

Attendance Policy

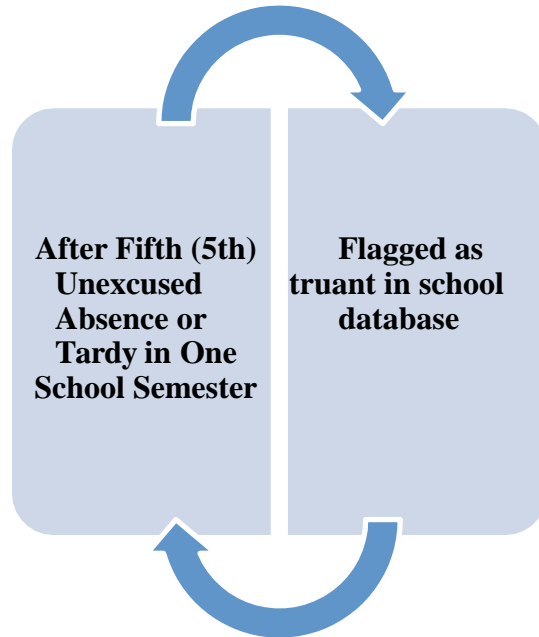


Figure 1

Research demonstrates that consistent and punctual school attendance is critical to academic success. The State of Louisiana recognizes the relationship between student performance and consistent, punctual attendance; consequently, *Title 28 Part CXV. Bulletin 741—Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators* (December 2012) lists the rules adopted and required by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) relating to attendance and truancy in statute.

Following is the New Beginnings Schools Foundation Attendance Policy (in accordance with the aforementioned state attendance rules):

Section and page numbers cited below identify exact location of attendance rules in Bulletin 741

Section 713. Attendance Records (pg. 25)

A. The attendance of all school students *is* checked each school day and at the beginning of each class period and *is* verified by the teacher keeping such records, which *is* open to inspection by the visiting teacher, or supervisor of child welfare and attendance, or duly authorized representative (*NBSF Designee: School Social Worker*), at all reasonable times.

All *four* schools immediately report to the *School Social Worker* any unexplained, unexcused, or illegal absence, or habitual tardiness. (*These reporting procedures are outlined later within this document.*)

B. No public elementary or secondary school student who has not been emancipated by judicial decree or by marriage *is* permitted for any reason to leave school during the school day on his or her own authority.

1. The school principal or the principal's designee makes all reasonable efforts to notify the parent or other person responsible for the student's school attendance of any such prohibited absence by a student. (*Refer to Evidence of Reasonable Effort form and Reasonable Efforts Truancy Log in appendices.*)
2. For the purposes of notification as required by this Paragraph, a parent or other person responsible for a student's school attendance may designate in writing with the school principal one or more alternative contact persons.

Section 1103. Compulsory Attendance (pages 29 -31)

A. Students who have attained the age of seven years shall attend *school* or participate in an approved home study program until they reach the age of 18 years. Any child below the age of seven who legally enrolls in school shall also be subject to compulsory attendance. Refer to Chapter 33 (*Bulletin 741*) for information on home study programs.

B. A parent, tutor, or legal guardian who has a student who is under the age of 18 and meets one of the requirements below shall be in compliance with the compulsory attendance law.

1. A student, under 18 years of age, who withdraws from school prior to graduating from high school and who has been ruled to be a truant, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 15 of Title VII of the Louisiana Children's Code, by a court of competent jurisdiction can be ordered by the court to exercise one of the following options within 120 days of leaving school:

- a. reenroll in school and make continual progress toward completing the requirements for high school graduation;
- b. enroll in a high school equivalency diploma program and make continual progress toward completing the requirements for earning such diploma;
- c. enlist in the Louisiana National Guard or a branch of the United States Armed Forces, with a commitment for at least two years of service, and earn a high school equivalency diploma during such service period.

2. If a student is under the age of 18, the parent or guardian may withdraw the student from high school if that student is seeking admission to a National Guard Youth Challenge Program in this state.

