



# Attendance Policy and Information

## DAILY ATTENDANCE

Daily school attendance is not just a matter of law. Regular attendance in school is a critical factor in a student's progress and academic success. Much of our curricular approach is directed by hands-on activities. This type of instruction requires your child's attendance in school as much as possible. Teaching our children the importance of self-discipline, responsibility, perseverance and a strong work ethic is essential to their success in life. It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian to ensure their student gets to school every day unless the child is truly ill or possibly contagious. All family vacations should be scheduled during school breaks and holidays. Challenge Charter School supports parent/guardians and students in their efforts to develop habits that result in good attendance in several ways: by making recognition of outstanding attendance part of our award program, by providing limited bus service, and by creating exciting classroom activities.

## ABSENCES

When your student(s) miss school, it is your responsibility to notify the school. Please call the school's ATTENDANCE LINE AT 602-938-5411 as soon as you know that your child will be absent. If you reach the office voicemail system, please choose the attendance extension or general voicemail box and leave a message with your student's name, the reason for the absence, and how many days your student(s) will be out. This voicemail system operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The school must legally account for EACH day a student misses. Therefore, you must notify EACH day that your student(s) is out of school, not just the first day, unless you have provided written notice excusing your student for a block of time or provided the office the proper documentation [forms available at front desk] regarding chronic illness, surgery etc. Even if you have notified your teacher, you must directly notify the school office. An absence is unexcused if a parent/guardian has not called to excuse it before the end of the same school day or if the parent has not provided a written note from the doctor/dentist/Medical Care organization, etc. after the sixth parental excuse. Legally, an absence cannot be excused after that day without documentation of circumstances creating a unique attendance issue. Please schedule vacations during school breaks.

In order for a student to qualify for attending a full day of school, that student must attend greater than 75% of *scheduled instruction time*. In order to qualify for a half day of attendance, the student must attend greater than 50% of *scheduled instruction time*. Partial absences and unexcused tardies cumulate and are reported as full day absences. Students do not qualify for the CCS perfect attendance award if they have *any* full day absences. However, students may have *one* ½ day absence per trimester and still qualify for the perfect attendance award.

A student will be permitted to be excused from school attendance for religious purposes, including participation in religious exercises or religious instruction as long as these days fall into the six days allowed by the school attendance policy, and the guardian or parent has provided a written consent.

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TRUANCY

A parent can only excuse 6 days of absences. After those 6 days, a student must have a written doctor/dentist/Medical Care Center PA or an authorized & documented family emergency leave (family funeral/car accident/etc.) to be considered an excused absence. A student is subject to truancy hearing with the School Advisory Council after 5 unexcused or 18 total absences per year (unless chronic illness paperwork has been completed by a doctor and is on file for the student.) **We will and we have referred students to Juvenile Court.** Excessive absences of more than 10% of the days enrolled are one of the factors that are taken into consideration in making the decision to promote or retain a student at the end of the year.

With the exception of long-term, serious illness, state statute requires a student who is absent for 10 consecutive unexcused days to be withdrawn from school. If a student is withdrawn due to non-attendance it will be necessary for the parent/guardian to go through the formal process of re-enrolling the child, if there is space available, when they wish to return to school.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR and DAILY SCHEDULE

The school calendar is established by the Board of Directors each year and meets or exceeds the state requirements for number of school days. With our extended day we significantly exceed the required number of hours of instruction each year (nearly 20% more). The academic day for our students is from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Students may arrive on campus NO EARLIER than 8:00 am and must be picked up by 3:45 pm, unless they are participating in our after school programs. After school programs are offered to all students on a first come basis as availability allows and if all necessary enrollment paperwork for the program has been completed by the parent/guardian and is on file. Please check with the office for the current schedule and enrollment requirements.

## MAKING UP CLASS WORK

It is the student's responsibility to make up any and all work missed during an absence. The normal grace period is two days for each day missed. Because of Challenge Charter School's emphasis on a student's active participation in their classroom learning rather than just textbook or worksheet activities, in most cases: it is not possible to provide work in advance for students who will miss school for trips or other activities. For the same reason, it may not be possible for a student to make up some parts of classes missed even for reasons of legitimate illness. If such an activity is part of a student's grade, an alternate assignment will be provided or the missed grade will simply not be included in the child's trimester average when the absence is due to documented illness. If you request make-up work for an illness and it can be accommodated, expect AT LEAST one-day turn-around, if not more. Due to the hands-on nature of our classrooms, your teacher will have to convert and prepare this work for your student during her preparation times, often in the mornings or afternoons outside of normal school hours, and cannot make it available on the same day of the absence or request. At the discretion of the Principal, students may not be allowed to make up missed work due to an unexcused absence or suspension.

Different rules apply to late or incomplete work for students who did not miss class. Work turned in after the due date or turned in incomplete will be docked points or in some cases, may not be accepted at all.

## TARDINESS

A student is considered tardy when the student is not in his or her assigned area promptly at 8:30 am. A warning bell rings at 8:25 am and the final bell rings at 8:30 am. Please note that times set on different clocks may vary. The bells ring according to the time the school clock is set (aligned regularly with the National Atomic Clock). Please adjust your student's school schedule according to the school clock. Students who arrive late must report to the office unless there is a Teacher's Assistant signing in tardy students at the East or West gate (shortly after the bell). **The tardy is excused if it meets State Law and/or is accompanied by a medical services note. Four (4) unexcused tardies will result in one (1) unexcused absence.** As a courtesy, Challenge allows parents to excuse up to 6 tardies per trimester without formal documentation by signing their student in at the front office, calling, or writing a note. If you know in advance that your child will be late to school, it is helpful to notify the office so they can include them in the hot lunch count if necessary. Four unexcused tardies is considered an unexcused absence. These absences will impact a student's attendance record preventing them from receiving a perfect attendance certificate. Please help your children develop responsibility and organizational skills by emphasizing being on time. Late arrivals are very distracting in the classroom during morning activities. Parents are not allowed to escort tardy students to class.

## LEAVING SCHOOL PRIOR TO DISMISSAL TIME

Children, who need to leave before the end of the school day, must be checked out at the school office. Once the parent/guardian or their designee has signed their child out the student will be called up to the front office. A student will only be called from class after they have been signed out in person and your ID has been verified; please do not call ahead and ask for the student to be sent up. This helps protect the student's safety and also minimizes the class time that they will have to miss. You will want to allow a few extra minutes for picking your student up if you are trying to make an appointment, etc. Only people included on the student(s) emergency card will be allowed to pick up your student(s) from the school office. **Please remind family/friends when they come to pick up your student(s) to bring identification.**

## IMPORTANT:

Except for emergencies, do not pick your student(s) up between 3:00 and 3:30 pm. It is VERY difficult to pull student(s) from class during this time of the day. During this time, your classroom teacher is doing a culmination, with your student(s) and their class, of everything that has taken place for the day. It is very disruptive to pick-up during this time for your student(s) and the other students in the classroom. If you have already signed in and are visiting another area of campus and would like to pick your child up from their classroom at the end of the day: please wait outside the classroom door for the bell to ring and your student(s) to be dismissed. Please do not ever enter your classroom unexpected AT ANY TIME between 8:30am and 3:30pm. Thank you!