Maritime Academy Charter School

Elementary/Middle School: 2275 Bridge Street, Building 11, Philadelphia, PA 19137
Phone: 215-535-4555; Fax: 215-535-4398

High School: 2700 E. Huntingdon Street, Philadelphia, PA 19125
Phone: 215-427-3090; Fax: 215-999-5027

Attendance and Truancy Policy

Attendance during the days and hours in which school is in session is required of all Maritime Academy cadets. The MACS Board of Trustees and the MACS administration expect that the families of all cadets enrolled in MACS have chosen the school for the strength and challenge of the academic programs offered, and therefore will ensure the cadet attends school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. Failure to comply will not only interfere with the continuity of the cadet's education and academic growth, it may result in the loss of academic credit. Legal prosecution for truancy as dictated by the state for both parent and child, consequences as outlined in this Code, and/or referral to the Board of Trustees for potential additional consequences.

For the purposes of implementing this policy, MACS considers 3 unexcused tardy arrivals as 1 unlawful absence. For the purposes of implementing this policy, MACS considers 3 unexcused early dismissals as 1 unlawful absence. Therefore, throughout this policy, reference to unexcused/unlawful absence shall be meant to include actual unlawful absences and/or the equivalent accrued from unlawful tardy arrivals and/or unlawful early dismissals.

Academic Credit and School Attendance

In order to earn academic credit for courses taken, cadets may not have more than 10 absences from class for a semester-long course, or 20 absences from class for a yearlong course. Cadets exceeding the allotted number of days absent from class may not receive credit for the course, which may affect promotion to the next grade level and/or graduation. If a cadet's absences exceed the allotted days, the Principal will decide, on a case by case basis, if the course grade remains intact, becomes an automatic failure with no credit for the course being granted or is reported as an incomplete grade with stipulations that must be met before a grade and/or credit can be issued. The decision can be reviewed, first by the CEO, and then by the MACS Board of Trustees, upon written request of the parent/guardian of the cadet.

Academic Day

Kindergarten through 8th Grade:	7:35 am to 2:45 pm
9th through 12th Grade:	7:30 am to 2:30 pm

Cadets must be present in their homeroom by the start of their academic day.

Lawful - Excused Absences/Excused Tardiness/Excused Early Dismissals

1. Personal illness.
2. A visit to a medical professional. A note from doctor or dentist is required to consider this as excused.
3. Serious illness in the immediate family living in the same home.
4. Quarantine ordered by a local or State health office. Official documentation is required.
5. Court or administrative proceedings if the cadet is a party to the action or has been subpoenaed as a witness. Official documentation is required to consider this as excused.
6. Observance of a religious holiday if the religious tenets to which the cadet adheres require observance of the holiday. Only one day of absence will be excused for a religious holiday unless multiple days of absence have been pre-approved in accordance with the Planned Absence section of this policy - see below.
7. Death in the family.
8. Lack of proper immunizations, medical exams or waiver (one day only). Additionally, cadets may be excluded from school for failing to provide required immunization records. Only one day of absence for the exclusion is excused.
9. Nurse exclusion: For the day(s) the cadet is sent home for medical reasons. A note must be provided if the absence continues to the next day or subsequent days unless those days are specifically listed as part of the nurse exclusion.
10. Educational opportunities or family trips that are pre-approved in accordance with the Planned Absence section of this policy - see below.
11. College visits that are pre-approved by the principal. Official documentation confirming the appointment interview may be required to consider as excused, in accordance with the College Visit section of this policy.
12. Other absences as approved by the Principal or Principal's designee.
13. Out-of-school suspensions. A cadet who is suspended is absent but counted as an excused absence for reporting purposes.

Unlawful - Unexcused Absences/Unexcused Tardiness/Unexcused Early Dismissals

1. A parent or medical/professional note was not supplied to the school within two days of the cadet's return from absence that provided an acceptable explanation for the absence/tardiness/dismissal.
2. Cadet not present in homeroom by the start of school.
3. Missing the bus and/or no transportation to/from school.
4. Lack of proper immunizations or waiver after the first day.
5. Lack of proper uniform, without Principal's permission, after the first day.
6. Loss of bus privilege or lack of transportation.
7. Family/educational trips, visits, etc. that were not pre-approved or for which approval was not granted.
8. Other reasons not noted as excused.

