ARTICLE V. - TRUANCY

[Historical Note. Previous Article III. Truancy repealed by adoption of Article III. Truancy set forth below pursuant to Resolution No. 2001-44 enacted June 26, 2001. Article III. Truancy was subsequently amended by Resolution No. 2001-57 on August 14, 2001 to more clearly define absences from school and further clarify instances of good cause and the duties and authority of the Truancy Officer. Please refer to the attachment to Resolution No. 2001-57 for a complete description of all changes made by such Resolution. Section 11-51 through 11-59 was amended by Resolution No. McD. 2002-43, effective July 16, 2002.]

11-51. Applicability

A. This Truancy Ordinance shall apply to any parent or guardian, student, or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A1-4 who resides within the exterior boundaries of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

1. For the purposes of this Article, a “student” shall be defined as any student who has reached the age of five (5) by September 1 in the current school year until the age of nineteen (19) who has not received a high school diploma, a graduate equivalency diploma, or otherwise satisfied the requirements for high school graduation.

2. An “adult student” shall be defined as a student who has reached the age of eighteen (18), but not yet turned nineteen (19) and has not received a high school diploma, a graduate equivalency diploma, or otherwise satisfied the requirements for high school graduation.

3. For the purposes of this article, "Parent" includes a natural or adoptive parent, but does not include persons whose parental rights have been legally terminated; nor does it include the unwed father whose paternity has not been legally acknowledged or adjudicated.

4. For the purposes of this article, "Guardian" is a person assigned by a court of law, other than a parent, having the legal duty and authority to provide care, shelter and control of a student. Guardians include, but are not limited to, those with a power of attorney or educational rights, foster parents, custodians, or any person appointed by a court of law to act in loco parentis.


11-52. School Defined

A. It is mandatory that all students age 5 by September 1st up to their 19th birthday residing within the exterior boundaries of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation attend:

1. An accredited school that monitors attendance every day that school is regularly in session except for those students who have received a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma or otherwise satisfy the requirements for high school graduation or

2. The Fort McDowell Education Division Academic Recovery Program if the student is suspended for two (2) or more days from a school.
   a. Located at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Education Division Office for the duration of a student’s suspension.
   b. The intention is to provide a place of study for students to maintain course work during suspension.
   c. Upon the suspension contact is required between the Truancy Officer and parent, guardian, or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 to review the suspension and the Academic Recovery Program requirements. If a student does not attend the Academic Recovery Program, a referral to Wassaja Family Services will be made.

B. Home Schooling may be recognized upon the prior written approval of the Education Division Director. The Education Division Director shall determine the acceptable requirements and standards of home schooling and shall publish those requirements and standards in the community newsletter on an annual basis.

1. Home Schooling is an education platform that requires a core curriculum from an accredited source for the student to meet the Arizona grade level requirements/standards.

2. Must be reviewed and renewed on an annual basis by the Education Division Director. Student must have passing grades, stay on track to meet graduation requirements, and show progress towards the Arizona grade level requirements/standards, and attend every day that school is regularly in session.

C. Online Education may be recognized upon prior written approval of the Education Division Director.

1. Online education is a digital platform from an accredited source that provides student monitoring and access to their specific grade level requirements/standards.
2. Must be reviewed and renewed on an annual basis by the Education Division Director. Student must have passing grades, stay on track to meet graduation requirements, and show progress towards the Arizona grade level requirements/standards, and attend every day that school is regularly in session.

D. If a student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 dis-enrolls from school for any reason or is dropped for ten (10) days of non-attendance, they are required to re-enroll in an accredited school within five (5) school days.

