

# ENCORE



Junior & Senior High School for the Arts

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BP 5113

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**CLASSROOM BASED ATTENDANCE POLICY**



## CLASSROOM-BASED ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Absences

Encore is a seat-based traditional program UNLESS you have signed an independent study agreement. The state projects that all seat-based schools will have an attendance rate of 95% or higher. This means that all students are required to attend school 95% or more during the school year.

### Did You Know?

Any child that misses more than 9 school days over the course of the school year is considered a high risk student for graduation? When a student misses more than 9 school days, they are listed as a chronically absent student and is placed in this high risk category. One of Encore's LCAP goals for this school year is to lower the percentage of chronically absent students.

**YOU CANNOT MISS A DAY OF SCHOOL, THEN PARTICIPATE IN AN AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY.** – This includes rehearsals, shows, dances, field trips, mock trial, concerts, spelling bees, and any other school activity that takes place outside of school hours. We know the schedule is hectic, but your first commitment is to your regular school day. **If you miss school on Friday, you are ineligible to participate in weekend activities (like prom or shows).**

Students will be given an opportunity to complete work, which is reasonably close to, but not necessarily identical to, missed work for full credit within a reasonable time to make up work. Encore encourages all students to sign an independent study / short term agreement that can help students recover attendance for absences that happen throughout the school year using [encorestudent.com](http://encorestudent.com), Cyber High, and Google classroom to complete schoolwork even when not on campus. With the technology resources available, it is important to log on to school every day.

Periodically, Encore students will be offered an opportunity to makeup absent days on minimum days and Saturday Absence School to help students retain good attendance. If a student misses a day of school, they should prepare to complete work off site using an approved agreement OR come to makeup absent days to complete scheduled assignments.

### Excused Absences

There will be times when missing a day of school or arriving late will be unavoidable. At Encore, there are very specific reasons that are outlined as excused absences. Any absence for a reason that is not listed here is an unexcused absence, whether or not a parent or guardian clears it.

- Personal Illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health
- (Encore will require a doctor's note verifying absence after 8 days of missed school due to illness in a single school year.)

- Personal medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic appointment. Students in grades 7-12, inclusive, may be excused from school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.
- Funeral services for a member of the immediate family (limited to one day in state and three days out of state)
- Jury duty
- Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the student is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child. (The school does not require a note from the doctor for this excusal).
- To permit the student to spend time with an immediate family member who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Charter School.
- For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Election Code section 12302.
- Attendance at the student's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
- Authorized parental leave for a pregnant or parenting student for up to eight (8) weeks, which may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician.
- Authorized at the discretion of the Executive Director or designee, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.
- A student who holds a work permit to work for a period of not more than five (5) consecutive days in the entertainment or allied industries shall be excused from school during the period that the student is working in the entertainment or allied industry for a maximum of up to five (5) absences per school year subject to the requirements of Education Code section 48225.5.
- In order to participate with a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public-school student audience for a maximum of up to five (5) days per school year provided the student's parent or guardian provides a written note to the school authorities explaining the reason for the student's absence.
- For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event. "Cultural" for these purposes means relating to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.

- For the purpose of a middle or high school pupil engaging in a civic or political event as indicated below, provided that the pupil notifies the school ahead of the absence. A “civic or political event” includes, but is not limited to, voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls.
  - A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to this provision is required to be excused for only one schoolday-long absence per school year.
  - A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to this provision may be permitted additional excused absences in the discretion of a school administrator.
- For the following justifiable personal reasons for a maximum of five (5) school days per school year, upon advance written request by the student’s parent or guardian and approval by the Executive Director or designee pursuant to uniform standards:
  - Appearance in court.
  - Observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil’s religion.
  - Attendance at religious retreats.
  - Attendance at an employment conference.
  - Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization.
- Exclusion from school because student is either the carrier of a contagious disease or not immunized for a contagious disease.

### Unexcused Absences

The following list of UNEXCUSED reasons for absences will be marked as unexcused, not cleared absences. Although sometimes unavoidable, these are not accepted reasons for absences.

