

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

Fact Sheet



A major issue regarding education is how to enroll in schools, and the rules of attendance once a child is enrolled. The following are answers to the most commonly asked questions regarding enrollment and attendance.

Do all Kentucky children have to enroll in a public school?

Any parent, guardian, or other person with custody of a child between ages six and sixteen must enroll the child in a regular public day school in the district where the child lives. Any child that will be five years old by October 1 may enter a primary program. School districts must enroll any resident who is under twenty-one years old who wishes to enroll if they do not have a high school diploma.

Are there exceptions that allow a child not to go to school?

A child between six and sixteen years old does not have to go to a regular public day school if he or she has already graduated from high school, is enrolled in a private or home school, has physical or mental conditions that prevents them from going to school, or is enrolled in state-supported school for exceptional children.

How does a student enroll in school?

When enrolling for the first time in elementary or secondary school, a student has 30 days to provide:

- A certified copy of his or her birth certificate; or
- Other reliable proof of the student's identity and age, and an affidavit stating that a copy of the birth certificate cannot be provided.

However, possible exceptions exist for homeless youth or youth with immigrant status.

Do students need to have an immunization record to enroll?

A school must have the student's current immunization certificate within two weeks after the student begins attending school. However, there are exceptions for homeless or immigrant youth.

What if a student cannot be immunized due to health or religious reasons?

If a physician feels an immunization would be harmful to the student's health, and can provide a written opinion stating that it would be, the student does not have to be immunized. If immunization is against the student's religious beliefs, a parent must object to immunization in a sworn statement. However, if there is an epidemic, the state may require all persons to receive an immunization due to the emergency situation.

Do students have to give a school their social security number (SSN)?

No. A school cannot prevent a student from enrolling because he/she did not give them an SSN.

Can a student quit school?

Students between 16 and 18 years old and unmarried can terminate education if there is a conference between the student, the principal, and the parent or guardian. The student must also attend a one-hour counseling session. The school should contact the student to encourage reenrolling, attending an alternative program, or pursuing their GED. Students are not required to get anyone's permission to stop going to school after the age of 18.

What is truancy?

If a student under age 18 misses school or is tardy without a valid excuse for three or more days, he/she is considered "truant." Any student reported as truant two or more times is a habitual truant. The local board of education may adopt reasonable policies that require students to make up missed school days, and discipline a student for missing school. Habitually truant students may have to go before juvenile

court, but not before the school has assessed the student. When investigating a student's habitual truancy, the school director or assistant of student personnel must contact the student's parent or guardian and try to address causes of the truancy. The director must inform the school of any home conditions, and inform the student's parent/guardian about the advantages of regular school attendance.

Do truancy laws apply to students who are 18 or have withdrawn from school?

If a student between ages 16 and 18 has gone through the process to withdraw from school, the truancy laws do not apply. If a student is 18 and still enrolled in school, truancy laws apply.

Will a parent or guardian get in trouble if a student does not go to school?

Any parent, guardian, or custodian who intentionally fails to make sure a child goes to school may be fined \$100 for the first offense, and \$250 for the second offense. Each subsequent offense is classified as a misdemeanor.

What are "homebound" students?

Homebound students are those with a mental/physical condition that prevents them from attending school. To be classified as a homebound student, a child must have:

- A signed statement from a physician, nurse practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist, chiropractor, or public health officer that says the condition of the student prevents or renders inadvisable attendance at school. Any student who is excused from school attendance more than six months must have two signed statements from a physician, nurse practitioner, psychologist, psychiatrist, chiropractor, and health officer; or
- An individual education plan specifying that placement of the student with a disability at home or in a hospital is the least restrictive environment for providing services.

A homebound student's status must be reviewed annually with updated evidence. An exception exists for a child with a chronic physical condition unlikely to substantially improve within three years. Homebound students must be provided instruction standards, rules, and regulations of the Kentucky Board of Education.

What does it mean to be "home-schooled"?

Home schools are considered non-public schools; the laws relating to non-public schools also apply to home schools. The parent in charge of a student who is home schooled must report the name, age, and residence of the student to the superintendent of schools of the district where the home is situated within two weeks of the beginning of each school year. Parents must teach subjects that will educate children to be intelligent citizens, including reading, writing, spelling, grammar, history, mathematics, and civics. Parents must record and maintain scholarship reports of each student's progress, keep accurate attendance reports, provide instruction for terms that are as long as the public schools' terms where the child resides, and be open to inspection. The parent should be knowledgeable about the transfer process between home and public schools. The public school will assign any incoming student to the grade for which he or she is best suited. For more information on home schooling, visit the Kentucky Department of Education website at:

- <http://education.ky.gov/KDE/About+Schools+and+Districts/Home+Schooling+in+Kentucky/>

Resources:

- KY. REV. STAT. ANN. § 159.010; § 159.030 (termination prior to graduation); § 158.032 (birth certificate); § 214.034, §214.035 (immunization); § 214.036 (waiver of immunization); § 159.150 (truancy); § 159.990 (truancy); § 630.020 (truancy); § 159.030 (homebound students); § 159.160 (home schooling); § 158.080 (home schooling); § 156.160 (home schooling)
- 702 KY. ADMIN. REGS. 7:125; 7:090 (Kentucky Homeless Children Education Program)
- 5 U.S.C. § 552 (Social Security Privacy Act)
- 42 U.S.C. § 11431 et. seq. (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act)

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