

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define student attendance and to provide structure for the procedures regarding student attendance, truancy, educational neglect, and enrollment. Because of the nature of being an online charter school, the definition of student attendance is not based entirely on seat time in a physical location but rather on engagement in coursework by the student. This policy also recognizes that student attendance and course completion are a joint responsibility to be shared by the students and their parents or guardians. In accordance with Minnesota state laws concerning student attendance, the policy also includes the school's truancy intervention processes.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Attendance is required of all full-time students enrolled in the charter school. State law requires that children attend school from age 7, or upon enrollment in school, until age 18. In accordance with MN state laws, students who are not in attendance for 15 consecutive school days will be dropped from school enrollment. Additionally, students residing out of state for 15 consecutive school days will also be dropped from school enrollment. How attendance is tracked, how the school intervenes when attendance is excessive, and to which other agencies the school must report depends upon the age of the particular student in question. See Section IV for these procedures.

The charter school recognizes that the responsibility for student attendance belongs to the students and their parents/guardians in a partnership for overall communication and learning. The different responsibilities are as follows:

1.) Students' Responsibilities

- a. Grades 6-12: Students are expected to make adequate daily progress: staying on track with the due dates in Edgenuity, Canvas, Google Classroom or individual plan from the Learning Coach. To be marked present in the online program, students must login AND complete at least one activity or assignment on school days. An absence occurs if a student does not login or complete any work. If a student logs in and does not do work, the attendance will be considered a tardy. Three tardies will equal one unexcused absence in the student's overall attendance count.
 - i. Weekend work: Attendance is expected on and only recorded for school days per the board approved school calendar. However, up to 2 days, maximum, for any weekend, extended weekend or holiday preceding a school week may be applied to the following school week in lieu of any potential absences. This policy only stands in place for days where work is turned in on a weekend, extended weekend, or holiday (tardies will not be applied), and these days cannot be banked to use at a later time.
- b. Grades K-5: Students are expected to make adequate weekly progress and attend daily meetings with the teacher. To be marked present, students must either attend the daily meeting with their teacher or login to the Edgenuity system and open their course folder. Tardies will not be given for students in the K-5 program due to the nature of the LMS platform and its functionality.
- c. Adhere to computer/internet back up plan, as agreed upon and signed off on in student's enrollment paperwork, in the event of technology issues that would otherwise prevent school attendance.

- d. Students communicate questions, computer problems, and school struggles with the school as soon as issues occur and maintain daily/weekly contact with their teachers, learning coaches, and other support staff. This includes responding to and initiating emails and phone calls/texts and responding to requests from school personnel in a timely manner.
- e. Students attend all required in-person testing days in required locations. Testing dates and locations are determined by the school and will be made available to students and parents/guardians prior to the testing windows.
- f. Finish required coursework by the scheduled end date relative to the current school term. For students who finish required coursework early, attendance will continue to be marked present for the remainder of the term, but the following expectations will remain in place:
 - i. Students should continue to login to the online classroom, daily, for accountability.
 - ii. Students should keep up with all school communications via text, phone, or email.
 - iii. Students should continue to check-in weekly, with their learning coach.
 - iv. Students who are behind in their credit needs for graduation may be eligible to take an additional course (does not apply to students who are on track with credits, already)

2.) Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

- a. Parents/guardians ensure that the student is making adequate daily/weekly progress.
- b. Parents/guardians provide the student with access to the necessary tools for student success.
- c. Parents/guardians inform the school in the event of an excusable student absence.
- d. Parents/guardians work cooperatively with the school and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise and take an active role in supporting the student in course completion.

3.) The Charter School's Responsibilities

- a. The charter school will monitor attendance, maintain accurate attendance records, and apply attendance policies uniformly.
- b. The charter school will provide reports to parents/guardians and students concerning progress and inform students and parents/guardians of any attendance issues.
- c. The charter school will work cooperatively with students and their parents/guardians to resolve any attendance problems that may arise.

III. DEFINITIONS

Absence – The failure of a student to attend school virtually via one of the charter school's course delivery systems and/or the failure to complete coursework. Whether an absence is excused or unexcused (as defined below), students are required to make up all work and continue toward successful completion of coursework in order to receive credit in accordance with the policy which governs the granting of credits. Students can avoid having absences (whether excused or unexcused) tracked by making adequate daily/weekly progress in their assigned coursework and maintaining consistency with daily login to the online course platforms.

