



# *Supervisor of Attendance*



# *Manual*

**Developed By:  
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(revised 6/19/17)**

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## Introduction

The Supervisor of Attendance or Truant Officer is a state-mandated school-based law enforcement position. The Supervisor of Attendance enforces federal, state and local attendance laws within the municipality of employment. Currently, Plymouth Public Schools employs one Supervisor of Attendance Officer. His office is currently located at Plymouth South Middle School.

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Duties of the position are district-wide (all schools) and generally service families of children of compulsory school age (between six and sixteen). The primary focus of service is mainly for children who are at risk due to poor school attendance. However, attendance is usually a symptom of a much greater problem and thus accompanying issues such as poor school conduct, chronic tardiness, parental neglect, parental abuse, substance abuse and/or other issues that prevent the child from taking full advantage of school opportunities are examined as well.

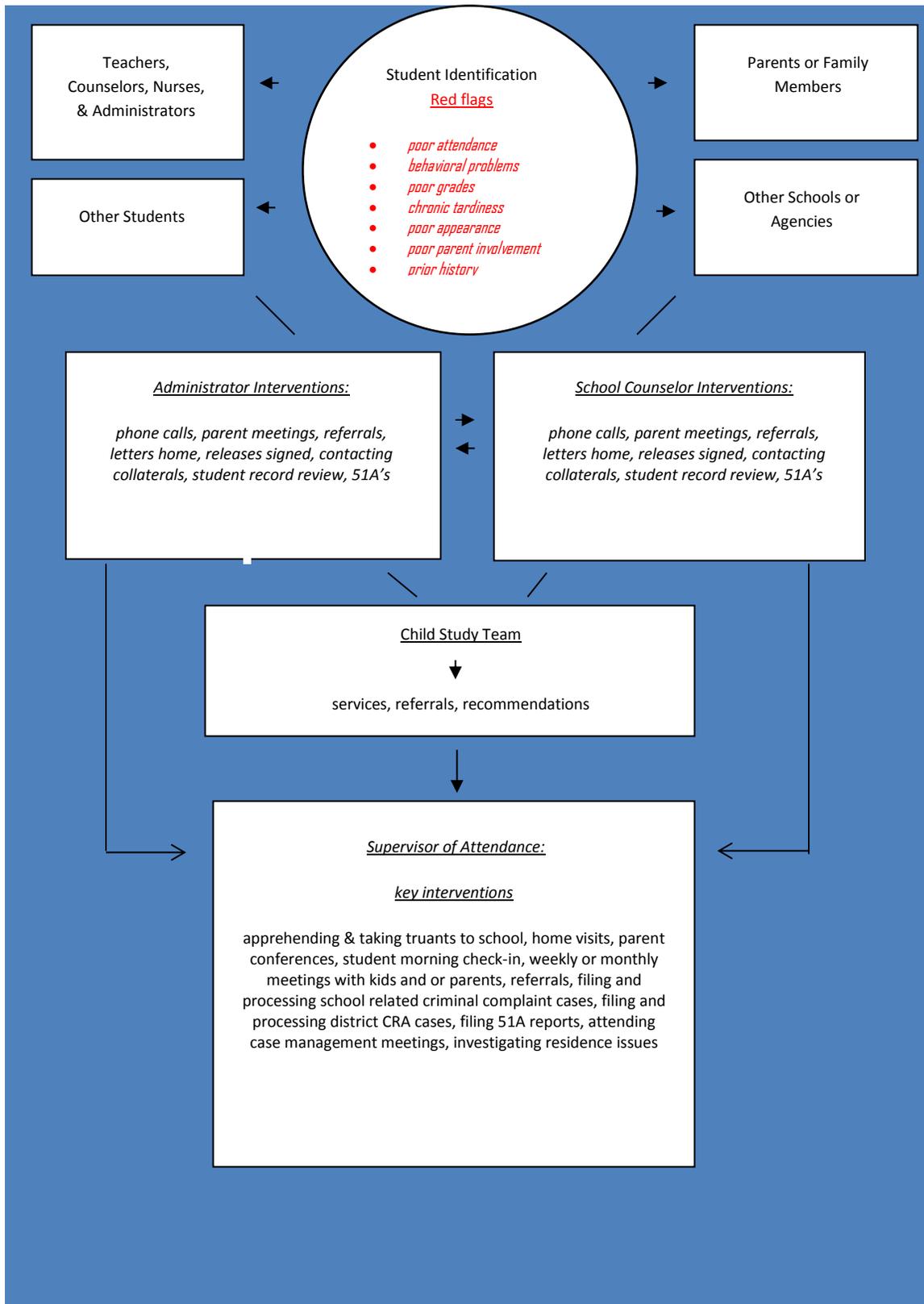
Services involve both direct and indirect forms as well as preventative and reactive types of engagement. Two examples of direct forms of service would be *home visits and parent conferences*. Two examples of indirect services would be *filing and processing a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) petition with the Juvenile Court or filing criminal complaints against parents who fail to send their children to school*.

