

2200 -- TCCA Attendance Policies

A. Philosophy

The classroom experience is of unique value and it cannot be duplicated by make-up work. Student interaction and the development of ideas through discussion are lost when a student is absent. A student's enrollment in a course is his/her commitment to attend all class sessions. Therefore, it is the intent of this policy to disallow students from being absent from class unless a situation exists which makes their absence absolutely necessary.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this attendance policy is to foster responsibility and reliability on the part of academy students to attend all classes. Students will acknowledge greater emphasis on attendance at school because credit in their classes will be contingent upon their presence.

Florida Statutes § 1003.21 mandates that all students are required to attend school and sets forth specific requirements for the school. Parents and students can be held legally accountable for truancy.

C. Truancy Consequences

If a student has at least five (5) unexcused absences within a calendar month, or ten (10) days out of ninety (90) days, the student's homeroom teacher shall report to the principal that there may be a pattern of absence existing. After this referral, the principal will consider referring the student to the School Based Leadership Team (SBLT). The SBLT is a "child study team" for the purposes of satisfying the requirements of § 1003.26, Florida Statutes. If the SBLT finds a pattern of nonattendance, the team will meet with the parent to identify potential remedies; the principal must notify the school district's charter school office of the identified pattern of nonattendance. If the initial meeting with the parent does not resolve the problem, the SBLT shall implement the following pursuant to Florida Statutes:

1. Frequent attempts at communication between the teacher and the family.
2. Evaluation for alternative education programs.
3. Attendance contracts.

The SBLT may also, but is not required to, implement other interventions that include referral to other agencies for family services or changes to the learning environment. Additionally, legal authorities will be notified if the problem is not corrected.

If the parent refuses to participate in the remedial strategies because he or she believes those strategies are unnecessary or inappropriate, the parent may appeal to the principal.

D. Absences

Excused Absences

Excused absences include:

1. An illness of the student of two (2) or less days needs to be documented by a parent note or a documented medical/dental appointment.
2. Mental health counseling for the student. A note on business stationery from the mental health facility or personnel may be required by the principal.
3. Major illness in the family. (If illness persists for three or more consecutive days, or requires numerous nonconsecutive absences, a doctor's note may be required, as requested by the principal).
4. Death in the immediate family of the student. A student's immediate family includes biological parents, grandparents, siblings, or adults and siblings from an immediate extended family unit, at the principal's discretion.
5. An observance of an established religious holiday or for prearranged religious instruction as defined in F.S. 1003.21 (documentation of the religious affiliation of the student may be required by school officials).
6. Religious institutes, conferences, or workshops (only two days allowed if the request is signed by a parent and given to the school at least forty-eight (48) hours before the absence).
7. Subpoena or forced absence by any law enforcement agency. A copy of the subpoena or summons will be given to the school's principal (or designee). This includes detention at a juvenile center in which the student continues his/her education.
8. A major disaster, as decided by the administration.
9. Other approved student activities such as Student Council, National Honor Society, class meetings, and academic/athletic competitions.
10. Any absence, including those for field trips or other parental requests as judged appropriate by the school's principal, provided that the request is submitted to

the principal forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the absence. The principal may waive the requirement for advance notice if extenuating circumstances exist. The student's parent or legal guardian shall make a call to the school or give advance written notification to the school when a student will be absent for excused reasons.

Validated Absences

Brief illness, appointments, and family business are considered absences for purposes of meeting attendance policy requirements. Non-medical absences must be documented by written notes from parents. All notes can be sent to school with the student on the first day returning to school or scanned and emailed.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences shall include, but not be limited to out-of-school suspensions, vacations, truancy, class cuts, and tardies to class of ten (10) minutes or more.

E. Attendance Procedures

Make-up Work

Students are to be provided one (1) school day for each school day absent to make-up work missed without academic penalty. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for such make-up work. Work not made up within the specified time period will receive a grade of "F". The principal may extend the time for make-up work when in his/her judgment extenuating circumstances justify such extension. However, long-term assignments given before the student is absent are expected to be turned in on the date the student returns to school. These provisions shall apply to all grade levels.

Tardiness/Early Dismissal

It is necessary that a student be in attendance throughout the school day in order to benefit fully from the educational program of the academy. The academy school board recognizes, however, that from time-to-time compelling circumstances require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

A student is tardy when the student arrives after the beginning of the school day or when the student is not inside the assigned room of a class at the time the class is scheduled to start.

It is required that the school be notified in advance of such absences by request of the student's parent, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. A student's tardiness to school or early dismissal from school shall be excused at the

discretion of the principal or designee. A student who is habitually late to school and/or chronically dismissed early shall be subject to disciplinary action by the school administration including but not limited to in-school suspension and/or a required parent conference.

Classroom Activities

Classroom activities are of unique value and cannot be duplicated by make-up work. Student interaction and the development of ideas through discussion are lost when a student is absent. A student's enrollment in a school is a commitment to attend school each day. Therefore, it is the intent of this rule to encourage students to be present daily in school unless a situation exists which makes their absence absolutely necessary.

Responsibilities

Further, it is incumbent on the academy to provide a meaningful and relevant program with appropriate incentives to promote student commitment to education and attendance. In addition, educators have the responsibility to encourage regular attendance of students, maintain accurate attendance records, and follow reporting procedures prescribed by the principal. The academy will record absent and tardy students in the automated student attendance record-keeping system.

School attendance shall be the responsibility of parents and students. All students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility.

A student who is absent without the principal's or designee's approval shall have his/her parent or legal guardian report such absences to the academy.

A student shall be considered truant when absent without parent or legal guardian permission or when the parent or legal guardian consents to unnecessary absences (e.g., vacations, etc.) which will be recorded as unexcused.

Student Absence Notification

Parents/Guardians are required to notify the school when their child is absent and inform the school of the reason for the absence within twenty-four (24) hours by a telephone call, email or written note. In order to qualify for an excused or validated absence the parent must notify the school of the child's absence within twenty-four (24) hours of the date of the absence. A phone call on the date of the absence prior to 10:00 a.m. is preferable. If it is not possible for the academy to be contacted by phone, or email then the parent is to send a note with the student on the day s/he returns to

school explaining the absence. Failure to notify the school within twenty-four (24) hours by phone, email or note when the student returns will result in the absence being unexcused regardless of the reason for the absence. If the school is not notified by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent when practical and possible. The principal may waive the twenty-four (24) hour notification requirement when in his/her judgment extenuating circumstances justify such a waiver. In addition to parent notification, absences require written verification to be excused.

The school will make a good faith effort to contact parents per F.S. 1003.26.

High School Course Credit

High school course credit shall be a function of demonstrated mastery of the student performance standards in the course of study as provided by the rules of the academy school board. At the high school level and for high school courses taken at middle school, credit is earned by attaining a passing average for the semester and by accumulating no more than nine (9) days absent for the semester. No distinction will be made between excused, validated, and unexcused absences when calculating absences for earning of credit.

High School Course Credit - Due Process Procedure

A student who does not earn high school credit because of the failure to meet attendance requirements may file an appeal within ten (10) days of the date of notification of loss of credit. A committee consisting of an administrator, a counselor, and a faculty member will review cases in which granting of credit is requested by a student and/or parent. After review of the student's case, the committee shall make a recommendation to the principal as to the granting of such credit.

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