3. For a student who is under the age of 18 and enrolled in school beyond his/her sixteenth birthday, the parent or guardian may request a waiver from the local superintendent (*NBSF Designee: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)*) for that student to exit school to enroll in an adult education program approved by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS).

a. In the case of a student with no parent or guardian, the *CEO* may act on behalf of the student in requesting a waiver if appropriate documentation is on file at the local school board office and one or more of the following hardships exist:

- i. pregnant or actively parenting;
- ii. incarcerated or adjudicated;
- iii. institutionalized or living in a residential facility;
- iv. chronic physical or mental illness;
- v. family and/or economic hardships.

(a). Family and/or economic hardship is defined as a student who acts as a caregiver or must work to support the family due to a parent's death or illness, or needs to be removed from an existing home environment.

b. The *CEO* or her designee may approve the request for exiting public or home school without requesting action from BESE. If the request to exit school to enroll in a LCTCS approved adult education program is denied at the local level, a student may request the waiver from the DOE for approval by BESE with documentation of reason for denial at the local level. Students seeking to exit school to enroll in adult education, who are enrolled in a formal education setting other than a public K-12 institution, may request a waiver from the institutional agency head or his/her designee. Mandatory attendance components shall be met in all of the above circumstances.

4. A student who is at least seventeen years of age may exit high school without violating compulsory attendance statute (R.S. 17:221), if that student has met the following criteria:

- a. completed a program established by BESE;
- b. achieved a passing score on the GED test; and
- c. received a Louisiana High School Equivalency Diploma issued by the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

C. Students *are* expected to be in attendance every student-activity day scheduled by the *New Beginnings Schools Foundation Governing Board*. This includes special programs, pep rallies, plays, special topic events conducted by guest speakers, and other such activities during the school day.

D. A student is considered to be in attendance when he or she is physically present at a school site or is participating in an authorized school activity and is under the supervision of authorized personnel.

1. This definition for attendance would extend to students who are homebound, assigned to and participating in drug rehabilitation programs that contain a state-approved education component, or participating in school-authorized field trips.

a. **Half-Day Attendance.** Students are considered to be in attendance for one-half day when they:

- i. are physically present at a school site or participating in authorized school activity; and
- ii. are under the supervision of authorized personnel for more than 25 percent but not more than half (26-50 percent) of the students' instructional day.

b. **Whole-Day Attendance.** Students are considered to be in attendance for a whole day when they:

- i. are physically present at a school site or are participating in an authorized school activity; and
- ii. are under the supervision of authorized personnel for more than 50 percent (51-100 percent) of the students' instructional day.

E. A student who is enrolled in regular or special education and who, as a result of health care treatment, physical illness, accident, or the treatment thereof, is temporarily unable to attend school, shall be provided instructional services in the home or hospital environment. (Homebound Instruction).

1. Homebound instruction *is* provided by, a properly certified teacher, on the eleventh school day following an absence of more than 10 consecutive school days for a qualifying illness.

a. After a student has been absent for 10 days, for one of the above identified reasons, the student *is* referred for review by the *School Building Level Committee* (SBLC), to determine need for referral for Section 504 services if the student has not previously been identified as a student with a disability.

2. Homebound instruction, at a minimum, *is* provided in the core academic subjects: English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

3. A minimum of four hours of homebound instruction *is* provided per week, unless the student's health as determined by a physician requires less.

a. Consideration *is* given to the individual need for services beyond the core academic subjects for students with disabilities.

4. Homebound services may be provided via a consultative model (properly certified regular or special education teacher when appropriate, consults with the homebound teacher delivering instruction) for students needing such services less than 20 days during a school year.

F. The *school provides* educational and related services to exceptional students in accordance with the IEP for no fewer than 177 days, or the equivalent (63,720 minutes), during the normal 182-day school cycle.