The Plymouth Public Schools Attendance Officer maintains a yearly log of referrals, cases, and services provided throughout the academic school year. Interventions and student impacts are assessed at the end of each academic year as well.

Cases for service are generated in many ways. Informal requests for services are often made by parents, family members, social workers, police, therapists, court personnel, as well as others outside the school system. Formal referrals are the most common and are made by school counselors and administrators and usually include a formal referral process.

The following page represents a service diagram that illustrates the flow of referrals and services.

# Service Diagram



## Referral Process for School Personnel

If you would like to refer a child for services from the Supervisor of Attendance, please adhere to the following process:

The *Referral and Residence Verification Request Form* can be accessed at <http://www.plymouth.k12.ma.us/page.cfm?p=2501> and must be completed and submitted to the Supervisor of Attendance.

**Referral Form:** Referrals are for “at-risk children” with ongoing school issues, despite school related interventions. Completion of the referral process is required for Supervisor of Attendance services and, if necessary, for court intervention via the district’s Supervisor of Attendance.

**Residence Verification Requests:** Please ensure that the student and parents have been questioned, prior to submitting, unless there is a reason to do otherwise.

**Please Note:** The CRA (prior CHINS) statute no longer requires that the Petitioner be a certified Supervisor of Attendance. However, it does require that the school make attempts to resolve the problem prior to filing (see CRA application). If you would like to continue to use the Supervisor of Attendance for services as the petitioner on a court case, the above formal process must be followed.

Included in the *Links* section of this manual are the two required Juvenile Court CRA forms.

Below is a brief description of the CRA and the process. Please contact the Supervisor of Attendance directly at (508)-380-1585 if you have any questions or need help with the forms

## CRA: Child Requiring Assistance

The CRA statute replaced the old CHINS statute (Child in Need of Services) in 2012. Basically, this is a non-criminal court action filed on behalf of a child that utilizes the courts services and powers to protect children and / or prevent later delinquency. The process is very involved with many steps and may require the hiring of parent and child attorneys and many hearings in front of a judge. Although rare, the process of the CRA as with the prior CHINS can ultimately lead in a custody change order (child placed outside of the home).

There are four types of Petitions:

- 1) *Stubborn* (filed by parents, legal guardians or custodians)
- 2) *Runaway* (filed by parents, legal guardians or custodians)
- 3) *Truant* (over 8 absences in a quarter)
- 4) *Habitual School Offender* (legally undefined). Formal documentation (evidence) of frequent incidents is necessary.

**Please Note:** When considering filing a CRA, discretion should be used regarding time frames necessary for a practical intervention within that school year. Filing very late in the school year is discouraged and is usually deferred to the next school year.