E. All students described in subsection (A) above shall be enrolled in an accredited school. A student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 absent from school shall be considered truant unless excused by good cause. The term "absent" means that a student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is not in attendance at school. Good cause shall consist of only the following conditions:

1. Sickness. A medical doctor's note or nurse practitioner's note is required for two (2) consecutive days of absence from school, and for three (3) non-consecutive days of absence from school during any given thirty (30) day period for which the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is required to attend school;

2. Medical treatment and appointments for the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 that cannot be scheduled for non-school hours;

3. Hospitalization. Physical, mental, emotional or behavioral conditions verified by a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist that make instruction inexpedient or impracticable;

4. Death of a family member. Allowable absences under this condition are limited to a period of three (3) school days for the death of an immediate family member unless reasonable cause is provided for a longer absence, and for a period of one (1) school day for the death of an extended family member unless reasonable cause is provided for a longer absence;

   a. An immediate family member means a student’s or adult student’s (as defined in Section 11-51A2) mother, stepmother, father, stepfather, sister, step-sister, brother, step-brother, grandparent, step-grandparent and legal guardian.

   b. An extended family member means a student’s or adult student’s (as defined in Section 11-51A2) aunt, uncle, and cousin that are directly related to the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2.

5. Later stage of pregnancy and childbirth. The applicable school's criteria for this condition shall be taken into consideration for determining the appropriate length of time allowable for absence from school;
6. Head lice. Only one (1) day of school is authorized for this condition;

7. Participation in a school activity authorized by the school for which the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is enrolled;

8. Participation in events occurring in official Tribal celebrations where such participation is approved by Tribal Council resolution;

9. Required attendance in court;

10. Verifiable hazardous road conditions;

11. School approved college visitations;

12. School approved co-operative programs;

13. Verifiable emergencies reasonably preventing attendance at school;

14. A student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 who is a participant in a Tribal cultural or religious ceremony. In order for such absence to be considered good cause, the absence may not be for a period longer than would cause the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 to be dropped from a class or lose credit for a class. Prior to a student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 being absent from school for this exception, a parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 must provide the Truancy Officer at least two (2) weeks notice and receive approval by the Truancy Officer;

15. Family vacation. In order for such absence to be considered good cause, the absence may not be for a period longer than would cause the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 to be dropped from a class or lose credit for a class. Prior to a student being absent from school for this exception, a parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 must provide the Truancy Officer at least two (2) weeks notice and receive approval by the Truancy Officer;

16. Detainment in a juvenile detention facility pursuant to court order. The student shall participate in an educational program unless otherwise ordered by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court.

17. Homebound. A student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 who is under a doctor’s care and is unable to attend school in person due to a medical condition, however, is able to receive educational instruction. The condition may be physical, mental, emotional or behavioral in nature and must be verified by a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist. The homebound instruction is provided by the student’s home school district.

F. Suspension or expulsion from school shall not be considered good cause.
1. Students with verified disabilities that fall under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or the Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan may have fines dismissed. The Truancy Officer, the Special Education Specialist, and the Education Division Director will review the student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan to determine if the behavior that precipitated the suspension is a function of the student’s disability identified in the said IEP and/or Section 504 Plan. If the behavior that precipitated the suspension is a function of the disability fines shall not be levied for that specific suspension.

2. If the review results in recommendations for specific actions to be taken or resources utilized to help the student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 and mitigate further similar behavior, and the student’s parent/guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 refuses to take such actions or utilize recommended resources, parent/guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall not be exempt from paying fines levied for subsequent suspensions.

3. Students who are expelled from school have five (5) school days to re-enroll in an accredited school.

G. Five (5) incidents of unexcused tardiness will be considered as one (1) unexcused absence from school. Fines will be administered accordingly.

H. Three (3) incidents of unexcused absence from individual classes or school periods will be considered as one (1) unexcused absence from school.

I. Acceptable "excused" absences with one (1) semester are limited to a total of nine (9), unless the absence is caused by a verifiable documented emergency at the discretion of the Truancy Officer.


11-53. Parental Responsibility

A. It is the responsibility of each parent and/or guardian to ensure that their student or students attend school, including but not limited to addressing underlying issues causing truancy in
accordance with the requirements of this law. For an adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2, this section shall apply equally to the adult student who shall be responsible to ensure their own school attendance. When the student reaches the age of majority, the parent or guardian shall no longer be responsible.

B. For purpose of this Article V, it shall be the duty and obligations of each student and parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 to provide information that is reasonably requested by the Truancy Officer as to circumstances, activities, and whereabouts of any student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 or other information relating to a student’s or adult student’s (as defined in Section 11-51A2) school attendance. The parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall provide written documentation signed by an appropriate professional for good cause for absences listed in Sec 11-52E.