Attendance – Attendance is not based on a student's physical attendance in any one location at any given time, with the exception of required in person testing. Attendance at an online school is evidenced by daily, consistent login and work completion which contributes to the student's ability to stay on track with due dates in Edgenuity, Canvas, Google Classroom, or with a Learning Coach. Due to ongoing enrollment, students that are not enrolled for the full semester may be given a reduced workload to accommodate realistic work completion expectations.

Days of attendance – Days of Attendance are student's active days which are determined by a student signing into their online classrooms and completing coursework.

Excused absence – An acceptable absence as determined by the school. The burden of proof for a student being excused from school is placed on the parent/guardian of the student. *Please note:* students may access and attend school virtually from their home 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Excused absences should be few, far between, and due to extreme circumstances. The very nature of an online school allows students to maintain attendance in circumstances that would ordinarily prevent them from attending school.

The following reasons are examples which are recognized by the school as legitimate absences:

- a) Parent/guardian/doctor verified illness: an absence verified by a parent/guardian or doctor, in writing. The excuse should specify the health condition and why it prevents attendance at the online school. Absences, due to illness, that exceed three days require a doctor's note. Should the illness prevent them from attending school virtually from their home, a doctor's note is required to verify the severity of the illness and the length of time anticipated that the student would not be able to work online.
- b) Bereavement: an absence/s resulting from a serious illness, injury or death of an immediate family member, relative, or someone in close relation to the student.
- c) School directed activities: absences for field trips, athletic trips, music trips or other school activities planned by the school.
- d) Prearranged vacations/travel: an exceptional circumstance which requires families to take a vacation or travel during the school year. A pre-approved absence must be submitted by email from the legal parent/ guardian to the attendance coordinator **in advance** and be approved by the school prior to the absence in order for the absence to be excused. The student needs to work with their learning coach to make a plan for catching up/working ahead on the work that they will miss and follow through on this plan for the absences/tardies to be excused. Students who are significantly behind in coursework are not guaranteed to have their absences excused.
- e) Suspension: as defined by the charter school board of directors.
- f) Court appearances: an absence by a student who has been court ordered to appear and the absence has been previously arranged by the parent/guardian with the school. Proof of court order and of actual appearance is required to verify this type of absence.
- g) Computer problems: an absence by a student whose computer access is not working. This problem must be resolved within 24 hours. A maximum of 1 day can be excused for this reason. Students should use the agreed upon backup plan as listed on the signed enrollment forms.
- h) Exceptional circumstances: any other circumstances where permission may be granted at the discretion of the school, which is coordinated by the parent/guardian with the school, in advance, or as the occasion arises. Examples would be childbirth, hospitalization, detention center, family emergencies, etc.

Without advance notification (illness, emergency, etc.), we still encourage families to have their students make the effort of meeting the minimum attendance requirement for the day/s, when possible.

Examples:

- A student who needs to miss school for illness could use their phone, while resting in bed, to login and turn in one assignment to meet the minimum attendance requirements for the day when they would otherwise have to miss an entire day in a seat-based setting.

- A student who has an appointment/s and would otherwise need to be pulled out of a seat-based setting would have the option to meet their attendance requirements before/after the time of their appointment.

Unexcused absence - An absence that is not recognized by the school as legitimate. Unexcused absences are tracked for truancy and enrollment purposes. After any unexcused absence occurs, students are expected to return to successful completion of coursework in order to avoid truancy consequences and/or losing their enrollment in the charter school. The following are examples of unacceptable reasons for absence and will be considered an unexcused absence:

- Car trouble
- Overslept; alarm did not work
- Appointments - student's work is available 24/7 and attendance requirements can be met before or after the time of an appointment
- Shopping
- Required to perform duties at home (i.e. babysitting, cleaning, or caring for a family member/relative) that interfere with student's ability to complete schoolwork
- Family vacation/travel (not pre-approved)
- Death of pet
- Work
- No email or call from the parent/guardian verifying the absence
- Computer issues of more than one 24 hour period
- Personal (no reason given)
- Truancy, as defined in this document
- Other absences as determined on a case by case basis

Extended absences – An absence of more than five consecutive school days. Students who accrue more than **five** consecutive absences must provide documentation for the absences to be considered excused absences. Students who are unable to provide this documentation are subject to attendance and truancy policies. Students who accrue **ten** consecutive absences will be warned that they are jeopardizing their enrollment in the charter school. Students who accrue **fifteen** consecutive unexcused absences will be dropped from the enrollment of the charter school, and, thereafter, would need **to meet with a school representative (learning coach, director, case manager, social worker, etc...)** in order to be admitted back into the program. No credit is earned in the time the student is not enrolled.