### **CRA Statute Change:**

The new C.R.A. statute (prior C.H.I.N.S statute) no longer requires that the petitioner be a certified Supervisor of Attendance. All school personnel can now file a school based petition on behalf of a student (Truancy or Habitual School Offender). The petitioner (person who files the paperwork) must be familiar with the student and the situation and be prepared to answer questions from the judge, attorneys and other court personnel. They must also be consistent and present themselves for all court hearings and court meetings on the case or they risk dismissal of the case. Plymouth Public Schools Supervisor of Attendance will continue to petition the courts (as a last resort) on cases that are on the Supervisors caseload. The Supervisor of Attendance will not represent another petitioner or petition on an unfamiliar case, nor will he petition on cases that he deems inappropriate or premature (due to lack of school based interventions).

For those who prefer to petition directly, the Supervisor of Attendance is available for consultation on any Plymouth Public Schools case.

Included in this manual are the required two CRA forms. Please take note of the requirement, that the school make attempts to resolve the problem prior to filing (see CRA application).

## List of Services/Interventions

The Supervisor of Attendance provides a wide range of services/interventions. Many interventions are preventative and are intended to avoid the need for involvement by state agencies. The following is a list of services provided:

- Apprehend and take to school students (between the ages of 6-16) who are in public places during school hours
- File and process CRA petitions (Child Requiring Assistance petitions with the Plymouth Juvenile Court)
- Attend parent conferences
- Conduct unannounced home visits
- Conduct morning check-in for students with attendance issues
- File “Duties of Parent” charges (case against parents or guardians) who fail to send their children to school for more than 7 days in a 6 month period
- File “Inducing Absences charges” (two hundred dollar fine) against anyone who keeps a minor from attending school
- Issue warning letters
- Attend monthly group meetings with students
- Attend weekly meetings with students at school
- Make referrals for services
- File 51A’s (reports of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families)
- Work with school nurses (student morning check in with nurse)
- Attend school-based Child Study Team meetings when requested
- Attend monthly case management meetings
- Verify residency
- Resolve school transfer issues
- Resolve school enrollment issues

## Supervisor of Attendance Warning Letter

John Amaral, Supervisor of Attendance  
Plymouth Public Schools  
488 Long Pond Road  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
508-224-2725

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

It has come to my attention that your child, \_\_\_\_\_ continues to be excessively absent from the \_\_\_\_\_ School despite school related interventions.

I call your attention to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 2:

Every person in control of a child shall cause him to attend school on a daily basis and, if he should fail to do so...he shall, on complaint by the Supervisor of Attendance, be punished by a fine...

In addition to the fine, the following interventions may also be implemented to resolve attendance issues:

- \* C.R.A (Child Requiring Assistance) petition with the Plymouth Juvenile Court
- \* 51A, report to the Department of Children and Families for educational neglect.
- \* Inducing Absences charges (\$200.00 fine)

**If attendance does not improve immediately these interventions may be utilized.**

Due to the abnormal frequency of absences, medical verification is requested. Please send copies of doctor's notes to me at the address above or to the school. In addition, all future absences must be medically documented/verified.

Excessive absenteeism deprives children of an opportunity for social growth, as well as academic progress and achievement. It is my hope that you will do everything necessary in the future to ensure that your child attends daily. Any further absences should only occur for reasons of personal illness or injury.

If you have any questions or if I may be of assistance, please contact me at the location above. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

John Amaral

CC: \_\_\_\_\_, Principal

Parent acknowledgment of letter /signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

John Amaral  
Supervisor of Attendance  
Plymouth Public Schools  
488 Long Pond Road  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
(508) 224-2725



## Supervisor of Attendance Referral Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name /School: \_\_\_\_\_

### School Issues:

- School Offender
- Truancy
- Tardiness
- Class Cutting
- Poor Grades
- Court History
- DCF History
- DYS History
- Mental Health History
- Substance Use /Abuse
- Chronic Medical History
- Trauma History
- Violence History
- Other

### Background Information:

### Current Services:

- Medication
- Counseling
- CAP
- 504
- IEP
- Ed Advocate
- FBA
- Other

Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Conference? If Yes, Date: \_\_\_\_\_

No

Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

John Amaral  
Supervisor of Attendance  
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(508) 224-2725