Tardiness

Cadets in kindergarten through 8th grade, must be present in their homeroom by 7:35 am. Cadets in 9th grade through 12th grade, must be present in their homeroom by 7:30 am. A cadet is considered tardy if he/she is not present or checked into homeroom by the start time. A cadet is not counted as tardy if their bus arrives late to MACS. A cadet who does not attend a minimum of

four hours of school will be counted as absent for the full day. If your child is going to be late to school, provide your child with a signed note explaining the reason for being tardy. (See Notes section that follows for more information.) 3 unexcused tardy arrivals = 1 unlawful absence.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent from school, report your child's absence by calling Maritime Academy. If your child will be out of school for several days due to an extended illness, such as the chicken pox, one call at the start of the absence is sufficient. When your child returns to school, provide your child with a signed absence excuse note indicating the dates and reason for the absence. (See Notes section that follows for more information.)

All absences are treated as unexcused/unlawful unless the school receives the required note. Six (6) unexcused/unlawful absences initiates the truancy reporting process. Medical absences beyond 3 consecutive days, that are not planned absences (see Planned Absences section that follows for more information), require a medical note from a physician's office to be excused. 10 days of cumulative absence during a school year is the maximum number of days that MACS will excuse upon receipt of a parent note. All absences beyond 20 in a school year, whether excused or unexcused, will require a medical note from a physician's office to be excused. (Principal approved absences for college visits and absences for which medical documentation has already been supplied to the school will not count toward the 10 day limit.) When this is required, parents will be notified in writing by the school. Failure to comply by providing the required medical note from a physician's office will result in all subsequent absences for which the required notes are not received remaining unlawful and reportable as truant. Chronic illness may be documented by a medical doctor and submitted to the school health professional to review for exemption from securing a separate medical excuse for each absence exceeding the 10 allowed to be excused with a parent note. If authorized, a parent note is still required for each incident of absence. The parent note must reference, as the reason for the absence, the chronic illness documented, and on file in the MACS health office. All medical notes must be provided by practitioners licensed to practice in Pennsylvania and in compliance with the PA School Code, to be considered valid.

Planned Absences

Planned absences are absences from school for any reason that could reasonably be known in advance of the absence occurring, including but not limited to: family trips, religious instruction (up to 36 hours per school year), observance of a religious holiday requiring more than one day of absence, college visits, cadet conferences, medical procedures, etc. MACS cadets may be excused from school attendance for planned absences, provided approval for the absences is obtained at least two weeks in advance from the Principal. Planned absence days are counted toward the threshold requiring medical notes from a physician's office. (See Absences section above.) Lengthy absences may result in the loss of academic credit, as planned absences tally toward the allotted days that may be missed in order to earn credit.

Parents must submit the official Request for Approval of Planned Absences form to the appropriate Principal no less than two weeks prior to the first date of absence or the request may be denied. Forms for approval will not be accepted after the absence dates. The forms are available in the MACS Main Offices and on the MACS website (www.maritimecharter.org). Current and historical attendance, academic and behavior records, along with the reason for the planned absence will be reviewed for each planned absence request. Up to 10 days per school year will be

considered for planned absences, with the exception of college visits at the principal's discretion, and medical procedures if deemed necessary and medically documented in advance by a medical professional. Should a cadet's planned absence extend beyond the approved time, each additional day will be classified as unlawful and/or unexcused. There will be no planned absences approved during the first two weeks of school, with the exception of medical procedures if deemed necessary by a medical professional. Cadets will not be excused from school on dates when standardized testing or mid-term/final exams are scheduled, with the exception of medical procedures if deemed necessary by a medical professional. Families with multiple children at MACS should use a separate request form for each child when requesting absences for the same dates. If one child is determined ineligible, siblings may also be deemed ineligible. Parents will be informed in writing when the dates requested are approved or the reason(s) the request is denied. Pre-planned absences that were requested and not approved, and for which the cadet does not attend school are unlawful/unexcused absences and subject to truancy reporting. Additionally, if the absence(s) is unexcused, make up work, test and quiz grades will be reduced by 10%. Notes/Request for Approval forms will not be accepted after a planned but unapproved absence occurs and the days will be unexcused. All missed schoolwork must be completed and handed in upon a cadet's return to school. Due dates will be determined on a case-by-case basis for pre-planned medical absences.

