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State of Wisconsin  
Governor Scott Walker



TO: **W-2 Agencies  
Training Staff**

FROM: Margaret McMahon, Director  
Bureau of Working Families  
Division of Family and Economic Security  
Department of Children and Families

**BWF OPERATIONS MEMO**

No: 18-04  
DATE: 3/20/2018

W-2  EA  CF   
JAL  RAP  Other EP \*

**SUBJECT: *New Learnfare Requirements and Changes to the CARES Worker  
Web School Enrollment Page***

**CROSS REFERENCE:** [Wisconsin Works \(W-2\) Manual Chapter 16](#)  
[Operations Memo 16-09: Modernizing CARES Work Programs](#)  
[Subsystems – Learnfare Policy and Systems Changes](#)  
[2017 Wisconsin Act 59](#)  
[Wis. Stat. s. 49.26](#)  
[Admin. Rule DCF 101.25](#)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to announce policy changes to Learnfare school attendance and verification requirements and the updates made to CARES Worker Web (CWW) to reflect the policy changes.

**BACKGROUND**

2017 Wisconsin Act 59 revised the Learnfare statute to require children to attend school regularly and not be a habitual truant. A habitual truant is defined as a student absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five or more days on which school is held during a semester. Previously, W-2 agencies could sanction a family's monthly payment if a child was not enrolled in school, refused to cooperate with Learnfare case management, had no good cause granted, and had no Fact Finding Review requested. The statutory changes now require W-2 agencies to sanction a family's monthly payment if a child is not enrolled in school

or is a habitual truant, refuses to cooperate with Learnfare case management, has no good cause granted, and has not requested a Fact Finding Review.

## ***POLICY CHANGES***

W-2 Manual [Chapter 16](#) now includes the new Learnfare school attendance requirement. The Learnfare policy updates are summarized below. The W-2 Manual sections are attached with all policy changes incorporated. Policy that was removed is struck through and policy that has been added is underlined.

### LEARNFARE REQUIREMENTS

#### Current Policy

Children ages 6-17 must be enrolled in school (W-2 Manual, Sections [16.1.1](#) and [16.2.1](#)).

#### New Policy

Children ages 6-17 must be enrolled in **and attending** school.

“Attending” means that a child has not been absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester. A child that has been absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester is considered a habitual truant. [[Wis. Stat. s. 118.16\(1\)\(a\)](#)]

- **Note:** Children ages 6-17 not enrolled in school or habitual truants are required to participate in Learnfare case management. For more information on mandatory Learnfare case management recipients, see [W-2 Manual, Section 16.3.1](#).

### SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION

#### Current Policy

Financial and Employment Planers (FEPs) must verify a child’s school enrollment status and may use any form determined effective and efficient by the W-2 agency, including documentation provided by or through the school ([W-2 Manual, Section 16.2.3](#)).

#### New Policy

FEPs must verify both a child’s school enrollment status **and** attendance for each child ages 6 - 17. Verification of school enrollment and attendance must be a school attendance record. The verification may be a document provided by or through the school that indicates the number of days a student is absent from school without an acceptable excuse. The format of a school attendance record may vary from school to school. If the FEP cannot determine whether the child is a habitual truant from the attendance record, the FEP must use the [School Enrollment](#)

[and Attendance Information Release form \(DCF-F-DES11297\)](#) and allow the school to make the determination (See **FORM CHANGES** below).

### LEARNFARE FINANCIAL PENALTY

#### Current Policy

W-2 Groups may not have a financial penalty imposed if a habitual truant fails to cooperate with Learnfare case management ([W-2 Manual, Section 16.4.1](#)).

#### New Policy

A W-2 participant in a Community Service Job (CSJ), W-2 Transition (W-2 T), or Custodial Parent in the Trial Employment Match Program (TMP) placement may have a financial penalty imposed if a habitual truant fails to cooperate with Learnfare case management.

In addition to changing the manual language to reflect the new policy, the language was also updated to more accurately reflect who actually receives the financial penalty.

### **FORM CHANGES**

The W-2 participant has the primary responsibility for providing school enrollment and attendance verification. The FEP may assist the participant in obtaining needed documents to expedite the verification process. The [School Enrollment and Attendance Information Release form \(DCF-F-DES11297\)](#) is available for FEPs to use to obtain verification if participants are unable to provide verification or if the FEP is uncertain if the student's absences meet the definition of a habitual truant. FEPs must scan completed forms into the W-2 Electronic Case Files (ECF) with code WLCM ([W-2 Manual, Section 16.2.3](#)).

To reflect the policy changes, the [School Enrollment and Attendance Information Release form \(DCF-F-DES11297\)](#) has been updated. The Current Semester and Preceding Semester sections have been changed to capture school enrollment and attendance information. The preceding semester section has also been updated to include dropout information, which was previously not requested in this section. See highlighted form changes below.

