Vantage Career Center
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Understanding Ohio's Updated Attendance Law: What Vantage Families Need to Know

Highlighting important policy and procedural updates for the 2026–2027 school year.
Every hour in the classroom and career-technical lab matters. As Vantage Career Center prepares to welcome students back for the 2026–2027 school year, families will notice an increased focus on student attendance and the total amount of instructional time students miss throughout the year.

These updates stem from **Ohio House Bill 96**, passed in 2025, which shifts the state's attendance framework beyond traditional truancy to emphasize chronic absenteeism, early intervention, prevention, and family support. The goal is to identify attendance concerns early so schools, associate districts, and families can work together to keep students actively engaged in their academic courses and hands-on career-technical programs.

Key Policy Changes & What They Mean for Our Students
1. Focus on Total Missed Instructional Time
School districts across Ohio are now required to monitor the total amount of instructional time students miss. This includes full-day absences, late arrivals (tardies), and early dismissals.
While Vantage will continue to distinguish between **excused** and **unexcused** absences, **both types of absences count toward a student's overall missed instructional time** when determining chronic absenteeism.

2. Chronic Absenteeism vs. Habitual Truancy

- **Chronically Absent:** Under Ohio law, a student is considered chronically absent if they miss **10 percent or more** of the required instructional time during the school year, *regardless of the reason for the absence*.
- **Early Notification Threshold:** Vantage is required to notify parents or guardians before a student's missed instructional time reaches **5 percent** of the school year. This early notification serves as a proactive opportunity to address potential barriers before they impact learning or credentialing requirements.
- **Habitual Truancy:** Truancy continues to be based strictly on *unexcused* absences and remains subject to separate legal thresholds established under Ohio law.

3. Career-Tech Lab & Academic Impact
Hands-on lab training, industry credential preparation, and college credit pathways require consistent participation. Missing time in high-school career technical programs not only impacts course grades, but can also affect a student's ability to accumulate the lab hours necessary for industry certifications and work-based learning opportunities.

Important Expectations & Reminders

- **Health First:** The updated law does not mean students should attend school while sick. Students who are ill should stay home. The policy is designed to reinforce communication, documentation, and awareness of how short absences, early check-outs, or frequent tardies accumulate over time.
- **Reporting Absences:** Parents and guardians should report absences promptly by emailing attendance@vantagecareercenter.com or calling 419-238-5411 ext. 2115. Please provide the student's full name, program, parent/guardian name, reason for absence, and a call-back number.
- **Religious Observances:** Ohio law continues to provide excused absences for sincerely held religious beliefs. Families requesting time away for religious observances, instruction, or activities must submit written notification to the High School Office within a week before the student is planning to miss school.
- **Associate School Calendars:** Vantage students represent 13 member school districts across Van Wert, Paulding, Mercer, and Allen counties. Students are expected to follow the Vantage Career Center academic calendar regardless of their associate school's schedule.
- **School Delays/Cancellations:** Students are to follow their "homeschool" delays and cancellations. If it is deemed unsafe for your student to travel to Vantage, it will not be counted against their attendance

Supporting Our Students Together

The primary purpose of these changes is **not** to impose penalties on students or families. Instead, it is to build a stronger partnership between Vantage and our families by identifying attendance challenges early and connecting students with support before academic or career-tech progress is impacted.

When attendance concerns arise, our Student Services team, instructors, and counselors will work collaboratively with families to address the root causes—whether related to transportation, health concerns, personal circumstances, or other barriers.

Regular attendance remains one of the strongest predictors of success in school, in technical training, and in the workforce. By being present every day, Vantage students gain the skills, certifications, and professional work habits needed to excel in their future careers and higher education.

Additional Resources

For more information regarding attendance reporting procedures, handbooks, and support services:

- **Attendance Office Line:** (419) 238-5411 ext. 2115
- **Attendance Email:** attendance@vantagecareercenter.com
- **Website:** vantagecareercenter.com