College Visits

For the purposes of implementing this policy, College Visits will include visits to colleges, universities or other institutions or organizations offering post-secondary educational opportunities for our high school cadets. Cadets \who are absent from school for the purpose of college visits will be excused at the principal's discretion. Official documentation confirming the cadet's attendance at the college visit, appointment and/or interview may be required to excuse the absence from school. Typically, high school cadets schedule college visits, however we recognize it may beneficial for non-high school siblings to also attend. Each cadet/sibling must obtain individual approval from the appropriate principals for the absence to be excused. Please see the Planned Absences section of this policy (see above) for procedures to request approval for a planned absence. Absences for college visits are subject to the same criteria for make-up work as noted in the Planned Absences section of this policy (see above).

Approved absence days for college visits will not be counted toward the threshold requiring medical notes from a physician's office. (See Absences section above.)

Early Dismissal from School

Parents requesting an early dismissal from school must send a note to be handed in during homeroom on the morning of the early dismissal. Phone calls/emails are not accepted. A cadet's regular dismissal routine will not be changed unless written notification is provided to the school on the morning of the change. This allows for appropriate planning with minimal disruption. Appropriate reasons for early dismissal are the same as those for a lawful absence. A cadet who does not attend for a minimum of four hours of school will be counted as absent for the full day. Cadets sent home by the school nurse are medically excused for that day only. Subsequent absences require a note upon return to school. Cadets leaving for appointments must provide a note from a medical professional upon their return to school. The note is needed regardless of whether the cadet returns to school on the same day or the next day. Parents/guardians or those authorized by a parent/guardian to pick-up a cadet should be prepared to show photo identification to verify their identity.

Notes

Parents must send a signed note with their child when he/she arrives tardy to school, requires an early dismissal, or returns to school from an absence. Failure to provide a timely excuse note will result in unlawful attendance violations subject to truancy reporting. (See Truancy section that follows.) Parents must still send in the note, even if they called to report their child absent. Absence, tardy, and early dismissal notes must list the date(s), provide a reason, and be signed by a parent/guardian. Dismissal notes must also indicate a pick-up time and include the name of the person picking up the cadet. Absence and tardy notes must be received by the second day following a return to school in order to be accepted, and by noon on the last day of school for cadets in order to be accepted for absence or tardiness occurring immediately preceding and/or through the close of the school year. Cadets' absent/tardy/dismissed early due to an appointment (medical, dental, legal, etc.) must provide a note from the professional's office documenting the date(s)/time necessary to be absent from school for it to be considered excused/lawful. Notes must be presented to the attendance office. The sending of the note itself doesn't excuse absence, late arrival or early dismissal from class or school. The Principal or his/her designee will make the determination. Valid reasons are those listed above, classified as Lawful/Excused or Unlawful/Unexcused. Notes may be faxed to the school to the attention of the attendance office. Emails cannot be accepted as notice to the school of an early dismissal or tardy arrival, however an email that provides an attached copy of a signed note for a prior absence, a prior tardy arrival or a prior early dismissal may be sent to: Maria Garlick at garlick.m@maritimecharter.org at the high school or lindsey.a@maritimecharter.org at the elementary/middle school. All medical notes must be provided by practitioners licensed to practice in Pennsylvania and in compliance with the PA School Code, to be considered valid.

Make Up Work

Cadets are required to make up all missed work resulting from planned absences, excused and unexcused absences, late arrivals and early dismissal to ensure they do not fall behind in their academic work. Making up work is not viewed as an alternative for the direct instruction received by attending classes for the purpose of earning academic credit. (See Academic Credit section above.) Cadets may receive assignments during an absence. The time frame for completing make up work shall be one day for each day of absence. Cadets should be prepared to take missed tests/quizzes, etc. upon returning to school, at the teacher's discretion. Cadets turning in work late will be subject to their individual teacher's late-work policies. Cadets that do not turn in work or make up assignments will receive a zero. If the absence is unexcused, make up work, test and quiz grades will be reduced by 10%. Late arrivals and early dismissals are viewed as absences with respect to makeup work.

