

Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (PSIS)

On September 7, 2022, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the following definition of student attendance:

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if: 1) present at their assigned school, and/or 2) participating in an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip); and/or, 3) participating in statutorily authorized remote learning as determined through a combination of: synchronous virtual classes, synchronous virtual meetings, activities on time-logged electronic systems, and/or the completion and submission of assignments for at least half of the instructional school day. Students serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion are reported as “absent” except for each day that the student receives alternative education programming for at least half of the instructional school day.

General Guidance for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System

Districts may develop attendance policies (e.g., period-by-period attendance) that differ from this written guidance for their own local reporting purposes. However, for reporting student attendance to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), specifically PSIS (i.e., days of membership, days in attendance), districts **must** adhere to all guidance provided in this appendix of the most recently published *Public School Information System User Reference Guide*.

- In accordance with the State Board of Education’s definition of attendance, any student who is physically attending their assigned school building (i.e., facility 1) for **at least half** of the instructional school day should be reported as “in attendance” for the purpose of reporting membership and attendance days to the CSDE.
 - On early dismissal days and all days shortened due to inclement weather, the instructional school day is calculated as the total amount of instructional time provided to students on that school day. For example, if a school is open for four hours due to a shortened or amended school day schedule, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours to be reported as “in attendance.”
- In accordance with the State Board of Education’s definition of attendance, any student who is **not** physically attending their assigned school building (i.e., facility 1) for **at least half** of the instructional school day is reported as “absent” for the purpose of reporting membership and attendance days to the CSDE.

Guidance for Reporting Student Attendance for Special Scenarios

Disciplinary Absences (out-of-school suspension, expulsion)

1. Students serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion are reported as “absent” except for each day that the student receives an alternative education program for **at least half** of the instructional school day.

Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (PSIS) (cont'd)

Early Dismissal Days

1. On early dismissal days and all days shortened due to inclement weather, the instructional school day is calculated as the total amount of instructional time provided to students on that day.
 - a. For example, if a school is open for four hours due to a shortened or amended school day schedule, a student **must** be present for a minimum of two hours to be reported as “in attendance.”

Extended Family Vacations/Travel

1. Students missing **more than half** of the instructional school day for the purpose of travel or vacation are reported as “absent.”
2. The fact that a parent or guardian has authorized such absence has no impact on the child being reported as “absent.”
3. In addition, students absent from school for extended stays abroad are reported as “absent” even if the child was provided with supplemental work by their home school in an effort to minimize the child’s missed classroom instruction.
4. Districts are strongly discouraged from seeking to use the unenrollment of students to favorably report aggregate school and district-level student attendance measures (e.g., chronic absenteeism rates).
5. Children who are absent from school because of a family vacation should not be unregistered from PSIS. Moreover, only when the child is 17 years old can a parent consent for such child to withdraw from school. For all other school age children under 17, Connecticut General Statute Section 10-184 requires that parents cause their child to attend a public school regularly or show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. For these school age children under 17, all the allowable list of exit codes within PSIS ask the parent to affirm that the child is continuing to receive equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.

Half-Day Kindergarten Programs

1. Students who attend a half-day kindergarten program should be reported as “in attendance” if the student is present for **at least half** of that program’s instructional day.

Homebound Students

1. Students who are homebound due to illness or injury are reported as “absent” **unless** they are receiving instruction and/or tutoring from an appropriately certified teacher for a designated amount of time that the school or district deems adequate, which will ensure that the student is able to successfully return to their home school and regular school classroom.
 - a. If an appropriately certified teacher does not provide the student instruction, the student **must** be marked “absent.”

Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (PSIS) (cont'd)

Medical Absences

1. Students who are absent from school for medical reasons (e.g., routine medical appointments, chronic illness, hospitalization) are reported as “absent” for each day that they are **not** present for **at least half** of the instructional school day and **not** receiving instruction by an appropriately certified teacher.

Online Virtual Learning

1. Students participating in online and/or virtual learning programs approved by the district and in full accordance with subsection (g) of section 10-221a of the Connecticut General Statutes are reported as “in attendance” for each day they are receiving eligible instruction:

(g) Only courses taken in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, shall satisfy the graduation requirements set forth in this section, except that a local or regional board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward meeting a specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine to twelve, inclusive; (2) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of a world language course (A) in grade six, seven or eight, (B) through on-line coursework, or (C) offered privately through a nonprofit provider, provided such student achieves a passing grade on an examination prescribed, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education and such credits do not exceed four; (3) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon achievement of a passing grade on a subject area proficiency examination identified and approved, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education, regardless of the number of hours the student spent in a public school classroom learning such subject matter; (4) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of coursework during the school year or summer months at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited. One three-credit semester course, or its equivalent, at such an institution, shall equal one-half credit for purposes of this section; (5) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of on-line coursework, provided the local or regional board of education has adopted a policy in accordance with this subdivision for the granting of credit for on-line coursework. Such a policy shall ensure, at a minimum, that (A) the workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting, (B) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate, (C) the course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs, (D) the program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (E) the courses are (i) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (ii) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or (6) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of the academic advancement program, pursuant to section 10-5c.

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Outplaced Students

Students attending outplaced facilities (e.g., approved private special education facilities, vocational facilities, etc.) **must** be reported in accordance with all written guidance provided in this appendix.

School-Sponsored Activities

1. Students participating in a school-sponsored activity during the instructional school day should be reported as “in attendance.” Appropriate examples of such school-sponsored activities include, but are **not** limited to the following:
 - a. Cooperative work experience programs
 - b. Community service and/or service-learning programs
 - c. Field trips
 - d. District-sponsored activities

Mental Health Wellness Days

Public Act 21-46, An Act Concerning Social Equity and the Health Safety and Education of Children, Section 19 (a) and (b), defines and allows students to have two Mental Health Wellness (MHW) Days in a school year. District policies should consider the following when tracking MHW absences:

1. Students are limited to two MHW days per school year;
2. MHW days cannot be taken on consecutive school days, (e.g., Friday and Monday, Wednesday and Thursday);
3. MHW absences should always be excused when parent or guardian permission is documented, regardless of the number of absences a student has accrued in the school year (i.e., Level 1 or Level 2) as per the Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences;
4. MHW absences should not be included in reporting or referrals related to truancy;
5. MHW absences will count towards chronic absence calculations as students are missing opportunities to learn; and
6. Districts are encouraged to create codes in their student information systems for tracking and monitoring use of MHW days.

Modified School Day

Students that are only required to attend school for a partial day should be counted as present if they are in attendance for all of their required classes.

Contact

For questions about reporting student attendance in PSIS, please contact Kendra Shakir at (860)713-6896 or kendra.Shakir@ct.gov.

Additional Resources

- [Chronic Absenteeism Resource Page](#)