## Residence Verification Request

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Requested by: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's listed address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Suspected address if known: \_\_\_\_\_  
Questioning of student or parent? \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do not write below this line**

Date received:

- 1) *Phone book:*
- 2) *Computer search:*
- 3) *Census information:*
- 4) *Voter registration information:*
- 5) *Assessor's Office information:*
- 6) *Police records:*
- 7) *Court records:*
- 8) *RMV records:*
- 9) *Post Office records:*
- 10) *DCF info:*
- 11) *Landlord:*
- 12) *DTA:*
- 13) *Housing Authority:*

**Dictation:**

**Home visits**

***Address      Date:      Time:      Contact:      Auto/plate #***

**Conclusion:**

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Department of Children and Families*

**51A Report**

Report of child(ren) alleged to be suffering from serious physical or emotional injury by abuse or neglect

Massachusetts law requires an individual who is a mandated reporter to immediately report any allegations of serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services by oral communication. This written report must then be completed within 48 hours of making the oral report and should be sent to the appropriate Department office.

Please complete all sections of this form. If some Data is unknown, please signify. If some data is uncertain, place a question mark after the entry.

Data on Children Reported

Name	Current location / Address	Sex	Age or Date of Birth
		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	

Data on Male Guardian or Parent

**Name:**

First last middle

**Address:**

Street & number City/Town State Zip Code

**Telephone Number:**

**Age:**

Data on Female Guardian or Parent

**Name:**

First last middle

**Address:**

Street & number City/Town State Zip Code

**Telephone Number:**

**Age:**

Data on Reporter/Report

**Report Date:**

Mandatory  Voluntary Report

**Reporter's Name**

First last

*(If the reporter represents an institution, school, or facility, please indicate)*

**Reporter's Address:**

Street & number City/Town State Zip Code

**Telephone Number:**

Has reporter informed caretaker of report?  Yes  No

**What is the nature and extent of injury, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect, including prior evidence of the same? (Please cite the source of this information if not observed firsthand.)**

**What are the circumstances under which the reporter became aware of the injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect?**

**What action has been taken thus far to treat, shelter, or otherwise assist the child(ren) to deal with the situation?**

**Please give other information that you think might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury and/or the person(s) responsible for it. If known, please provide the name(s) of the alleged perpetrator(s)?**

## Links to Forms & Resources

The following links are functional if you have a secure internet connection:

[CRA Statute](#)

[CRA Application](#)

[51A Form](#)

[Caregiver Authorization Instructions](#)

[Caregiver Authorization Form](#)

## Significant Laws

### **CHAPTER 76      SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

#### **Section 2          Duties of parents; penalty**

Section 2. Every person in control of a child described in section one shall cause him to attend school as therein required, and, if he fails so to do for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any period of six months, he shall, on complaint by a supervisor of attendance, be punished by a fine of not more than twenty dollars. No physical or mental condition capable of correction, or rendering the child a fit subject for special instruction at public charge in institutions other than public day schools, shall avail as a defense unless it appears that the defendant has employed all reasonable measures for the correction of the condition and the suitable instruction of the child. The Boston juvenile court shall have jurisdiction within the territorial limits described in section fifty-seven of chapter two hundred and eighteen of complaints hereunder. The Worcester juvenile court shall have jurisdiction, concurrent with the central district court of Worcester, of complaints hereunder. The Springfield juvenile court shall have jurisdiction, concurrent with the district court of Springfield, of complaints hereunder. The Bristol county juvenile court shall have jurisdiction, concurrent with all of the district courts of Bristol County, of complaints hereunder, and the presiding judge of said court shall establish hearing dates on a circuit basis to be held in such respective courts. Complaints hereunder brought in other district courts shall be heard in the juvenile sessions thereof.

### **CHAPTER 76      SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

#### **Section 41        Inducing absences; penalty**

Section 41. Whoever induces or attempts to induce a minor to absent himself unlawfully from school, or unlawfully employs him or harbors a minor who, while school is in session, is absent unlawfully therefrom, and shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars.