Requests from parents for teachers to provide assignments during an absence must be made to the Main Office by 1:00 pm on the day of the absence. Requests received by 1 pm will be filled to the best of the teachers' abilities by 2:00 pm and available for pick up in the Main Office. As teachers may not have time to respond, requests received after 10:00 am cannot be accommodated for same day pickup and instead will be prepared for a 2:30/3:00 pm pickup on the following day. However, parents are invited to contact the school after 2:30/3:00 pm to see if the assignments were able to be readied on the requested day.

For planned absences (including college visits), it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and the cadet to contact teachers a minimum of one week in advance of the absence to request assignments that will be missed. All work must be submitted to the teacher upon the cadet's return to school or be subject to the teacher's late-work policies. Cadets should be prepared to take missed tests/quizzes, etc. upon returning to school, at the teacher's discretion. Grades for make-up work, tests, quizzes, etc. from planned absences not approved by the Principal will be reduced by 10%.

Truancy

It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure their child attends school in accordance with PA Law and this policy. The law explicitly defines "truant" as a child subject to compulsory school laws having 3 or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year. Cadets accumulating 6 or more unexcused absences are considered "habitually truant" and those cadets under 15 years of age will be referred to their county department of Children and Youth Services. Citations may also be filed against the parent/guardian residing in the same household as truant cadets under 15 years of age. Citations will be filed against the habitually truant cadet 15 years of age and older, or against the parent/guardian residing with the habitually truant cadet with a possible referral to the local department of Children and Youth Services.

Parents will be notified in writing of unlawful attendance violations dates and potential consequences. Within 10 days of accumulating 3 unlawful absences (or the equivalent), an Official Notice of Child's Illegal Absence letter will be issued to a parent/guardian with whom the truant cadet resides informing them of the violations and consequences should the unlawful absence incidents continue. Upon accumulating 6 unlawful absences (or the equivalent) a subsequent letter will be issued notifying the parent/guardian of their child's Habitual Truant Status. This letter to the parent/guardian shall include the offer of a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC). At the SAIC, effort will be made to meet with families and collaboratively establish a School Attendance Improvement Plan/Truancy Elimination Plan. Once an Official Notice of Child's Illegal Absence letter is issued and the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Plan meeting has occurred (with or without parent/guardian participation), without further notice to the family any additional days of unlawful absence will be reported to the county department of Children and Youth Services and/or the appropriate citation for truancy filed with the local District Court (Title 24, Pennsylvania School Code, Section 13-1327 and 13-1326). MACS shall then refer the cadet to (a) school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or (b) county children and youth agency for possible disposition as a dependent child pursuant to Pennsylvania School Code, Section 13-1333.1(a)(1).

A cadet who has accumulated 6 unexcused/unlawful absences (or the equivalent) may also be referred to the MACS Board of Trustees for in-school suspension or Saturday School Intervention.

For special education cadets, MACS will comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to determine whether there is a possibility that a child is chronically absent or truant due to a disability or medical condition. If the cadet has 10 consecutive unexcused absences found to be unrelated to the identified disability or medical condition, and if compulsory attendance prosecution cannot be pursued, then MACS will move forward in compliance with procedures as required by IDEA and 22 Pa. Code Chapter 14 pertaining to dis-enrolling a cadet with an IEP.

Removal from the active membership roll will be a last resort after every effort has been made to contact the parents or guardians of the cadet about the cadet's failure to attend school. A cadet will not be removed from the active membership roll if there is any evidence that a cadet's absence may be legally excused. MACS will immediately inform the school district of residence of all cadets dropped from the active membership rolls.

Consequences: In addition to the consequences listed in this Cadet Code of Conduct, any parent/guardian of a cadet and/or cadets 15 years of age or older who fail to comply with Pennsylvania law regarding compulsory school attendance may be subject to the penalties outlined in the Pennsylvania School Code of 1949 at Section 13-1333. Cadets will not receive exclusionary consequences for truant behavior. Specifically, as a last resort, MACS may file a truancy citation with the magisterial district judge (MDJ) against the cadet or parent/guardian of the cadet. In turn, a Magisterial District Judge may impose such penalties that include, but are not limited to, imposition of a fine not exceeding $300 with court costs for the first offense/citation, $500 with court costs for the second offense/citation and up to $750 per offense with court costs for the third and all subsequent offenses/citations, completion of an approved course or program designed to improve school attendance, completion of community service, suspension or delay of driver's license (cadet only), or a sentence in the county jail for no more than three (3) days.