- Bus not available lack of transportation
- Going to work with parent or other family member
- Babysitting, taking care of other family members
- Personal problems
- Waiting for service or repair people to arrive
- Vacation, family reunions, camping, going to the beach, lake, river, amusement park, mountains
- Attending a sporting event
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs, joy riding or partying
- Repairing car or household items
- Participating in a student demonstration
- Any other reason not included in the list of “excused Absences”

### Absence Procedure

When a student is absent, the parent is to call the office the day of the absence at 760-956-2632. A written note stating the reason and date(s) of the absence is also required the day the student returns to school. Parents can also fill out the absence verification form on the school’s website. Please include the following information in the note:

- Student's full legal name (please print name clearly)
- The day(s) and date(s) of absence(s)
- Reason for the absence
- Writer's name and the relationship to the student
- Home and work phone numbers

All absences not cleared within three days will be considered truanancies and will be counted in assigning Attendance Codes. "Class Cut" days are NOT sanctioned by Encore and any such absences will be considered truanancies. Students who do not maintain 90% attendance (unexcused or unverified absences) will not be able to take part in traditional school activities such as extracurricular activities, performances, dances, field trips, etc.

If a student needs to be picked up from school, the guardian must report to the attendance office. Students will not be pulled from class the last 30 minutes of any school day. We apologize for the inconvenience, but we cannot pull students from class until their ride has arrived on campus.

As a true pre-college block schedule, attendance is very important to every student every day. If a student misses five class meetings within a single class that is the equivalent of two weeks of missed coursework in that class. Parents, if you attended college after high school, think of how much course content you would miss if you did not attend five classes during a single term. Many college professors drop you after two to three consecutive absences. The Encore classes are pre-college paced. Help us help your students by making sure that they attend school every day.

### Homework for extended leave

If a student is going on vacation or family business for two (2) or more days, a parent may request the student be put on independent study. This must be done at least four (4) days before the student leaves. A parent will need to sign a contract agreeing that their student will complete the assigned work. Assigned work will be available for pick-up in the front office prior to leaving. Upon return to school, the student is to turn in the work to the office for processing. If a student is ill and will be missing two or more days, they can also go on independent study if the parent notifies our independent study coordinator and the student can complete the work while at home.

### Office Tardies

If a student is late for class in the morning, they will receive an office tardy. The student will be required to scan their identification (ID) card at the main office before proceeding to class. Office tardies are cumulative for the semester.

### Class Tardies

If a student is late for class during the school day, they will receive a class tardy. Class tardies are recorded by the office. Parents are called using an automated system after the first class tardy. Class tardies are recorded by semester. Disciplinary actions are cumulative for the span of the semester.

## Attendance Eligibility

It is crucial for the success of a student at Encore both academically and in the arts departments to attend school every day. With Encore's full calendar and block scheduling, miss a day miss a lot.

- Students cannot participate in any event on a day that they are absent.
- If the event happens over the weekend, the student must be present on Friday.
- Students with less than a 90% attendance rate are not eligible to participate in productions, teams, or competitions.

Students can alleviate absenteeism by signing up for short term independent study and long term independent study. Encore will help with attendance success. See your counselor for tailored ideas.

## Incentivizing Good Attendance

Encore Education Corporation has always had attendance incentives for the students. Encore is currently working on new ideas and "games" that can be added to give appropriate incentives to students to have good attendance.

Some attendance incentives that have been executed in the past:

- \$10 off letterman's jacket coupons for each month of perfect attendance
- Earning of a Varsity letter for any student with a 95% or higher attendance rate annually
- Scholarships for perfect attendance since kindergarten
- Participation in "It's a Gas" car giveaways in the high desert
- Certificates for perfect attendance
- Recognition for improved attendance
- Special field trips for students with perfect attendance
- Attendance requirements of 92% or better to participate in productions and special events

## Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

The Executive Director, or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, including working with the family in an attempt to resolve the attendance problem. A student's progress and learning may be affected by excessive unexcused absences. In addition, the Charter School is fiscally dependent on student attendance and is negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences. If all attempts to resolve the student's attendance problem are unsuccessful, the Charter School will implement the processes described below.

