



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the intent of the Governing Board (“Board”) of the Academy of Alameda (“AoA” or the “Charter School”) to ensure that students attend school every day on time. Consistent school attendance is critical to school success. Being present for classroom instructional time is essential for students to reach their goals and achieve academic, social and behavioral success in preparation for the next grade level and beyond. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, disengagement from school and behavior challenges.

Communication with Student and Families

The Academy of Alameda will offer interpretation/translation services to students and families to make sure that two-way communication is clear and understood when developing collaborative attendance support plans, during SART meetings, when notifying families, etc.

Definitions

- “*Tardy*”: Students shall be classified as tardy if the student arrives any time after the official school start time.
- “*Unexcused Absence*”: Students shall have an unexcused absence if the student is absent or is tardy for more than thirty (30) minutes without a valid excuse.
- “*Truant*”: Students shall be classified as truant (under state law) if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse three (3) full days in one school year, or if the student is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three (3) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Any student who has once been reported as truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be deemed truant. The names of such students will be forwarded to the principal/s or designee to initiate a collaborative process to support the student.
- “*Chronic Truant*”: Students shall be classified as chronically truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for ten (10) percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date.
- “*School Attendance Review Team (“SART”)*”: The SART panel will be composed of designated personnel including the principal, dean of students and a counseling staff member. The SART panel will discuss the absence challenges with the student and their Parent/Guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and student’s family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.

1. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign a collaboratively developed attendance agreement that specifies actions to be taken by AoA including those actions listed in the Process for Addressing Truancy referenced in this policy. The collaborative process will include input from designated school staff, the student and their parent/guardian. In addition to specifying corrective actions, the SART panel may include consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the contract including:
 - a. School event related privileges
 - b. Mandatory tutorial attendance in a specific class or some other specified time*
 - c. Lunch time detention in order to make up missed work*

*Every effort will be made to provide students with academic support
2. The SART panel may discuss other school placement options.
3. Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as required by law or permitted under this Attendance Policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health;
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer;
3. Medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic appointments;
 - a. Students in grades 7-8, inclusive, may be excused from school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the student's family;
 - a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one (1) day if the service is conducted in California or three (3) days if the service is conducted out of state.
 - b. "Family" shall be defined by the student and/or parent/guardian as anyone with whom the student has a close and familial-like relationship (or at the discretion of the school administrator per #10 below)
5. Participation in religious instruction or exercises as follows:
 - a. The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four (4) school days per month.
6. To permit the student to spend time with an immediate family member who is or will be separated from the student for a sustained period of time for reasons to include:
 - a. Military deployment (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.

b. Detainment (immigrant or criminal) or deportation

c. Hospitalization or other health related treatment

Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Charter School.

7. For purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Election Code section 12302.
8. Attendance at the student's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
9. 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.
10. Authorization at the discretion of a school administrator, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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 school principal or designee pursuant to uniform standards:
 - a. Appearance in court
 - b. Attendance at an employment conference
 - c. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization

A student who is absent due to an excused absence will be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the excused absence that can be reasonably provided and will receive full credit upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time. The teacher of the class from which a student is absent shall determine which tests and assignments are reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the excused absence.

Method of Verification

When students who have been absent return to school, they are required to present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Signed written note from parent/guardian or parent representative

2. Conversation, in person, by telephone, or through an online attendance platform, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student;
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative;
 - c. Name of verifying employee;
 - d. Date or dates of absence; and
 - e. Reason for absence.
3. Healthcare provider's verification;
 - a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, school staff shall not ask for the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
 - b. A healthcare provider's note of illness will be accepted for any reported absence. When a student has had fourteen (14) absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-#3 above without a healthcare provider's note, any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider.

Insofar as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

Students should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency or for students in grades 7 through 8, inclusive, who may be excused from school to obtain confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent/guardian.

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 principal or designee after first talking to the student.. 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 principal or designee. In addition, the student's classroom teacher may also call home and/or the Charter School may send the parent an email 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 (4th) unexcused absence.
3. Upon reaching five (5) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive "**Truancy Letter #2 and a 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 or other designated staff member 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.
4. 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 district of residence.
5. 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.
6. If student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and 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 may 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 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 (6th) day of the school year due to an unexcused absence may 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 (1st) 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 (3rd) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will be contacted by email indicating the student’s risk of disenrollment.
3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the fifth (5th) 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 (6th) 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 for any students who have not attended by the sixth (6th) day, and do not have an excused absence.
5. The Involuntary Removal Process can be started immediately upon the Charter School receiving documentation of 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 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 reason/s for involuntarily removing 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 parent/guardian 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 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 reoccur.

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.

Non-Classroom Based Programs

All attendance for non-classroom based programs shall be in accordance with current law and regulations.

Adopted: May 17, 2011

Revision Date: [INSERT]