

Truancy

The passage of Senate Bill 181 has revised the law concerning how school officials deal with truants and imposes some new requirements and creates new rights.

In what ways has the law changed regarding truancy?

Essentially, the law creates two categories of truancy: habitual and chronic truancy. A habitual truant is a child who has been absent without excuse for five consecutive days, seven days in a month, or 12 days in a year without excuse. Habitual truancy is an unruly offense, unless a child has been previously adjudicated a habitual truant; then the offense is a delinquency. A chronic truant is a child who has been absent for seven consecutive days, 10 days in a month or 15 days or more days a year. Chronic truancy is a delinquency offense. The penalties applicable to delinquent offenses are greater than those imposed for unruly offenses.

The law expands the jurisdiction to juvenile courts in dealing with parents of truant students and creates a new option allowing the court to order school districts to place a child in an alternative school if one has been established.