G. Elementary students shall be in attendance a minimum of 167 six hour days or 60,120 minutes a school year. In order to be eligible to receive grades, high school students shall be in attendance a minimum of 30,060 minutes (equivalent to 83.5 six hour school days), per semester or 60,120 minutes (equivalent to 167 six hour school days) a school year for schools not operating on a semester basis.

1. To receive Carnegie credit for a course, the minimum amount of time students must be present shall be as follows:

- a. 10,020 minutes for a six-period schedule;
- b. 8,589 minutes for a seven-period schedule; and
- c. 7,515 minutes for an eight-period or 4x4 block schedule;
- d. for other schedule configurations, students must attend a minimum of 7,515 minutes;
- e. if instructional time for Carnegie credit has been waived, students still must meet the attendance requirement of 60,120 minutes per year.

2. Students in danger of failing due to excessive absences may be allowed to make up missed time in class sessions held outside the regular class time. The make-up sessions must be completed before the end of the current semester and all other policies must be met.

H. Each school has a system whereby the principal of a school, or her/his designee, notifies the parent or legal guardian in writing, via certified mail, upon a student's third unexcused absence or unexcused occurrence of being tardy, and holds a conference with such student's parent or legal guardian. This notification includes information relative to the parent or legal guardian's legal responsibility to enforce the student's attendance at school and the civil penalties that may be incurred if the student is determined to be habitually absent or habitually tardy. The student's parent or legal guardian signs a receipt for such notification. (*Refer to New Beginnings Schools Foundation Parent Notice form letter in appendices.*)

I. Tardy includes but not be limited to leaving or checking out of school unexcused prior to the regularly scheduled dismissal time at the end of the school day but shall not include reporting late to class when transferring from one class to another during the school day.

J. **Exceptions to the attendance regulation** are the enumerated extenuating circumstances below that are verified by the *Network Social Worker* or the school principal/designee where indicated. **These exempted absences do not apply in determining whether a student meets the minimum minutes of instruction required to receive credit:**

1. extended personal physical or emotional illness as verified by a physician or nurse practitioner licensed in the state; (*More the two consecutive days absent.*)
2. extended hospital stay in which a student is absent as verified by a physician or dentist;
3. extended recuperation from an accident in which a student is absent as verified by a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner licensed in the state;
4. extended contagious disease within a family in which a student is absent as verified by a physician or dentist licensed in the state; or
5. observance of special and recognized holidays of the student's own faith; (*Verified by a note from parent or guardian and for no more than five absences per school semester.*)
6. visitation with a parent who is a member of the United States Armed Forces or the National Guard of a state and such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting. Excused absences in this situation shall not exceed five school days per school year;
- 7. absences verified and approved by the school principal or designee as stated below:**
 - a. prior school system-approved travel for education (*documentation of such is evidenced in student's cumulative folder*);
 - b. death in the immediate family (not to exceed one week and evidenced by documentation provided by parent or legal guardian, such as, newspaper obituary, funeral program, and other such documents); or
 - c. natural catastrophe and/or disaster.

K. **For any other extenuating circumstances, the student's parents or legal guardian must make a formal appeal in accordance with the following due process procedures:**

Parent or legal guardian may exercise their right to appeal disciplinary school-based decisions resulting from their child's by unexcused absences as follows:

School-level Appeal: Appeal to the principal to determine if any procedures listed in this policy have not been followed and ensure that no violation of local, state, or federal law has occurred.

Process:

- Parent or legal guardian may request an appeal to be heard no more than five (5) school days after the request is made.
- Principal or designee will notify parent or legal guardian in writing of the date and time of this School-level Appeal, and will meet with the parent or legal guardian at the designated time.
- Decision will be rendered within three (3) days of the appeal meeting (hearing).
- Parent or legal guardian will be notified of decision by mail.
- Parent or legal guardian may request a Network-level Appeal if not satisfied with School-level Appeal outcome.

Network-level Appeal: Appeal to the CEO to determine if appropriate Due Process procedures were followed and to ensure the School-level Appeal was adequately disposed.

