL)].
Education Code 25.085(i)

Exemptions

A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements under the following statutory provisions.

Equivalency
Diploma

A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is at least 17 years of age and has been issued a high school equivalency certificate or diploma.

Private or Home
School

A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student attends a private or parochial school that includes in its course a study of good citizenship.

A student in a home school shall be exempt from compulsory attendance if he or she is pursuing in good faith a curriculum consisting of books, workbooks, other written materials (including those that appear on an electronic screen of either a computer or video tape monitor), or any combination of these. The curriculum shall be designed to meet basic education goals of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and a study of good citizenship. *Tex. Educ. Agency v. Leeper*, 893 S.W.2d 432 (Tex. 1994)

Special Education
— Nondistrict
Placement

A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is eligible to participate in a district's special education program under Education Code 29.003 and cannot be appropriately served by the resident district.

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Medical Condition	A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student has a temporary and remediable physical or mental condition that makes attendance infeasible and the student has a certificate from a qualified physician specifying the temporary condition, indicating the prescribed treatment, and covering the anticipated period of absence for the purpose of receiving and recuperating from remedial treatment.
Expulsion — No JJAEP	A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is expelled in accordance with legal requirements in a district that does not participate in a mandatory juvenile justice alternative education program. [See FOD]
17-Year-Old in GED Course	<p>A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is at least 17 years old, is attending a course of instruction to prepare for the high school equivalency examinations, and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Has the permission of the student's parent or guardian to attend the course;2. Is required by court order to attend the course;3. Has established a residence separate and apart from the student's parent, guardian, or other person having lawful control of the student; or4. Is homeless.
High School Replacement Programs	A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is enrolled in the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities, Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science, or Texas Academy of International Studies.
16-Year-Old in GED Program or Job Corps	<p>A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is at least 16 years old and is attending a course of instruction to prepare for the high school equivalency examinations, if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The student is recommended to take the course by a public agency that has supervision or custody of the student under a court order; or2. The student is enrolled in a Job Corps training program under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, 29 U.S.C. 2801. [Note: The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 has been repealed.]
Other Exemption	A student is exempt from compulsory attendance requirements if the student is specifically exempted under another law.

Education Code 25.086

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**Excused Absences
for Compulsory
Attendance
Determinations**

Note: Additional information regarding attendance accounting requirements is found in the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) [Student Attendance and Accounting Handbook](#).¹

A district shall excuse a student from attending school for the following purposes, including travel for those purposes.

1. Observing religious holy days;
2. Attending a required court appearance;
3. Appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student's application for United States citizenship.
4. Taking part in a United States naturalization oath ceremony;
5. Serving as an election clerk [see Early Voting Clerks, below]; or
6. If a student is in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), participating, as determined and documented by DFPS, in an activity:
 - a. Ordered by a court under Family Code Chapter 262 or 263, provided that it is not practicable to schedule the participation outside of school hours, or
 - b. Required under a service plan under Family Code Chapter 263, Subchapter B.

Education Code 25.087(b)(1)

Religious Holy Days For purposes of excusing a student from attending school to observe a religious holy day, a district may not require documentation from a clergy member or other religious leader and shall accept a note from the student's parent or person standing in parental relation verifying the purpose of the student's absence. *Education Code 25.087(f)*

Health-Care Appointments A district shall excuse a student from attending school for a temporary absence resulting from an appointment with a health-care professional for the student or the student's child if the student commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment. "Temporary absence" includes the temporary absence of a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder on the day of the student's appointment with a health-care practitioner to receive a generally recognized service for persons with autism spectrum disorder, including applied behavioral analysis, speech

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therapy, and occupational therapy. *Education Code 25.087(b)(2)-(b-3)*

Serious or Life-
Threatening Illness

A district shall excuse an absence resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's parent or guardian provides a certification from a physician licensed to practice medicine in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment. *Education Code 25.087(b)(3)*

Higher Education
Visits

A district may excuse a student from attending school to visit an institution of higher education accredited by a generally recognized accrediting organization during the student's junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education, provided that:

1. The district may not excuse for this purpose more than two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year; and
2. The district adopts:
 - a. A policy to determine when an absence will be excused for this purpose; and
 - b. A procedure to verify the student's visit at the institution of higher education.

Education Code 25.087(b-2)

Early Voting Clerks

A district may adopt a policy excusing a student from attending school for service as a student early voting clerk in an election. A district may excuse a student for serving as an election clerk [see Election Clerks, above] or early voting clerk for a maximum of two days in a school year. *Education Code 25.087(b-1), (e)*

Military Dependents

A district shall excuse a student whose parent, stepparent, or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from continuous deployment of at least four months outside the locality where the parent, stepparent, or guardian regularly resides, to visit with the student's parent, stepparent, or guardian. A district may not excuse a student under this provision more than five days in a school year. An excused absence under this provision must be taken not earlier than the 60th day before the date of deployment or not later than the 30th day after the date of return from deployment. *Education Code 25.087(b-4)* [See FDD]