C. In order for a parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 to be in compliance with this Article V and receive Tribal benefits the parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 must execute an Authorization for Disclosure of Information, at the beginning of each school year, that allows their student’s school to provide any and all academic, special education, attendance, disciplinary, enrollment, and health records to the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Education Division.

1. The Authorization for Disclosure of Information for each student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall be submitted by the end of August of each school year to the Education Division Office. Non-compliance will result in a fine being assessed and/or referral to the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court.

   a. A fine of $250 will be assessed if the disclosure is not submitted by the end of August.

   b. An additional fine of $250 will be assessed if the disclosure is not submitted by the end of the first week of September along with a referral to the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court.

2. The parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall provide an updated Disclosure to the Education Division, throughout the given school year for any/all changes of information on the Disclosure to include: change of guardianship, change of phone number or address, and/or change of school enrollment.


11-54. Truancy Officer and Duties

A. There is hereby established within the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Education Division the position(s) of Truancy Officer whom shall have the following authority and duties:

1. Verify that all students and adult students (as defined in Section 11-51A2) are enrolled in an accredited school as required under Section 11-52A;

2. Verify that all students and adult students (as defined in Section 11-51A2) are attending an accredited school as required under Section 11-52A;

3. Make inquiries of any accredited school and of any student and their parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 as to the enrollment and attendance status of students in school;

4. Verify that all students or adult students (as defined in Section 11-51A2) are arriving at or beginning school on time according to school guidelines;

5. Issue notices and fines;

6. At anytime the Truancy Officer may make a referral to Wassaja Family Services if it is deemed necessary;

7. Perform other duties specifically set forth in this Article V.

B. Whenever the Truancy Officer finds or observes that a student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is not attending school during regular school hours, the Truancy Officer shall:

1. Inquire as to the student’s absences and/or tardiness from school. The student and/or parents or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall explain to the Truancy Officer the reason for the student’s failure to attend school;

2. Monitor the student until the parent or guardian or proper Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation agency takes custody of the student and

3. If deemed appropriate, make a report of the truancy incident and send a copy of that report to Wassaja Family Services.

C. In the event that the student’s parent or guardian is not at home or not available, the Truancy Officer may release the student to Wassaja Family Services which shall take the student into custody until the parent or guardian becomes available.

D. In the event that a Fort McDowell Police Officer finds or observes a student who is not in the presence or company of his parent or guardian within the territorial boundaries of the
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation during regular school hours, the Police Officer shall notify the Truancy Officer and may detain such student at the Fort McDowell Police Department.


11-55. Notice of Truancy and Fines

A. Whenever the Truancy Officer finds or observes a student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 outside of school during regular school hours or information comes to the Truancy Officer from a school or other source that a student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is not attending school during regular school hours without good cause, the Truancy Officer shall serve by regular mail on the parent or guardian and student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 written notice of such truancy and associated fines, and that such truancy violates Tribal law. The parent or guardian and student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 will have the opportunity to have the fines waived for the first and second violation of this law by successfully completing the Truancy Diversion Program outlined in the Education Division’s policies and procedures. The listing of fines is published in the Education Division’s policies and procedures.

1. Upon the first notice of violation, the parent or guardian and student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall participate in the Nation’s Truancy Diversion Program. The fines will be waived upon successful completion of the Truancy Diversion Program and enforced for non-completion.

2. Upon the second violation of this law, within a twelve (12) month period the parent or guardian and student shall participate in the Nation’s Truancy Diversion Program. The parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall attend/complete, a minimum of 6 hours, parenting training, counseling, a support group, or any other similar self-help training, classes, etc. the parent or guardian chooses that addresses cause(s) for Truancy. The student, 10 years old and older, shall complete 6 hours of Community Service. The fines will be waived upon
successful completion of the Truancy Diversion Program and enforced for non-completion.

3. A third or subsequent violation of this law within a twelve (12) month period shall result in a referral to Juvenile Court.

B. The Truancy Officer shall make a report/referral to Wassaja Family Services for an assessment/investigation, and/or to Juvenile Court regarding truancy, neglect of student, educational neglect, incorrigibility, or other issues of dependency in the household as warranted at anytime during the school year. Wassaja Family Services Staff will report, to the Truancy Officer, the date the follow up occurred.

