REACH
CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL
Reach your potential

Attendance Policy

Purpose

The Board recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.

Authority

The Board requires attendance of all students in accordance with this policy. Temporary student absences may be excused by authorized School staff in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations. School administrators – including the chief administrator – may not alter an attendance record taken by a teacher, unless the alteration corrects an error as required by Section 1327.2(a.1)(2) of the Public School Code.

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Definitions

Compulsory school age **shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter school and which shall be no later than 6 years of age until the child reaches 18 years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school." 24 P.S. §13-1326.**

Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.

Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.

Guidelines

Attendance and Presence for Instruction

Each year, the Board approves a school calendar consisting of a minimum of 180 school days.

Students in Reach have no physical classrooms but still must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools in Pennsylvania. These requirements include attending school for the required number of days and/or completing a required number of

instructional hours. Caretakers and students are jointly responsible for ensuring students meet the attendance requirements. School authorities are responsible for enforcing attendance laws. Students not attending school as mandated by law will be considered truant.

In accordance with SB 315: A child who is habitually truant may not transfer, during the school year, to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child.

Although there is more flexibility in the Reach program than in a traditional school setting regarding instructional time, students are still expected to follow the school calendar.

Additional Requirements by Pennsylvania: A cyber charter school shall, at least once during any week consisting of at least three full or partial days of academic instruction, ensure that each enrolled student is able to be visibly seen and communicated with in real time by a teacher, administrator or other representative of the cyber charter school, either in person or via electronic means, in order to ensure the well-being of the student and verify participation in the educational program. The requirement under this subsection may be satisfied by students turning on a webcam during synchronous online instruction.

Reach Cyber Charter has established weekly benchmark completion for participating in asynchronous instruction in Canvas. Benchmarks are defined as weekly graded assignments in each course. Students must submit these benchmarks in the order they are assigned weekly in order to be considered present asynchronously. Failure to submit weekly benchmarks will result in absences (excused via formal request to the attendance department, or unexcused if no request has been approved) if the student does not participate synchronously during that week for the days they did not submit their benchmarks.

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Minimum Requirements for Administrative Guidelines or Regulations

The administrative guidelines or regulations developed by the CEO or designee under this policy shall, at a minimum:

1. Detail the process for monitoring and maintaining accurate attendance records.
2. Detail the reasons that an absence will be considered excused or unexcused.
3. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for absences.
4. Detail the process for making corrections to an attendance record.
5. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, and referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the appropriate local child and youth agency, or the appropriate judge.
6. Ensure that learners who complete assigned work are not counted as absent. An administrator may only alter an attendance record to correct an error.
7. Explain the process for determining when a learner is present for synchronous instruction or asynchronous instruction and completing defined benchmarks, to ensure

the learner is making adequate and consistent progress toward completion of each course in which the learner is enrolled.

8. Explain the attendance consequences for a learner who fails to make adequate and consistent progress toward completion of each course in which the learner is enrolled.
9. Comply with the requirements of Article XIII of the School Code and Chapter 11 of the State Board of Education regulations.

Response to Unexcused Absences and Truancy

Reach Cyber Charter School will work closely with families in the event a student has unexcused absences from school. Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to prevent truancy and improve student attendance and achievement. The process below is outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and is consistent with compulsory attendance laws of the state of Pennsylvania.

Unexcused Absences	**Plan of Action**
First and Second (1-2) unexcused absence	Caretakers will receive a notification that the absence is unexcused from the previous week. Teachers, family mentors, and school counselors reach out to support the student with getting back on track.
Third (3rd) unexcused absence	Caretakers will receive a phone call and written notification of three (3) unexcused absences via email and USPS. The notice shall also inform the parent/guardian that a child who is habitually truant may not transfer to another cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child. Invites will be sent for a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). Caretakers will receive a phone call and email, which will outline next steps with regard to a mandatory School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) with school staff. Three (3) attempts will be made to hold a meeting with the caretaker to discuss the SAIP;

	however, the meeting can be conducted without the caretaker if they are unable to attend. Students with an IEP or 504 will be contacted about an additional meeting to review attendance concerns. Teachers, family mentors, and school counselors continue to reach out to support the student with getting back on track.
Fourth (4th) unexcused absence and fifth (5th) unexcused absence.	Caretakers will receive a notification that the absence is unexcused from the previous week. Teachers, family mentors, and school counselors continue to reach out to support the student with getting back on track.
Habitually truant status (having six (6) or more unexcused absences during the current school year)	Caretakers will be notified by phone call and email of absences, will be assigned a truancy officer, and invited to attend a truancy diversionary program live lesson. The notice shall also inform the parent/guardian that a child who is habitually truant may not transfer to another cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child. For students under fifteen (15) years of age, the school will make a referral to other community-based attendance improvement programs or Children and Youth in the student's local area. Truancy charges may also be filed at the local Magistrate. For students fifteen (15) years of age and older, the school will make a referral to other community-based attendance improvement programs in the student's local area. Truancy charges may also be

	filed at the local Magistrate. Children and Youth may also be contacted if the student does not attend the community program. Students residing in Philadelphia County will be referred to the Go Program through the District Attorney's Office. Teachers, family mentors, and school counselors continue to reach out to support the student with getting back on track.

Discipline

Reach shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment, or transfer for truant behavior of learners who are of compulsory attendance age or for learners who are not making adequate and consistent progress toward completion of the courses in which the learner is enrolled.

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Collaboration

Reach shall cooperate with other local educational agencies, county children and youth agencies, and/or judicial authorities when a learner who enrolls in Reach has already been referred by his/her former school for services or prosecution for violating the compulsory school attendance requirements.

Reach shall identify and collaborate with existing community-based attendance improvement programs or initiatives for learner referrals. When a community-based program is not available, Reach shall develop a school-based attendance improvement program on a case-by-case basis.

Reports to PDE

Reach will submit monthly reports to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) for students who have been found to be truant or habitually truant.

Reach will annually report all unexcused absences to PDE through PIMS.

Reach will report information related to student attendance to the Secretary of Education as required by law.

Distribution of Policy

At the beginning of each school year, or upon enrollment during the school year, the CEO or designee will notify learners and parents/guardians of Reach's attendance policy and guidelines.

The CEO or designee will also publish information about the policy and guidelines in Reach's Student Handbook and post the policy on Reach's publicly accessible website.

History:

Adopted

Legal Ref.:

24 P.S. §§ 13-1301 – 13-1345

24 P.S. § 15-1546

24 P.S. § 17-1743-A(d)

42 Pa.C.S. § 6302

22 Pa. Code Ch. 11

22 Pa. Code § 12.1

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