*Enrollment, Attendance, and Dropout Information Captured in the School Enrollment and Attendance Information Release form.*

<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	
<i>Please check the appropriate box(es) and fill in all other applicable information.</i>	
<b>Preceding Semester – Enrollment and Attendance</b> <i>(Please provide a copy of student's attendance record.)</i>	
Student was <input type="checkbox"/> enrolled / <input type="checkbox"/> not enrolled	If not enrolled, date last enrolled:
<input type="checkbox"/> Student attended school regularly	Name of school:
<input type="checkbox"/> Student missed part or all of 5 or more days on which school was held during a semester, without an acceptable excuse.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student was enrolled but has ceased to attend*	Date last attended:
<i>*Ceased to attend means the student is not in school now and has been absent without an acceptable excuse for at least 20 consecutive days and has not formally withdrawn from school.</i>	
<b>Current Semester – Enrollment and Attendance</b> <i>(Please provide a copy of student's attendance record.)</i>	
Student is currently <input type="checkbox"/> enrolled / <input type="checkbox"/> not enrolled	If not enrolled, date last enrolled:
<input type="checkbox"/> Student is attending school regularly	Name of school:
<input type="checkbox"/> Student missed part or all of 5 or more days on which school was held during a semester, without an acceptable excuse.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student is still enrolled but has ceased to attend*	Date last attended:
<i>*Ceased to attend means the student is not in school now and has been absent without an acceptable excuse for at least 20 consecutive days and has not formally withdrawn from school.</i>	

### **CARES WORK WEB (CWW)**

On March 3, 2018, updates to the Learnfare Monitoring portion of the CWW School Enrollment page were aligned with the new Learnfare policies. CWW will not prompt FEPs to update the School Enrollment page until the next review or until the page is accessed; at which point, if the Learnfare Status field is "WST – STUDENT IN GOOD STANDING," the Verification field must be a school attendance record.

Previously, "NOT ENROLLED" was the only selection in the Learnfare Status dropdown list that would enable CWW to impose a Learnfare sanction. Now, when FEPs select "HABITUAL TRUANT" in the Learnfare status dropdown, CWW will allow FEPs to select the appropriate penalty code if there is a need to impose a Learnfare sanction.

The Learnfare Status field dropdown with “WHT – HABITUALLY TRUANT” and “WNE – NOT ENROLLED.”

**W-2 Learnfare Monitoring**

Effective Period

Delete Reason: [dropdown] Last Updated:

**Learnfare Details**

\* Learnfare Status: [dropdown] Verification: [dropdown]

Penalty Code: [dropdown]

Issuance Month: [dropdown]

Participation Period: [dropdown]

WCA - CARING FOR AN INFANT  
 WCC - NO CHILD CARE  
 WDR - DROPOUT  
 WEX - EXCUSED FROM SCHOOL  
 WHT - HABITUALLY TRUANT  
 WIL - ILLNESS  
 WIN - INCARCERATED  
 WMP - MINOR PARENT  
 WNE - NOT ENROLLED  
 WNV - SCHOOL ENROLLMENT NOT VERIFIED  
 WPA - PHYSICIAN APPROVAL  
 WPX - PENDING EXPULSION  
 WRT - RETURNING DROPOUT  
 WSP - SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS  
 WST - STUDENT IN GOOD STANDING  
 WTR - NO TRANSPORTATION TO CHILD CARE  
 WVO - VOLUNTARY  
 WWL - ON WAITING LIST/CHILD -AT-RISK PROGRAM  
 WXP - EXPELLED  
 WZG - CHILD NOT IN W-2 GROUP

on or before  
 DD / YYYY Go

Cancel  Previous Next

The Penalty Code field will be available for updating only when FEPs select “WHT – HABITUALLY TRUANT” or “WNE – NOT ENROLLED” in the Learnfare Status field. If the student is cooperating with case management, no selection is needed in the Penalty Code field. However, if the FEP needs to issue a sanction because a habitual truant is still not attending school and not complying with Learnfare case management, the FEP must select the appropriate sanction option from the Penalty Code field.

The Penalty Code field dropdown when selecting “WHT – HABITUALLY TRUANT” in the Learnfare Status field.

**W-2 Learnfare Monitoring**

Effective Period

Delete Reason: [dropdown] Last Updated:

**Learnfare Details**

\* Learnfare Status: WHT - HABITUALLY TRUANT Verification: [dropdown]

Penalty Code: [dropdown]

Issuance Month: [dropdown]

Participation Period: 02/16/2018 - 03/15/2018

CM - FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CASE MANAGEMENT  
 LS - PENALTY ENTERED LATE - NOT DEDUCTED FROM PAYMENT

## AGENCY ACTION

W-2 agencies must familiarize staff with these Learnfare policy and systems changes and update any relevant local agency procedures.

## ATTACHMENTS

[W-2 Manual, Section 16.1.1 Learnfare Goal and Requirements](#)

[W-2 Manual, Section 16.2.1 Children Subject to School Enrollment and Attendance](#)

[W-2 Manual, Section 16.2.3 Enrollment and Attendance Verification](#)

[W-2 Manual, Section 16.4.1 Determining a Financial Penalty](#)

[School Enrollment and Attendance Information Release form \(DCF-F-DES11297\)](#)

**CONTACTS**

For W-2 Policy Questions in the Balance of State: Bureau of Regional Operations, W-2 Regional Coordinators

For W-2 Policy Questions in Milwaukee: Milwaukee Operations Section Regional Administrators

For W-2 CARES Processing Questions: W-2 Help Desk

DCF/DFES/BWF/CH