C. In the event fines are not paid within fourteen (14) days from the date the parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is served notice pursuant to this section 11-55, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Finance Department is authorized to deduct the amount of said fine from any Tribal benefit that may be due and payable to the parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 including, but not limited to, salary and per capita payments subject to the following restrictions: not more than eight (8%) percent may be deducted from a parent or guardian’s or adult student’s (as defined in Section 11-51A2) gross monthly per capita distribution and not more than eight (8%) percent may be deducted from a parent or guardian's or adult student’s (as defined in Section 11-51A2) gross pay check. No restrictions shall apply to the other Tribal benefits. Deductions set forth in this subsection shall continue in effect until the entire amount of said fine(s) have been paid in full.

1. Where the parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 is employed by a subordinate economic Enterprise of the Nation, the Finance Department is authorized to order the Enterprise to deduct the amount of said fine from the parent or guardian's or adult student’s (as defined in Section 11-51A2) paycheck pursuant to the requirements in this subsection and the Enterprise is required to comply with such order.

2. Truancy fines must be paid to be in good standing with the Truancy Ordinance to receive funding, incentives, sponsorships, and rewards from the Nation.

D. The imposition of fines in this Ordinance may be imposed joint and severable against the parents or guardians of truant students or adult students (as defined in Section 11-51A2).

E. In instances where the Truancy Officer is unable to reasonably locate the parent, guardian and/or student or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 to serve notice upon such individual(s) as required herein, service of notice may occur by the Truancy Officer attaching written notice to the front door of the home, house, or dwelling for which the person or student is last known to reside.
11-56. Appeals

A. Any parent or guardian, or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 who has received written notice of a fine from the Truancy Officer and wants to contest the fine must within seven (7) days of being served such notice, appeal the fine in writing to the Truancy Officer. The fine shall be upheld except when the parent or guardian or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 provide satisfactory information of proof of good cause occasioning the truancy or information in accordance with section 11-52 (B). The Truancy Officer shall have three (3) days within which to make a final decision in regard to a timely filed appeal. Any information provided shall be confidential except that it may be disclosed to the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court.

B. Within seven (7) days of a final decision by the Truancy Officer, the parent or guardian, or adult student as defined in Section 11-51A2 shall have the further right to appeal the Truancy Officer’s final decision to the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court which shall have jurisdiction over the issue. The Tribal Court shall hold a hearing within thirty (30) days and shall render a decision within five (5) days of the hearing in regard to a timely filed appeal. The Tribal Court shall give deference to the finding of facts submitted by the Truancy Officer and shall not overturn the findings unless the Tribal Court finds an abuse of discretion. The standard of review for the conclusion of law submitted by the Truancy Officer shall be de novo. The decision of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court shall be final and is not subject to further appeal.

C. It shall not be a defense to the imposition of any fine, suspension or termination of per capita allowed hereunder that the student is acting without the knowledge or authority of the parent or guardian, or that the parent or guardian was unaware of the truancy or claims to be unable to control their student, as the parent and/or guardian has responsibility for the student’s actions. Illness of the student shall not be defense or an excuse for the violation of this law if the student was: (1) seen or found outside of his residence and apart from the company of the parent or guardian during regular school hours, or (2) seen or found outside of his residence with his parent or guardian without good cause during regular school hours.

11-57. Judgments

A. The Truancy Officer shall have authority to have fines assessed pursuant to this Article V entered as a judgment in the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court to facilitate enforcement of such fines within the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

B. Upon the failure of a student to timely fulfill community service requirements imposed pursuant to Subsection 11-55A2; the Truancy Officer shall have authority to request that the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Court enforce the community service requirements.


11-58. Severability

If any section or provision of this Article or amendment made by this Article is held invalid, the remaining sections or provisions of this Article and amendments made by this Article shall continue in full force and effect and such invalidity shall not affect the sovereign immunity of the Nation, its Officials, Officers or Employees.

(Sec. 11-59 added and amended by Resolution McD. No. 2002-43, effective July 16, 2002.)


Secs. 11-59—11-70. - Reserved.