Process:

- Parent or legal guardian sends written appeal to:
Michelle Blouin-Williams, CEO
New Beginnings Schools Foundation
2045 Lakeshore Drive
CERM Building, Suite 415
New Orleans, LA 70122
- CEO will review the written accounts and disposition from the School-level Appeal.
- If there is a finding of violation to the Attendance Policy, the CEO may render a decision to either amend or reverse the corrective intervention (disciplinary action).
- If there is no violation finding, the principal's disposition shall stand.
- Due Process is complete - there is no further appeal.

L. Students who are verified as meeting extenuating circumstances, and therefore eligible to receive grades, shall not receive those grades if they are unable to complete makeup work or pass the course.

M. Students participating in school-approved field trips or other instructional activities that necessitate their being away from school shall be considered to be present and shall be given the opportunity to make up work.

N. If a student is absent from school for two or more days within a 30-day period under a contract or employment arrangement to render artistic or creative services for compensation as set forth in the Child Performer Trust Act (R.S. 51:2131 et seq.) the employer shall employ a certified teacher, beginning on the second day of employment, to provide a minimum of three education instruction hours per day to the student pursuant to the lesson plans for the particular student as provided by the principal and teachers at the student's school. There must be a teacher to student ratio of one teacher for every 10 students. Note: Refer to §1117.

Section 1105. Types of Absences (page 31) (*Considered for purposes of truancy and when determining whether or not a student is eligible to make up work and tests, receive credit for work completed, and receive credit for a course and/or school year completed.*)

A. The days absent for elementary and secondary school students include non-exempted, excused; exempted, excused, unexcused absences and suspensions.

B. Non-exempted, excused absences – absences incurred due to personal illness or serious illness in the family:
 ➤ *To excuse such absence, student must have NO more than two consecutive absences and, immediately upon returning to school, must provide documentation by a parent or guardian. It is strongly encouraged that a parent or legal guardian seek professional medical attention for student who is absent for more than two consecutive days due to personal illness.*
 ➤ **Note: Student must have absences excused to be eligible make up work and tests, receive credit for work completed, and receive credit for a course and/or school year completed.**

C. Exempted, Excused Absences—absences that do NOT require parentally provided documentation for excusal and that are NOT considered when determining whether or not a student is eligible to make up work and tests, receive credit for work completed, and receive credit for a course and/or school year completed.

D. Unexcused Absence—any absence *NOT* meeting the requirements set forth in the excused absence and extenuating circumstances definitions (*as noted above*), including but not limited to absences due to any job (including agriculture and domestic services, even in their own homes or for their own parents or tutors) unless it is part of an approved instructional program. Students shall be given failing grades in those days missed and shall *NOT* be given an opportunity to make up work.

E. **Suspension**—a non-exempted absence in which a student is allowed to make up his work and is eligible for consideration for credit (provided it is completed satisfactorily and in a timely manner) and whether or not she/he may or may not be promoted. Student absent from school as a result of any suspension shall be counted as absent (*but student will NOT be flagged as truant in school database*).

Section 1115. Statements of Compliance (page 34)

A. New Beginnings Schools Foundation requires each student in grades 4 through 12 in all four schools to sign a statement of compliance committing to do at least all of the following (*Refer to Student School Attendance Contract form in appendices*):

1. attend school daily, except when absent for reasons due to illness or other excused absence;
2. arrive at school on time each day;
3. demonstrate significant effort toward completing all required homework assignments; and
4. follow school and classroom rules.

B. Each parent or guardian of each student in grades 4 through 12 in any *New Beginnings Schools Foundation* school shall sign a statement of compliance committing to do at least all of the following (*Refer to Parent School Attendance Contract form in appendices*):

1. ensure that his/her child attends school daily except for excused absences;
2. ensure that his/her child arrives at school on time each day;
3. ensure that his/her child completes all required homework assignments; and
4. attend all required parent and teacher or principal conferences.

