

Implementation Requirements
Compulsory Attendance Policy

§ RIGL 16-19-1

In July of 2011, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed revised compulsory attendance legislation, which requires students to attend school until they are 18 years of age. The RI Compulsory Attendance Statute (RIGL 16-19-1) is an effort to prevent students from dropping out of school and placed in truancy court. The statute is written to encourage schools and families to work together so that students remain in school, or in an alternative learning program, so that the student may continue to work toward earning a high school diploma or its equivalent. The Compulsory Attendance statute mandates that students be in continuous school enrollment until the age of 18. The RI Compulsory Attendance law allows for a superintendent to waive the attendance requirements for those students over age 16 who have an alternative-learning plan that supports their continued progress toward obtaining a RI Diploma or its equivalent. All LEAs in RI are required to implement this legislation and, in the process, ensure that students have continued exposure to opportunities to further their education and/or their work readiness training.

Only the superintendent has the authority to approve or deny an attendance waiver request but appeals can be made by parents/guardians first to the school committee and then to the Commissioner of Education if denied by the school district.

Conditions for requesting a waiver of attendance:

Waivers of attendance may be granted to students who are 16 years or older, who have an acceptable alternative-learning plan for obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, and who have obtained parent or guardian permission to participate in the alternative learning program. It is expected that our educators and counselors have exhausted all available learning programs for students seeking a waiver of attendance and that waivers are granted only to students who are at great risk for dropping out of school.

Some students may be allowed to leave school before age 18; if they have completed one of the following:

- all requirements for graduation,
- obtained a GED,
- have been accepted into an accredited post-secondary institution,

- have been accepted to a vocational program that is recognized by the state; or
- have met the specific criteria described in the attendance statute.

Purpose of this document:

In accordance with RIGL 16-19-1, LEAs are required to develop, in conjunction with the student, the student's family, counselors and teachers, an alternative-learning plan and to assist the student in the attainment of the goals outlined in the learning plan. This guidance provides the basic protocol to follow when one of our students and/or their family requests an attendance waiver. Students enrolled in alternative learning plans will remain as an enrolled student of the resident LEA until completion of their plan, obtainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent, or until such time as the conditions for withdrawal (dropping out) are met (see RIGL 16-19-1 for conditions for withdrawal from school).

Roles and Responsibilities for Implementing the Compulsory Attendance Policy:

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to implement this policy. As such, the following must occur at the school building level (with the principals):

- All school personnel, specifically, assistant principals, guidance counselors, and teachers must be fully informed of the law.
- Each principal must follow all procedures and policies pertaining to this law.
- Principals are responsible for communicating the district policy to the school community on an annual basis as part of school wide parent meetings, class assemblies, and as needed with specific students and their families.

Superintendent is responsible for approving alternative learning plans with acceptable learning programs or opportunities that have been developed in conjunction with the appropriate school personnel, the student and at least one parent or guardian. Signing alternative learning plans indicates that the student has been given permission to be waived from regular attendance at their resident LEA/school.

Parents or guardians are responsible for participating in the development of the alternative-learning plan. A parent or guardian will be required to sign the alternative-learning plan

that indicates they participated in the development of the plan, give permission for their son or daughter to participate in the alternative learning activities, and that they understand the conditions for continuation of the alternative learning program.

Students are required to participate in the development of their alternative learning plan, obtain parent or guardian permission, and fulfill the expectations and conditions of their alternative learning plan program.

Process for requesting and receiving a waiver of attendance

Principals, teachers, advisors and/or parents/guardians may initiate an alternative learning plan by first contacting the school guidance counselor. The guidance counselor will first determine the appropriateness of such a request by considering the following:

1. Is the student in question at least 16 years old?
 - a. Yes
 - i. Has the student been provided comprehensive in-school resources and supports?
 - ii. Is the student currently passing?
 - iii. Does the student have enough senior-eligible credits?
 - iv. Is the student's attendance in question?
 - v. Can the student gain course credit in time to graduate this year?
 - vi. Are there extenuating circumstances preventing the student from attending (work, parenthood, pregnancy, illness)
 - vii. Is there an in-school alternative for this student?
 - b. No
 - i. Student cannot be waived from attending. Other solutions and resources must be explored.

If the student is at least 16 years old and all available in-school or district programs have been provided, the student may be eligible for a waiver from attendance and the following steps should be followed.

