

# Policy 204: Student Attendance

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## *Sylvan Heights Science Charter School*

Adopted: December 4, 2002

Revised: February 27, 2017

### **Purpose:**

The Board requires that students enrolled in Sylvan Heights Science Charter School attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by the school is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.

### **Authority:**

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in school during the days and hours that school is in session, except that a principal 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. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and does not permit irregular attendance. The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness.
2. Quarantine.
3. Family emergency.
4. Required court attendance.
5. Death in family.
6. Educational tours and trips not sponsored by the school if the following elements are met:
  - a. The parent/guardian submits a written request to the Principal/CAO for permission that the educational tour or trip be excused, at least ten (10) days prior to the absence; The application should state the date of absence, student's name, location of the tour or trip, and an explanation of the educational value the student will receive for participating in the tour or trip. This form is available on the school's website and at the Front Office.
  - b. The adult directing and supervising the educational tour or trip is acceptable to the parents/guardians and the Principal/CAO. Excused trips shall not exceed five (5) school days per school year; and

- b. The student's participation has been approved by the Principal/CAO.
- c. The student required to complete classroom assignments occurring during the absence.
- d. Trips which include days of absence during PSSA state testing will not be approved.

- 7. Religious holidays, with prior approval.
- 8. Religious instructional programs, with prior approval up to 36 hours per school year.
- 9. Participation in statewide or county wide 4-H, with prior approval.
- 10. Homebound students unable to attend school on the written recommendation of a physician, school psychologist, or a school psychiatrist, and upon the approval of the Secretary of Education.

Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the school receives a written excuse signed by the parent/guardian explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence. Absences of three (3) or more consecutive school days shall require medical documentation.

The Board shall report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of seventeen (17). The Board shall issue notice to those parents/guardians who fail to comply with the requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions will be prosecuted according to law.

**Procedures for Tardiness:**

Students' attendance and tardiness to school are recorded and reported to the Sylvan Heights Science Office daily by teachers and the receptionist at the Front Desk.

Students arriving after 8:30 AM must enter the building from the front entrance with their parent or guardian. The parent or guardian must sign in at the Reception Desk. All other doors will be locked at 8:30 AM. This enhances school safety while ensuring that each tardy offense is verified. Parents and guardians must call the school before 9:00 AM to order a school lunch if their child will not be packing a lunch that day.

Students will be issued a tardy letter after three (3) tardy offenses. A copy of the letter must be returned to school with the parent/guardian's signature. After five (5) tardy offenses, and for each instance where additional tardies accumulate to five (5) in number, the student will receive a one-hour after school detention from 3:30 – 4:30 PM. Parents/guardians will be responsible for picking up student at 4:30pm. The parents/guardian will also be expected to attend a conference with a school representative to discuss tardiness.

Failure to participate in detentions may result in suspension at the discretion of the Principal.

**ATTENDANCE**

All students are expected to report to school every day and on time. If a student will be absent, the parent/guardian should notify the student's teacher so that the parent/guardian can arrange to pick up assignments. If illness is the excuse for an absence, students should return to school from an absence with a parent/guardian's note or doctor's excuse. If a parent/guardian forgets to send or bring the required excuse note on the day that the student returns to school, the parent/guardian shall have three (3) days following the absence to send/bring the written note to their child's teacher. Any absence that is not verified with a written excuse note from the parent/guardian or a doctor shall be recorded as an "unexcused absence."

A written medical excuse is required for an absence for more than three (3) consecutive days and for any absence after 10 cumulative total absences per school year.

Parents/guardians will receive the first unlawful absence letter after one (1) unexcused absence. After three (3) unexcused absences, parent/guardians will receive a second notice of unlawful absence letter. After five (5) unexcused absences, parent/guardians will receive a letter titled NOTICE OF UNLAWFUL ABSENCES and a Truancy Elimination Meeting will be scheduled and conducted with the Principal or his designee. This letter and copies of the one and three day letters will be attached and sent to the truancy officer of the student's district of residence and /or the Country Children and Youth Services Office. Parents/Guardians may be required to appear for a hearing and may be subject to a fine from the County of Dauphin.

Students will be dismissed at the scheduled time of 3:30 PM. Parent/guardians must notify the school receptionist by 2:30pm if a child is to be dismissed early from school. Parents/guardians must send a note to the teacher about the early dismissal. Early dismissal from school should be for medical appointments or real emergencies, not for conveniences. To the extent feasible, parents should strive to schedule routine medical appointments outside of the school day. Parents must send a doctor's note verifying the early dismissal, lateness, or half-day absence within three (3) days. When an early dismissal is necessary, parents/guardians must come inside the building to sign students out at the front desk. Students will only be released to the parent/guardian of record or to persons designated on the school's emergency forms completed by the parent/guardian. Person listed on the school's emergency form who arrive to pick up child will be required to show picture identification before the student is permitted to leave school property. If the names of the persons on the emergency form changes, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to send a note to the school administration with the changed information.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Principal/CAO shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the school's attendance policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, school website and other efficient methods. The Principal/CAO shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of state law and regulations.

2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with law.
3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences and excusals.
4. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of truant behavior, and consider modification of the student's educational program to meet particular needs and interests.
5. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.
6. Issue written notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance law, within three (3) days of any proceeding brought under that law. Such notice shall inform the parent/guardian of the date(s) the absence occurred; that the absence was unexcused and in violation of law; that the parent/guardian is being notified and informed of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student; and that further violations during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510, 1301, 1318, 1326, 1327, 1327.1, 1329, 1330, 1332, 1333, 1338, 1339, 1354, 1501, 1504, 1546

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 4.4, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.5, 11.8, 11.12, 11.13, 11.21, 11.22, 11.23, 11.24, 11.25, 11.26, 11.28, 11.32, 11.34, 11.41, 12.1