C. Prior to the signing by any student of the statement of compliance as required in this Section, each homeroom teacher or teacher designated by the principal, on the first day of school each school year provides information to and answer any questions from students in grades 4 through 12 relative to the statement of compliance (*this will also be conducted during the beginning of second semester in school year*).

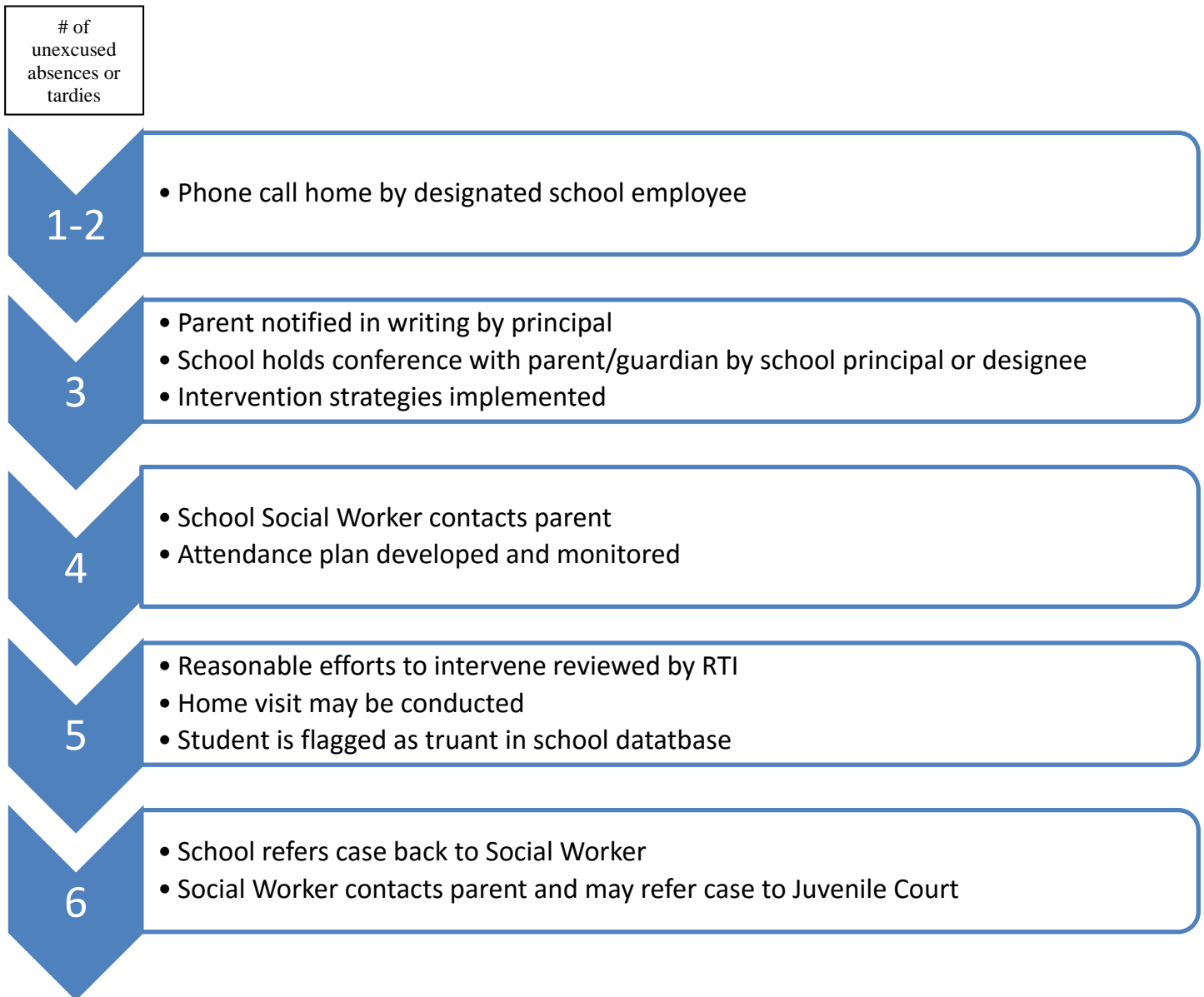
D. *New Beginnings Schools Foundation* has adopted rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Section. Such rules and regulations include the following:

1. For Parent or Guardian – **Figure 2 below** depicts appropriate actions to be taken against parent or guardian who fails to comply with the signed Parent School Attendance Contract, which is the statement of compliance required in this Section.

