



VALLEY FORGE
PUBLIC SERVICE ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL

EXHIBIT 28 – Attendance Policy

Book Policy Manual

Section 2000 Students

Title Attendance & Truancy

Code 2004

Status Active

Adopted September 24th 2025

Purpose

The Board of Trustees (Board) recognizes that attendance is an important factor in educational success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance issues.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)

Authority

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the Charter School during the days and hours that school is in session, except that authorized Charter School staff may excuse a student for temporary absences upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)

The Board shall establish and enforce attendance requirements, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and administrative procedures.

Definitions

Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school, which shall be no later than six (6) years of age, until the child reaches eighteen (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.[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)

Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.[\[10\]](#)

Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.[\[10\]](#)

Person in parental relation shall mean a:[\[10\]](#)

1. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
2. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
3. Guardian of the person of a child.

4. Person with whom a child lives and who is acting in a parental role of a child.

This definition shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.[\[11\]](#)

School-based or community-based attendance improvement program shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.[\[10\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall ensure students enrolled in the Charter School comply with state attendance laws and regulations, and shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

Charter School staff shall communicate attendance information to the school district of residence, in accordance with law.[\[12\]](#)

The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall annually notify staff, students and parents/guardians about the Charter School's attendance policy and school rules and procedures governing student attendance, absences and excusals by publishing such information in the:[\[1\]](#)

- Student handbook.
- Website.
- Any other efficient methods.

The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall develop administrative procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Govern the maintenance of attendance records in accordance with law.[\[12\]](#)
2. Detail the process for submission of requests and excuses for student absences.
3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans and referrals to a school-based or community-based school attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency or the appropriate judge.
4. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

Guidelines

Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction, or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; or the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.[\[3\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)

Excused/Lawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school for all or part of the school day:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated Charter School staff during school hours for health-related reasons.[\[4\]](#)[\[7\]](#)
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.[\[4\]](#)
3. Required court attendance.
4. Family emergency.
5. Death in family.
6. School-sponsored educational tours, trips or experiences.
7. Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request.[\[15\]](#)
8. Participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are met:[\[15\]](#)
 - a. The parent/guardian submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours of instruction.
 - b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
 - c. Following each absence, the parent/guardian shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.
9. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
10. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.[\[4\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

The Board may limit the number and duration of:

- Nonschool-sponsored educational tours or trips.

- College or postsecondary institution visits.

Parental Notice of Absence –

Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the Charter School receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond three (3) days cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absence

For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.[\[10\]](#)

Parental Notification –

Charter School staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation upon each incident of unexcused/unlawful absence.

Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance Requirements

Proper child accounting is an important aspect of education that is mandated by law and regulations, and shall be strictly adhered to by Charter School staff.[\[1\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

Designated Charter School employees shall be responsible for preparing and submitting complete and accurate child accounting information for those students enrolled in the Charter School.[\[12\]](#)

Student is Truant –

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, Charter School staff shall provide a Three (3) Day Unexcused Absence Letter, sent to the household address on file with the office. The notice will be sent to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.[\[16\]](#)

The notice shall:[\[16\]](#)

1. Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;
2. Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and
3. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the child's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the Charter School and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.

When a student has been absent from school for six (6) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, Charter School staff will hand deliver a Six (6) Day Unexcused Absence Letter and a Student Attendance Improvement Conference will be scheduled. This meeting will be comprised of the Truancy Officer, School Police Officer, Team Leader, Chief School Director and any other professional employee that would be deemed necessary. After the conference, a School Attendance Improvement Plan will be put in place by the aforementioned team.[\[10\]](#)[\[16\]](#)

Charter School staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[16\]](#)

The purpose of the School Attendance Improvement Conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.[\[10\]](#)

The following individuals shall be invited to the School Attendance Improvement Conference:[\[10\]](#)

1. The student.
2. The student's person in parental relation.
3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
4. Appropriate Charter School personnel.
5. Recommended service providers.

The student and the person in parental relation shall not be required to participate, and the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.[\[16\]](#)

The outcome of the School Attendance Improvement Conference shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student, and the appropriate Charter School staff.[\[16\]](#)

The Charter School may not take further action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Conference has passed.[\[16\]](#)

Student is Habitually Truant –

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, Charter School staff:[\[17\]](#)

1. Shall refer the student to:
 - a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or

- b. The local children and youth agency.
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

When a student fifteen (15) years of age or older is habitually truant, Charter School staff shall:[\[17\]](#)

1. Refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or
2. File a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the student or the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

Charter School staff may refer a student who is fifteen (15) years of age or older to the local children and youth agency, if the student continues to incur additional unexcused absences after being referred to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or if the student refuses to participate in such program.[\[17\]](#)

Regardless of age, when Charter School staff refer a habitually truant student to the local children and youth agency or file a citation with the appropriate judge, Charter School staff shall provide verification that the Charter School held a School Attendance Improvement Conference.[\[17\]](#)

Filing a Citation –

A citation shall be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the Charter School in which the student is enrolled.[\[18\]\[19\]](#)

Additional citations for subsequent violations of the compulsory school attendance requirements may only be filed against a student or person in parental relation in accordance with the specific provisions of the law.[\[18\]\[19\]](#)

Special Needs and Accommodations

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Student Services shall be notified and shall act in accordance with established Board policy and administrative procedures to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[\[20\]\[21\]\[22\]](#)

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[\[20\]\[21\]](#)

Discipline

The Charter School shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.[\[16\]](#)

Student is Excessively Late/Early Dismissals

Students who are excessively late negatively impact their academic performance. A student is considered **late** if they arrive after 8:00 a.m. Students who have excessive early dismissals also negatively impact their academic performance. An **early dismissal** is defined as any dismissal prior to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding Wednesday where an early dismissal is prior to 12:30 p.m.

- Every five (5) unexcused late instances will equal one (1) unexcused absence.
- Every five (5) unexcused early dismissals will equal one (1) unexcused absence.
- If a student arrives after 10:00 a.m., they will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities or athletic events for THAT day.
- If a student incurs more than ten (10) unexcused latenesses or early dismissals in a quarter, they will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities or athletic events for the remainder of that quarter.

Excused/Lawful Lateness or Early Dismissal

For purposes of this policy, the following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for lateness or early dismissal from school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated Charter School staff during school hours for health-related reasons.[\[4\]\[7\]](#)
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.[\[4\]](#)
3. Required court attendance.
4. Family emergency.
5. Death in family.
6. School-sponsored educational tours, trips or experiences.
7. Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request.[\[15\]](#)
8. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the conditions are met.[\[15\]](#)
9. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
10. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.[\[4\]\[7\]](#)

Legal

1. 22 PA Code 11.41

2. 24 P.S. 1732-A

3. 24 P.S. 1327

4. 24 P.S. 1329

5. 24 P.S. 1330

6. 22 PA Code 11.23

7. 22 PA Code 11.25

8. 22 PA Code 12.1

9. 22 PA Code 11.13

10. 24 P.S. 1326

11. 42 Pa. C.S.A. 6302

12. 24 P.S. 1332

13. 22 PA Code 11.28

14. 22 PA Code 11.8

15. 22 PA Code 11.21

16. 24 P.S. 1333

17. 24 P.S. 1333.1

18. 24 P.S. 1333.2

19. 24 P.S. 1333.3

20. Pol. 1003.1

21. Pol. 1013

22. Pol. 1013.1

22 PA Code 11.26