### **CHAPTER 76      SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

#### **Section 20        Powers and duties of supervisors of attendance**

Section 20. Supervisors of attendance shall inquire into all cases arising under sections two and eight of chapter seventy-two, sections one, two, four to eleven, inclusive, and fifteen of chapter seventy-six, and sections ninety, ninety-two, ninety-three, and ninety-five of chapter one hundred and forty-nine, and may apply for petitions under the provisions of section thirty-nine E of chapter one hundred and nineteen. They shall, if the court so orders, have oversight of children placed on probation; of minors licensed by the school committee under section nineteen of chapter one hundred and one; and of children admitted to or attending shows or

entertainments in violation of section one hundred and ninety-seven of chapter one hundred and forty. They may apprehend and take to school without a warrant any truant or absentee found wandering in the streets or public places.

## **CHAPTER 76      SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

### **Section 19      Supervisors of attendance; employment**

Section 19. Every school committee shall appoint, make regulations governing and fix the compensation of one or more supervisors of attendance, who may be either male or female, and who shall meet such standards of qualifications for such work as shall be established by the department of education; provided, that such supervisors shall have attained the age of twenty-one years. The committees of two or more towns may employ the same supervisors of attendance.

## **CHAPTER 76      SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

### **Section 5      Place of attendance; violations; discrimination**

*[Text of section effective until July 1, 2012. For text effective July 1, 2012, see below.]*

Section 5. Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No school committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the town unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the school committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be required to remit full restitution to the town of the improperly-attended public schools. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

## **CHAPTER 72      SCHOOL REGISTERS AND RETURNS**

### **Section 2      Registration of children; reports**

Section 2. The school committee of each town shall ascertain and record the names, ages and such other information as may be required by the department of education, of all minors residing therein between five and sixteen, and of all minors over sixteen who do not meet the requirements for the completion of the sixth grade of the public schools of the town where he resides. The school committee of each town shall also ascertain the number of pupils, regardless of age, whose parents or guardians are residents of the town and who are enrolled for full-time attendance, in kindergarten and grades up to and including grade twelve, in public and vocational schools and classes in the commonwealth and nonpublic schools anywhere. Whoever, in control of any such minor, withholds information sought by a school committee or its agents under this section or makes a false statement relative thereto shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars.

Supervisors of attendance, under the direction of the committee and superintendent of schools, shall have charge of the records required by this section, shall be responsible for their completeness and accuracy, and shall receive the co-operation of principals, teachers and supervisory officers in the discharge of their duties hereunder. A card, as prescribed by the department, shall be kept for every child whose name is recorded hereunder. Supervisors of attendance shall compare the names of children enrolled in the public and private schools with the names of those recorded as required herein, and examine carefully into all cases where children of school age are not enrolled in, and attending school, as required by section one of chapter seventy-six.

The annual school committee report shall set forth the number of children recorded as herein required, classified by ages, together with the number attending public or private schools, and the number not attending school, in any given year.

The supervisory officers of all private schools shall, within thirty days after the enrollment or registration of any child of compulsory school age, report his name, age and residence to the superintendent of schools of the town where the child resides; and whenever a child withdraws from a private school, such officers shall, within ten days, notify said superintendent.

## **CHAPTER 76      SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

### **Section 6              Payment of tuition for non-resident children**

Section 6. If a child resides temporarily in a town other than the legal residence of his parent or guardian for the special purpose of their attending school, the child may attend school with the authorization of the school committee of said town, and the said town may recover tuition from the parent or guardian, unless under section twelve of chapter seventy-six, such tuition is payable by a town. Tuition payable by the parent or guardian shall, for the period of attendance, be computed at the regular rate established by the school committee for non-resident pupils, but in no case exceeding the average expense per pupil in such school for said period. The school committee of the town in which a child is temporarily residing for the special purpose of their attending school may waive all or part of the tuition charge for such child.