For Students in Grades Fourth through Twelfth - Appropriate actions that may be taken against students who fail to comply with the signed Student School Attendance Contract, which is the statement of compliance required in this Section include, but are not limited to, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic sports and extracurricular activities, and

2. For Homeroom Teachers – Guidelines provided as it relates to Attendance Policy/Compliance Statements:
 - Network will provide copies of the New Beginnings Schools Foundation Attendance Policy and Appendices to all principals at the beginning of each school year and at the beginning of the second school semester.
 - School-based faculty and staff will review the policy with the principal at the beginning of each school year to clarify roles in its implementation and, again, at the beginning of the second school semester to reinforce and/or modify roles in its implementation.
 - Network will develop, modify, and provide all appropriate and required form letters of student absences, attendance contracts, summons log, and reasonable efforts documentation templates.
 - Attendance Policy will be posted in and available at all four schools and posted on each school's webpage.
 - Attendance Policy will be periodically re-introduced (refreshed) to parents at parent-teacher conferences, un-excused attendance conferences, and attendance intervention phone calls and/or home visits.

New Beginnings Schools Foundation Attendance Rules and Regulations (Intervention Protocol):



New Beginnings Schools Foundation Attendance Rules and Regulations (Intervention Protocol for Consecutive Absences):

of
consecutive
absences

1-2

- Phone call home by designated school employee

3

- Parent notified in writing by School Principal
- School holds conference with parent/guardian by School Principal or designee
- Intervention strategies implemented
- School Social worker notified

4

- School contacts parent
- Attendance plan developed and monitored

5

- Reasonable efforts to intervene reviewed by RTI team
- Home visit may be conducted
- Student is flagged as truant in school database

6

- School refers case back to Social Worker
- Social Worker contacts parent and may refer case to Juvenile Court or FINS

10

- School Principal sends home warning letter of impending drop at 15 consecutive days of absences, per OPSB regulations by certified mail
- School Social Worker follows up with Truancy Officer or FINS

15

- Student is dropped from PowerSchool as a 15 day No Show, per OPSB/EnrollNOLA guidelines

Section 1117. Child Welfare and Attendance (page 34)

A. *NBSF school social worker* gives written notice, either in person or by registered mail, to the parent or guardian of a student within the compulsory school attendance age, when no valid reason is found for a student's non-enrollment or unexcused absences from school, requiring enrollment or attendance within three days from the date of notice.

B. *NBSF school social worker* receives the cooperation of all teachers and principals within the four schools.

C. Each school, upon the request of *the network*, states whether any individual student is enrolled in such school and whether such pupil is fulfilling the compulsory attendance requirements.

D. Any student who is a juvenile and who is habitually absent from school or is habitually tardy will be reported by *NBSF school social worker* to the family or juvenile court of Orleans Parish as a truant child, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 2 of Title VII of the Louisiana Children's Code relative to families in need of services, there to be dealt with in such manner as the court may determine, either by placing the truant in a home or in a public or private institution where school may be provided for the child, or otherwise.

E. A student shall be considered habitually absent or habitually tardy when either condition continues to exist after all reasonable efforts by any school personnel, truancy officer, or other law enforcement personnel have failed to correct the condition after the fifth unexcused absence or fifth unexcused occurrence of being tardy within any school semester. The parent or legal guardian of a student shall enforce the attendance of the student at the school to which the student is assigned. NOTE: Refer to Section 1103.H. above.

