



Senate Bill No. 217

Public Act No. 14-198

AN ACT CONCERNING EXCUSED ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN OF SERVICE MEMBERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 10-198a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2014*):

(a) For purposes of this section, "truant" means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.

(b) Each local and regional board of education shall adopt and implement policies and procedures concerning truants who are enrolled in schools under the jurisdiction of such board of education. Such policies and procedures shall include, but need not be limited to, the following: (1) The holding of a meeting with the parent of each child who is a truant, or other person having control of such child, and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the child being a truant, provided such meeting shall be held not later than ten school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in a month or tenth unexcused absence in a school year, (2) coordinating services with and referrals of children to community agencies

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providing child and family services, (3) annually at the beginning of the school year and upon any enrollment during the school year, notifying the parent or other person having control of each child enrolled in a grade from kindergarten to eight, inclusive, in the public schools in writing of the obligations of the parent or such other person pursuant to section 10-184, (4) annually at the beginning of the school year and upon any enrollment during the school year, obtaining from the parent or other person having control of each child in a grade from kindergarten to eight, inclusive, a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or such other person during the school day, and (5) a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of children in grades kindergarten to eight, inclusive, which shall provide that whenever a child enrolled in school in any such grade fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent or other person having control of the child is aware of the pupil's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone and by mail, the parent or such other person shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel. Such mailed notice shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in a month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give notice pursuant to subdivision (5) of this subsection shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give such notice.

(c) If the parent or other person having control of a child who is a truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section or if such parent or other person

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otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, such policies and procedures shall require the superintendent of schools to file, not later than fifteen calendar days after such failure to attend such meeting or such failure to cooperate with the school attempting to solve the truancy problem, for each such truant enrolled in the schools under his jurisdiction a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs.

(d) Nothing in subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of this section shall preclude a local or regional board of education from adopting policies and procedures pursuant to this section which exceed the requirements of said subsections.

(e) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any child receiving equivalent instruction pursuant to section 10-184.

(f) A child, age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten days of excused absences in any school year and, at the discretion of the local or regional board of education, additional excused absences to visit such child's parent or legal guardian with respect to such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of excused absences pursuant to this subsection, such child and parent or legal guardian shall be responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by such child prior to his or her return to school from such period of excused absence.

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Approved June 12, 2014