## Process for Addressing Truancy

1. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Executive Director or designee. The student's classroom teacher may also call home.
  2. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Executive Director or designee. In addition, the student's classroom teacher may also call home and/or the Charter School may send the parent an e-mail notification. In addition, upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes in a school year, the parent/guardian will receive **"Truancy Letter #1 – Truancy Classification Notice"** from the Charter School notifying the parent/guardian of the student's "Truant" status. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Charter School. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy. This letter, and all subsequent letter(s) sent home, shall be sent by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, or some other form of mail that can be tracked. This letter shall be re-sent after a fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence.
  3. Upon reaching five (5) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive **"Truancy Letter #2 – Habitual Truant Classification Notice and Conference Request,"** notifying the parent/guardian of the student's "Habitual Truant" status and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to review the student's records and develop an intervention plan/contract. In addition, the Charter School will consult with a school counselor regarding the appropriateness of a home visitation and/or case management.
  4. Upon reaching six (6) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive a **"Truancy Letter #3 – Referral to SART Meeting"** and the student will be referred to a Student Success Team (SST) and the SART.
2. If the conditions of the SART contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from the Charter School, consistent with the Involuntary Removal Process described below. If the student is disenrolled after the Involuntary Removal Process has been followed, notification will be sent within thirty (30) days to the student's last known school district of residence.

3. For all communications set forth in this process, the Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to update the Charter School with any new contact information.
4. If a student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and the student's parent/guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to the Charter School's communication attempts, as set forth above, the student will be in violation of the SART contract, and the SART panel will recommend that the student be disenrolled in compliance with the Involuntary Removal Process described below. The Involuntary Removal Process can be started immediately upon the Charter School receiving documentation of the student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., a CALPADS report).

#### Process for Students Who Are Not in Attendance at the Beginning of the School Year

When a student is not in attendance on the first five (5) days of the school year, the Charter School will attempt to reach the student's parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first five (5) days to determine whether the student has an excused absence, consistent with the process outlined in this policy. If the student has a basis for an excused absence, the student's parent/guardian must notify the Charter School of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, consistent with process below, students who are not in attendance by the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) day of the school year due to an unexcused absence will be disenrolled from the Charter School roster after following the Involuntary Removal Process described below, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of the school year will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll in the Charter School.
2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive a letter indicating the student's risk of disenrollment.
3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.



4. Students who are not in attendance by the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive an Involuntary Removal Notice and the CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form. The Charter School will follow the Involuntary Removal Process described below, which includes an additional five (5) schooldays for the parent/guardian to respond to the Charter School and request a hearing before disenrollment.
5. The Involuntary Removal Process can be started immediately upon the Charter School receiving documentation of the student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., a CALPADS report).
6. The Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.
7. Within thirty (30) calendar days of disenrollment, the Charter School will send the student's last known school district of residence a letter notifying it of the student's failure to attend the Charter School.

### Involuntary Removal Process

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of the Charter School's intent to remove the student ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The Involuntary Removal Notice must be provided to the parent or guardian no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the proposed disenrollment date.

The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include:

1. The charges against the student
2. An explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action
3. The CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form

The hearing shall be consistent with the Charter School's expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but

does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon a parent's or guardian's request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder and shall include a copy of the Charter School's expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing, the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If as a result of the hearing the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) calendar days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

#### [Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney](#)

It is the Charter School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student's success, and the Charter School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, the Charter School may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a student's attendance does not improve after a SART contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents/guardians fail to attend a required SART meeting, the Charter School shall notify the County District Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Students twelve (12) years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

#### [Non-Discrimination](#)

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Penal Code

section 422.55, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

### Reports

The Executive Director, or designee, shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as students who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.