****If CCS Online has an active enrollment waitlist, students that are dropped at fifteen days are not eligible to be admitted, immediately, back into their coursework and will be required to go to the end of the waitlist until space becomes available in the program.**

A student absent for an extended period of time, due to illness, is eligible for a leave of absence. Parents/guardians should contact the school director to make these arrangements.

Truancy – Truancy does not apply to students 18 years old or older. **Students between the age of 12 and 17 are considered truant when they accrue a minimum of at least 3 total unexcused absences for the**

duration of their enrollment period. A student with at least 3 cumulative absences is considered a continuing truant, whereas a student with at least 7 cumulative absences is considered a habitual truant.

Educational Neglect - Minnesota Law presumes that it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure attendance for children age 11 and younger. Seven unexcused absences in a school year meet state guidelines for educational neglect which assumes the parent/guardian has failed to comply with their responsibility and the school has made efforts to remedy the attendance concerns.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Enrollment at MN schools requires attendance. By law, students who accrue 15 consecutive unexcused absences are dropped from the charter school enrollment. This policy applies **to all full-time students** regardless of the age of the student. For students who are **18 years of age and older**, truancy does not apply; however, attendance is still monitored in order to comply with the Minnesota Statute concerning enrollment in the charter school. Student attendance data is available upon request or can be viewed in the JMC parent portal but will be reviewed on a weekly basis, or as needed, to address necessary interventions. In addition, students/parents have access to session logs which record activity in the online classroom.
1. When a student has accrued **five days of consecutive unexcused absences**, the charter school sends notification, **via email** and U.S. Mail to the student and parents/guardians regarding the absences along with the warning that continued absence totaling 15 consecutive school days will result in loss of enrollment in the charter school.
 2. When a student has accrued **ten days of consecutive unexcused absences**, the charter school sends notification, **via email** and U.S. Mail to the student and parents/guardians regarding the absences along with the warning that continued absence totaling 15 consecutive school days will result in their loss of enrollment in the charter school.
 3. When a student has accrued **15 days of consecutive unexcused absences**, the school is required by Minnesota statute to drop the student from enrollment and sends notification via email and U.S. Mail to student/parent/guardian of that fact.
 - i. If a student enrolls while they are a MN resident, but later moves or takes an extended trip out of state, they must be unenrolled from the date they became a non-Minnesota resident. Once the student has been out of the state for 15 consecutive school days, the student is considered to have been absent and needs to be withdrawn.
- B. For students who are under **18 years of age**, enrollment laws, as well as truancy laws, apply. The charter school must comply with the truancy procedures of each individual county in which students reside. For truancy purposes, absences are totaled as a cumulative count. The absences do not need to be consecutive school days for truancy to be in effect. In addition, the school tracks consecutive absences in order to comply with the Minnesota statutes concerning enrollment.
1. At the point a student becomes a continuing truant (**3 cumulative days of unexcused absences**), the school will intervene as seen appropriate. This may result in sending an email warning notification or a 3 day warning letter via email and U.S. Mail to the student and parent/s guardians.
 2. At the point a student becomes a habitual truant (**7 cumulative days of unexcused absences**), the school will send a 7 day warning letter via email and U.S. Mail to the student and parent/s guardians.
 3. If absences continue to accrue after these interventions, the school will arrange for an attendance contract meeting with the student and parents/guardians. Failure to adhere to the agreed upon contract may result in truancy referral to the student's county of residence.

- C. Depending on the policies and procedures of a student's county of residence, the student will be referred to the county for early intervention when appropriate for the specific county.
- D. For students age 11 and younger, the aforementioned procedures will remain in place and the school will work with individual counties of residence and Child Protective services in the event that an Educational Neglect case needs to be reported.