

If a student has unexcused absences, Washington State law (RCW 28A.225.020) **REQUIRES** that schools/districts take the following actions:

1st Unexcused Absence:

MUST INFORM the parent/guardian there is an unexcused absence.

Between the 2nd & 7th Unexcused Absence:

MUST apply Attendance Student Assessment and take DATA INFORMED STEPS* to address barriers to attendance

3rd Unexcused Absence:

MUST schedule a conference to identify barriers, provide supports and resources.

Who should be at the conference?

At least one school district employee such as a nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher, or community human services provider; the parent/guardian/supportive adult, and student. **If a student has a 504 or IEP and/ or MKV:** The IEP team that created the program or plan is required.

Not later than the 7th Unexcused Absence:

1. Enter into an **attendance agreement** between the school, parent, & student,
2. Refer to a **Community Engagement Board (CEB)**, OR
3. **File a Truancy Petition**

7th Unexcused Absence:

7th excused absence in a month and not later than 15th Unexcused Absence in a year: **MUST FILE a truancy petition with Juvenile Court.**

Data informed steps should include?

For middle school and high school these steps **MUST include, when appropriate:**

Assessment

DATA INFORMED STEPS include but not limited to: adjusting the child's school program or school or course assignment, providing more individualized or remedial instruction, providing appropriate vocational courses or work experience, referring the child to a community engagement board (CEB), requiring the child to attend an alternative school or program, or assisting the parent or child to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or reduce the unexcused absence.

If the student has an IEP or 504 and/or MKV:

These steps **MUST** include the convening of the student's IEP or 504 or MKV plan team, including a behavior specialist or mental health specialist where appropriate, to consider the reasons for the absences.

If the student doesn't have an IEP or 504 and/or MKV:

BUT it is reasonably believed that the student has a mental or physical disability or impairment, or is eligible for MKV services **these steps must include** informing the child's parent of the right to obtain an appropriate evaluation at no cost to the parent to determine whether the child has a disability or impairment and needs accommodations, related services, or special education services. This includes children with suspected emotional or behavioral disabilities and/or the unhoused.

Education Reengagement & Supports



Questions?

If you have questions or want more information, contact the SPS Attendance Rep: attendance@seattleschools.org 206-252-0827 www.seattleschools.org/attendance

Juvenile Court

BECCA Court Program Coordinator: 206-477-2746

Community Attendance Support Team (CAST)

CAST Coordinator: 206-263-8886

The Becca Bill

(RCW 28A.225- Washington State Compulsory School Attendance and Admission Law)

All children/youth in Washington State have a right to an education. All children/ youth are also legally required to attend school.

Washington's truancy law is often also referred to as the "Becca Bill". It is intended to reengage the student and to stop truancy before it becomes an issue. Schools and families should work together in partnership to ensure school attendance and student safety.

School attendance is **required** by law for all children **ages 8-18** unless the child is:

1. Receiving home-based instruction or enrolled in private school
2. Attending a certified education center devoted to teaching basic academic skills, or
3. Excused by the school superintendent because they are physically or mentally unable to attend school.

The law also applies to children **ages 6 and 7** if enrolled in a public school.

If a child is **16 or older**, s/he may be excused from attending public school if the child:

1. Is lawfully and regularly employed and parent agrees that the child should not be required to attend school,
2. Is emancipated,
3. Has already met graduation requirements, or
4. Has earned a certificate of educational competence or passed the GED.

Did you know?

- Students are at risk academically if they miss 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- High school dropouts are four times as likely to be unemployed as those who have completed four or more years of college
- About 75% of America's State prison inmates, almost 59% of Federal inmates, and 69% of local jail inmates did not complete high school (Harlow, 2003).

Truancy laws exist in order to make sure that the proper accommodations and interventions are in place to address the barriers to regular school attendance.

School districts around the state have different rules and regulations about student attendance and how parents should excuse absences. Be sure to read the attendance policies in your school district and discuss them with your student.

Seattle Public Schools' Approach

In partnership with King County Superior Court, Seattle Public Schools is working with the BECCA Court Program Coordinator in order to take a preemptive and restorative approach to help keep young people engaged in their education while addressing the barriers to attendance in a holistic way.

Seattle Public Schools is committed to eliminating opportunity gaps to ensure access and provide excellence in education for every student, by increasing regular attendance practices.

Resources

Step Up (Building Respectful family Relationships): 206-477-2071 | Children and Family Justice Center 1211 E. Alder St. Seattle, WA 98122

Reconnect to Opportunity- Alternative Educational Options & Employment Jessica Ortiz Garcia | 253-264-8917 | jegarcia@kingcounty.gov

The Bobbe J Bridge Resource Center – Heather Patrick | 206-263-8634 | hpatrick@kingcounty.gov

Parent Support Group – Heather Patrick | Virtual Support Group | 206-263-8634

Friends of Youth- Family Services, Housing, Vocational Support & More 206-859-6290

Drugs/Alcohol: Kent Youth and Family Services, Consejo, CHS, Nexus, SW Youth and Family, Renton Youth and Family, Ryther, Intercept.

Mental Health: Nexus, Valley Cities, Youth East Side Services, Sound Mental Health, Conejos, Asian Counseling Services, Navos, Renton Youth and Family, Therapeutic Health Services, Hopelink.

LGBTQ Supports: Seattle Counseling Services, Northwest Network, Youth Care, PFLAG, GLOBE, Lambert House.

Housing Resources: Treehouse, Cocoon House, Youth Care, HopeLink,

Children's Crisis Outreach Response
206-461-3222

Unleash The Brilliance – Inspire, Connect, Empower, Educate. Terrel Dorsey | 253-441-6276 | www.utbteens.weebly.com

SPS McKinney Vento:
<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/homeless-program/>
206-252-0660

SPS Special Education Support:
<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/special-education/>