

**Ravenswood City School District**

# **Attendance Counts Today!**

**Parent Handbook  
Student Service Department**

**2016-17**

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# A Message From The Superintendent

To "attend" means to "be present", or to "take care of." Both definitions can serve as descriptors of what is required for a student to be successful. When students attend class they are in an environment, and participating in processes, that will allow them to gain the critical skills they will require throughout their life. When they are in class and attending to their studies, they are ensuring the highest level of success their own talents will allow. Without these two elements, being present and trying hard, they are diminished by what they could have learned, or what they could have achieved.

The State of California invests in the future of our children. This investment is worthwhile to our society, and we all benefit when the product of this investment results in citizens who can communicate, can create, can be productive workers, can learn and adapt to change, are good neighbors, and have the tools that will allow them to analyze issues and information in order to make thoughtful decisions.

Many studies have shown that a student's attendance is the greatest predictor of a student's success. To maximize the investment in our children's education, we all have an obligation to ensure that their attendance, the most important indicator of their academic success, is as regular as possible. So please, work with us to keep your child in school, involved, and proud of his or her accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gloria M. Hernandez-Goff  
Superintendent  
Ravenswood City School District

# What is the A.C.T. Project??

**GET AN EDUCATION**



**STAY IN SCHOOL**

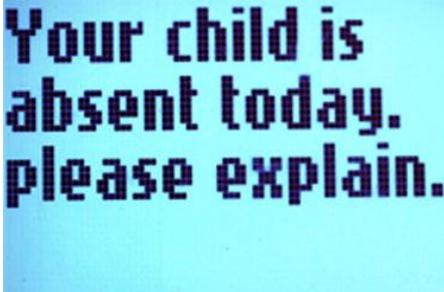
- ☺ A.C.T. stands for "Attendance Counts Today" and means striking a blow against truancy.
- ☺ A.C.T. means that we are serious about truancy and want to help keep kids in school.
- ☺ A.C.T. means making everyone aware that when kids are truant it affects us all.
- ☺ A.C.T. means everyone working together to make sure all of our kids get the education they deserve and need in order to succeed.
- ☺ A.C.T. means we care about truancy because we care about kids.

# What Are A.C.T.'s Goals?



- Improving school attendance for previously truant students.
- Discouraging future truancy
- Helping to make education a top priority for students.
- Looking at the truant student in totality to best assess his needs.
- Using a progressive discipline approach for truants and / or families.
- Working with families to determine the causes of truancy.
- Reducing the negative impacts caused by truancy and juvenile delinquency.

# Why Have A Manual About Truancy???



Your child is  
absent today.  
please explain.

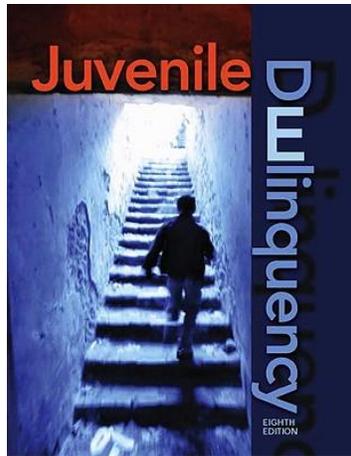
- \* Kids need a good education and they can't get it if they're not in school.
- \* A manual points out why it's important for kids to go to school.
- \* A manual spells out exactly what is expected of students and what will happen if they don't go to school.
- \* A manual brings together different agencies in a uniform policy and lets everyone know who's responsible for what.

# Why Talk About Truancy???



- Truancy is a big problem in Ravenswood City School District that affects all of us.
- Truancy is expensive and we all end up paying for it sooner or later.
- There is a direct link between truancy and juvenile delinquency.
- Kids who are truant are at greater risk for getting involved with alcohol, drugs, gangs, and violence.
- Parents need to understand why it's important for their kids to get to school and stay there.
- Kids need to understand that education should be their top priority.
- Everyone needs to understand the consequences of truancy.

# What's The Link Between Truancy And Delinquency?



- ☹ Students who drop out of school are more likely to end up in prison.
- ☹ 78% of prison inmates had truancy as the first entry on their arrest records.
- ☹ The most likely juvenile recidivists were those whose first referrals were truancy, burglary, motor vehicle theft or robbery.
- ☹ Truants are found to be at greater risk for becoming involved with gangs, drugs, alcohol or violence. 67% of truants tested positive for drugs at the time they were detained.
- ☹ 57% of violent crimes committed by juveniles occur on school days.
- ☹ 82% of prisoners today are school dropouts.

# Just The Facts, Ma'am....



- Truancy in 2014-15 had a total cost of \$1,379,640
- Truancy in 2015-16 had a total cost to Ravenswood City School District of \$1,243,400

## 2015-2016 Data

<u>School Name</u>	<u>Truancy Cost</u>
Belle Haven	\$236,160.00
Brentwood	\$206,680.00
César Chávez/ Green Oaks	\$146,000.00
Costaño	\$193,960.00
Los Robles	\$120,480.00
McNair	\$ 80,280.00
Willow Oaks	\$ 259,840.00

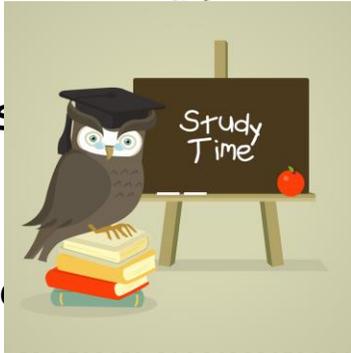
# What Agencies Work To Stop Truancy?