2. School personnel in conjunction with the student and their parent or guardian develop an alternative-learning plan that, at a minimum:
 - a. Provides age appropriate rigorous academic learning opportunities;
 - b. Meets student's interests and goals;
 - c. Supports student learning needs as required and appropriate;
 - d. Addresses required student entitlements (such as special education)
 - e. Outlines program expectations for student to remain in alternative plan;
 - f. Describes the expected outcomes of the program; and
 - g. Enables the student to complete educational requirements that result in attainment of a RI Diploma or its equivalent.
3. School counselor or principal and parent submit request to superintendent for approval of plan.
4. Superintendent reviews the plan with the student and family/guardian to ensure appropriateness of program to further student's learning and training.
5. Superintendent, student and parent or guardian sign plan.
6. Student participation and progress in alternative learning plan is monitored as outlined and agreed upon in plan.

The following appendices include:

Appendix I

1. Form to be submitted to the alternative learning program for completion,
2. A monitoring form for the student in an alternative learning program,
3. Application/request for Waiver of Attendance Form that complies with the RI Compulsory Attendance Law, to be signed by the principal, and
2. Consent for Waiver of Attendance Form to be signed by the student's parent or guardian.

Appendix I

Forms

Alternative Learning Plan – Form for Alternative Program

An appropriate alternative learning program official must complete this form.

The [SCHOOL NAME] will monitor our students' success in all alternative learning programs. As such, please provide the information requested so we may contact you to confirm and monitor student participation. Please also provide a written description of your program so we may ensure that it meets the needs of the student.

Student's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name _____

Telephone Number _____

The student named above has been accepted into _____

Name of Program

Program type (check one below):

- Independent Study
- Private Instruction
- Performing Group
- Internship
- Community Service
- Apprenticeship
- Online Course
- GED/Workforce Training

Other (Please explain) _____

Date of Admission _____ Expected Date of Completion _____

What will be the outcome of the student's participation in this alternative learning plan?

- Certificate
Type _____
- Diploma
- Other? (Please describe) _____

Who may we contact?

Name _____ Position _____

Telephone Number _____ Best time to call _____

Email _____

Prepared by _____ Title _____

Signature _____

[SCHOOL NAME] School Department Alternative Learning Plan Monitoring Form

School Level Person Responsible:

Name _____ Title _____

Dates program was contacted and results of that contact.

Date _____ Results _____

This student is participating in the program as outlined in the program requirements.

Signature _____

Application for Waiver of Attendance Form Under State of RI Compulsory Education Law

Student Name _____ Date _____

School _____

Grade _____ Spec. Ed. _____ Reg. Ed. _____ ESL _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

I, _____, parent of _____,
(Parent's/guardian's printed name) (Student's printed name)

request a waiver of attendance, in accordance with the State of Rhode Island Compulsory Education Law for my child. I acknowledge that the following conditions have been satisfied.

1. My child _____ completed 16 years of life prior to September 1, _____.
2. My child _____ has an alternative-learning plan, a signed copy of which is attached. I understand that if my child is not successful or does not participate as required, he/she may be referred for truancy.

The attached plan was developed in conjunction with a team from my child's last public school of record.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Principal Signature

Student Signature

Guidance Counselor Signature

For Official Use Only	
Waiver Granted by _____ Superintendent's Signature	Date _____
Waiver Denied by _____ Superintendent's Signature	Date _____
Reason for denial: _____	

Consent for Waiver of Attendance from [SCHOOL NAME]
(With Alternative Learning Plan)

Student Name _____ Date _____
School _____
Grade _____ Spec. Ed. _____ Reg. Ed. _____ ESL _____
Address _____ Telephone _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

To be signed by parent if student is over the age of 16 and under the age of 18:

I, (parent's printed name), _____, have provided written documentation that my child meets the requirements under TITLE 16, Education CHAPTER 16-19, Compulsory Attendance SECTION 16-19-1 (attached) for a waiver from attending [NAME SCHOOL].

My child, _____, has an approved Alternative Learning Plan. I participated in an exit interview with the principal of _____ School on _____.

Date

I understand that by withdrawing my child from school prior to graduation or the completion of an alternative learning program, the potential impact on his/her future earnings could be significantly impacted if employers require proof of high school completion for possible employment.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____