



Codes That Tell the Truth

How do we build the four reasons into our student information system?

THREE MOVES FOR THIS WEEK



Audit the menu

List every code staff can choose today.

Cost: \$0



Add a reason field

Add the four reasons as a required field after a conversation.

Low cost



Train the front desk

Show staff entering data what each code means.

Cost: \$0

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SIS VENDOR

1. Can we add a required reason field with four categories?
2. Can a category change over time and keep history?
3. Who can see each field?
4. Can we report categories by school, grade and group?

CLASSIFY BEFORE YOU CONSEQUENCE

Truancy

Code only after a documented conversation.

Withdrawal

Sub-codes: transport, caregiving, housing, economic.

Avoidance

Sub-codes: bullying, climate, specific class or time.

Refusal

Sub-codes: anxiety, health; protect privacy.

AVOID THESE MISSTEPS

- ✗ Letting the default code decide the category
- ✗ Adding codes without training staff
- ✗ Recording sensitive health details in open fields

HOW YOU WILL KNOW IT WORKS

Leading: Absences with a recorded reason

Lagging: Share coded unexcused with no reason

Evidence: Schools Spared, Ch. 1, Another Voice from the Field; Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 3: MSD of Warren Township case study; Attendance USA Attendance Intelligence Briefs, Aug to Oct 2026 (primary-source checked).



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