Truancy is a problem that affects the whole community, and many agencies are responsible for helping to reduce it. They are:

- 👁️ San Mateo County District Attorney's Office
- 👁️ San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Office.
- 👁️ Ravenswood School District Board of Trustees
- 👁️ San Mateo County Probation Department.
- 👁️ Ravenswood City School District
- 👁️ San Mateo County Social Services
- 👁️ Cities of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park

# Why Does My Child Need To Go To School?



- To get the best education, a child needs a good education.
- If your child misses school, he or she will fall behind the other students.
- If your child is not in school, he can't get the grades needed to progress and graduate.
- Often employers won't hire employees with spotty school attendance records - It sometimes means they'll miss work, too.
- Young people who miss school are often victims or perpetrators of crime.
- If your child doesn't go to school you and/or the child can be prosecuted.

# What's The Truancy Law?



Section 48260 of the Education Code states:

"Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse more than 3 full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any 30 minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on 3 occasions in 1 school year, or any combination thereof, is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district."

This means your child must be in school and ready to work unless there is a valid reason and an excused absence. If your child is declared a truant, then either you or the child can be prosecuted. You could go to jail or pay a fine, or both. It is your responsibility to make sure your child goes to school and stays in school!



# What Happens To The Truant Child?



1. If at any point a concern arises regarding your child's attendance, a referral may be made to the Ravenswood City School District's Truancy Office for further investigation. Upon completion of the investigation a prevention plan will be implemented to address further truanancies.
2. After 3 days unexcused absences or 8 days excused absences an *Initial Notification of Truancy* is sent to the parent and followed up with a phone call. This letter begins the SARB process for the truant student.
3. The parent or guardian and student meet with the school personnel to discuss attendance and to work out a plan to decrease truancy. An attendance contract is signed between the student, the parent and the school to identify the steps to improve attendance.
4. If truancy persists or if excused absences continues, a *Second Notification of Truancy or Excessive Absences* is sent to the parent/guardian after 5 days of unexcused absence or 10 days of excused absences. At this time an appointment with the School Administration will be held to discuss the importance of attendance and how the school can assist in solving the attendance problem.
5. If attendance problems continue still and there are 7 days of unexcused absence or 15 days of excused absence, a *Third Notification of Truancy or Excessive Absences* is sent to the parent or guardian and a Pre-SARB or SARB meeting is scheduled to assist the student and family in resolving attendance issues. A more specific and binding attendance contract is written at this meeting that is intended to support the student and improve attendance.
6. The student will appear before the School Attendance Review Board if all of these measures do not cause the student to improve his or her attendance in school. The SARB panel has the authority to move the student to another school, to recommend a flexible schedule or accommodations or to even transfer the student to the County Office Of Education's Community School.
7. Finally, if necessary, a referral may be made to the District Attorney's office for prosecution of either the parent, the child or both.

# The Case Goes To The District Attorney and ????????



- 📁 The District Attorney's office is the last stop for the truant.
- 📁 Before a case is referred to the District Attorney's office, it has already gone through many stages - each was a chance for the truant to turn his life around and start attending school.
- 📁 The truant and his parents have already received a letter from the District Attorney stating that if the child didn't attend school, the child and/or the parent could be prosecuted.
- 📁 When the District Attorney receives the case from the District S.A.R.B it will review the case and decide whether or not to prosecute.

# What Are The Penalties?



If the District Attorney chooses to file against the minor, the penalties are:

- 20 - 40 hours of community service, a maximum fine of \$100 (plus the penalty assessment imposed by the court)
- Driving privileges suspended or revoked
- Required attendance at a court-approved truancy prevention program.

Additionally, the student is put on probation.

The District Attorney can choose to file against the parents under the Education Code 48293, with the fines being from \$100 - \$500.

The District Attorney also has the option to file a P.C. 272, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, which is a misdemeanor that brings a \$2,500 fine and/or 1-year in county jail and up to five years probation.

# How Can I Help My Child?



-  Make sure your child goes to school regularly.
-  Take an interest in your child's schoolwork.
-  If your child starts to miss school, speak to the school and let your child know he/she must attend.
-  If your child is ill, contact the school and explain the reason for the absence.
-  Do not expect the school to agree to frivolous outings, such as shopping trips.
-  Don't expect your older children to stay home and act as babysitters for younger children.

# Why Should I Stay In School?



- ☺ If you stay in school and get your diploma, you'll double your chances of getting a good paying job.
- ☺ If you stay in school, you're less likely to get involved with gangs and drugs.
- ☺ If you stay in school, you're less likely to be a victim of crime.
- ☺ If you stay in school, you won't run the risk of being prosecuted by the District Attorney's Office for truancy.
- ☺ If you stay in school, you're less likely to get caught up in the Juvenile Justice System.
- ☺ If you stay in school, you can write your own ticket to go anywhere, to do anything, to be anyone.

Ravenswood City  
School District  
Student Service  
Department



For Further Information  
650-329-2800 ext. 60168