The parent or legal guardian of any student in kindergarten through grade eight who is considered habitually absent or habitually tardy pursuant to the provisions of this Section shall be in violation of the provisions of the aforementioned Paragraph and shall be punished as follows:

- A first offense shall be punishable by a fine of not more than fifty dollars or the performance of not less than twenty-five hours of community service.
- Any subsequent offense shall be punishable in accordance with R.S.

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Appendices:

New Beginnings Schools Foundation Appendices



Parent or Legal Guardian Reasonable Efforts Truancy Notice

Date:

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian,

This letter is to inform you that your child _____ has been truant from school for a total of _____ days (unexcused absences) and/or a total of _____ occurrences (unexcused tardiness).

According to the State Truancy Laws (LA RS 17:232) and State of Louisiana Department of Education guidelines, which are operationalized in the school's Attendance Policy, students accumulating five (5) unexcused absences or tardiness in a semester are in violation of this law. Whoever violates this law is subject to penalties provided under R.S. 17:221 that states Parent or Legal Guardian can be fined or imprisoned.

The only types of absences that may be excused are as follows:

- Medical (with official doctor's/hospital's note)
- Death (immediate family with death notice and/or funeral program)
- Legal Summons (summons to court, etc.)
- Extenuating Circumstances (with appropriate documentation)
- Illness - for no more than two consecutive days (with parent or legal guardian note) - when pattern is not evident

Please send these documents with your child as soon as possible so this matter may be resolved. (Please note, even with excused absences, your child is still responsible for any work in class).

Your attendance is required for a mandatory meeting:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

If you have any further questions or comments, you may contact: _____

Respectfully,
New Beginnings Schools Foundation



Parent or Legal Guardian School Attendance Contract

Our school is committed to providing a quality education for all students. We believe that students can only benefit from the education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all students and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. Wherever possible, we will make contact with parents when a student is absent from school without good reason.

As Parent or Legal Guardian I will:

- Ensure that my child(ren) attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the school whenever my child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time my child will be away.
- Help my child prepare for the school day by ensuring that he/she has had a goodnight's rest, homework has been done; and he/she has everything needed for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Meetings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect my child.
- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- To avoid, wherever possible, taking child(ren) out of school for personal matters, such as babysitting, shopping, trips, family holidays during the school session, especially during examination periods and other similar incidents.

I have been thoroughly apprised of The Compulsory School Attendance Law LA RS §17:232 , HB §1133 and §1103 (Bulletin 741, December 2012), which is described in the school's Attendance Policy. I will call/make contact with _____ weekly to verify my child's school attendance, as needed.

I have carefully read and understand the above contract. I agree to make every effort to fulfill my responsibilities as a parent or legal guardian to send my child(ren) to school every day prepared and on time.

Parent or Legal Guardian /Date

Witnessed By:

School Personnel /Date

School Personnel /Date



Student School Attendance Contract

Our school is committed to providing a quality education for all students. We believe that students can only benefit from an education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all students and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. Wherever possible, we will make contact with parents when a student is absent from school without good reason.

As a New Beginnings Charter Schools Network student I will work cooperatively to:

- attend school/class every day; arrive on time and remain in all classes
- whenever I am absent I will on the next day bring in written reason for the absence
- be prepared for school each day by getting a goodnight’s rest, complete my homework; and let my parent know of any materials or assistance I may have need of for the next day
- when problems arise affecting me in school and my attendance I will make contact with the school social worker or counselor for help.

I have carefully read and understand the above assurances and expectations. Also, I have been thoroughly apprised of The Compulsory School Attendance Law LA RS §17:232, HB §1133 and §1103 (Bulletin 741, December 2012), which is described in the school’s Attendance Policy. I agree to make every effort to fulfill my responsibilities as a student and to come to school every day, prepared, and on time.

I will check in with _____ every _____ to verify my school attendance.

Student /Date

Witnessed By:

School Personnel /Date

School Personnel /Date