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Enlistment in Armed Services	<p>A district shall excuse a student who is 17 years of age or older from attending school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The district may not excuse for this purpose more than four days of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school; and2. The district verifies the student's activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services or the Texas National Guard. <p>A district shall adopt procedures to verify a student's activities as described in these provisions.</p> <p><i>Education Code 25.087(b-5), (b-6)</i></p>
Visit to a Driver's License Office	<p>A district may excuse a student who is 15 years of age or older from attending school to visit a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner license, provided that the district may not excuse more than one day of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school for each of the following purposes: obtaining a driver's license; or obtaining a learner license. The district must verify the student's visit to the driver's license office in accordance with procedures adopted by the district. <i>Education 25.087(b-7)</i></p>
Career Investigation	<p>A district may excuse a student from attending school for a career investigation day to visit a professional at the professional's workplace during the student's junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, provided that the district may not excuse for this purpose more than two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year. The district must adopt a policy to determine when an absence may be excused for this purpose and a procedure to verify the student's visit at the professional's workplace. <i>Education 25.087(b-8)</i></p>
Taps at Military Funeral	<p>In addition, a district may excuse a student in grades 6 through 12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran. <i>Education Code 25.087(c)</i></p>
No Penalty	<p>A student whose absence is excused for a reason described beginning at Excused Absences for Compulsory Attendance Determinations, above, may not be penalized for that absence and shall be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the district.</p>

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Make-Up Work	<p>The student shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up school-work missed on the days described above. If the student satisfactorily completes the work, the days of absence shall be counted as days of compulsory attendance.</p> <p><i>Education Code 25.087(d)</i></p>
Other Excused Absences	<p>A person required to attend school may be excused for temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent of the school in which the person is enrolled.</p> <p><i>Education Code 25.087(a)</i></p>
Notices to Parents	<p>A district shall notify a student's parent in writing at the beginning of the school year that, if the student is absent from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under Education Code 25.093, and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Family Code 65.003(a).</p>
Warning Notice	
Notice of Absences	<p>A district shall notify a student's parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse under Education Code 25.087, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inform the parent that:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. It is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school;b. The student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Education Code 25.0915; and2. Request a conference between school officials and the parent to discuss the absences. <p>The fact that a parent did not receive the notices described above is not a defense for the parent's failure to require a child to attend school nor for the student's failure to attend school.</p> <p><i>Education Code 25.095</i></p>
Non-Attendance	<p>A parent or person standing in parental relation commits an offense if:</p>
Parent Liability	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A warning notice is issued;2. The parent with criminal negligence fails to require the child to attend school as required by law; and3. The child has absences for the amount of time specified under Family Code 65.003(a).

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The attendance officer [see FED] or other appropriate school official shall file a complaint against the parent in an appropriate court, as permitted under Education Code 25.093.

*Affirmative
Defense —
Parent*

It is an affirmative defense to prosecution that one or more of the absences required to be proven was excused by a school official or should be excused by the court. A decision by the court to excuse an absence for this purpose does not affect the ability of a district to determine whether to excuse the absence for another purpose.

Education Code 25.093

Student Liability

A child engages in truant conduct if the child is required to attend school under the compulsory attendance laws, and fails to attend school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. Truant conduct may be prosecuted only as a civil case in a truancy court. *Family Code 65.003(a)-(b)*

“Child” means a person who is 12 years of age or older and younger than 19 years of age. *Family Code 65.002(1)*

Truancy Courts

The following are designated as truancy courts:

1. The constitutional county court in a county with a population of 2.1 million or more;
2. Justice courts; and
3. Municipal courts.

A truancy court has exclusive original jurisdiction over cases involving allegations of truant conduct.

Family Code 65.004(a)-(b)

*Affirmative
Defense —
Student*

It is an affirmative defense to an allegation of truant conduct that one or more of the absences required to be proven:

1. Have been excused by a school official or by the court;
2. Were involuntary; or
3. Were due to the child's voluntary absence from the child's home because of abuse, as defined by Family Code 261.001.

The affirmative defense is not available if, after deducting the absences described above, there remains a sufficient number of absences to constitute truant conduct.

In asserting an affirmative defense, the burden is on the child to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the absence has been or should be excused, was involuntary, or was due to the

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child's voluntary absence from the child's home because of abuse, as defined by Family Code 261.001.

A decision by the court to excuse an absence does not affect the ability of the district to determine whether to excuse the absence for another purpose.

Family Code 65.003(c)-(f)

**Truancy Prevention
Measures**

If a student fails to attend school without excuse on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period but does not fail to attend school for the time described below, the district shall initiate truancy prevention measures on the student. [See FED] *Education Code 25.0915(a-4)*

**District Complaint or
Referral**

If a student fails to attend school without excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, a district shall within 10 school days of the student's 10th absence refer the student to a truancy court for truant conduct under Family Code 65.003(a). [See FED] *Education Code 25.0951(a)*

¹ TEA *Student Attendance Accounting Handbook*: <https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/financial-compliance/student-attendance-accounting-handbook>