

**2204 Attendance / Truancy**

Adopted 07/24/2019

Revised 08/26/2020

**Purpose:**

The Board requires that school age students enrolled in Innovative Arts Academy 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.

**Definitions**

**Absence** - the nonattendance of a student on those days and partial days school is in session.

**Compulsory school age** - the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school as a beginner, which may be no later than the age of six (6) years, until the age of eighteen (18) or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first.

**Cumulative absences** - days of absence that contribute to the allotted number of days a student is absent.

**Noncumulative absences** - days of absence that do not contribute to the specified number of cumulative days. Such absences include days missed due to:

1. Suspensions from school.
2. Illness verified by an acceptable written physician's statement submitted within three (3) school days of a student's return to school from an absence. Any absence for which an acceptable written physician's statement is submitted is not included in the number of days permitted for accepted parental statement.
3. Death in the family from date of death until two (2) days after the funeral unless otherwise extended by the building principal.
4. Official religious holidays observed by the student's religious group.
5. Authorized school-sponsored activities.
6. Preapproved educational trips or tours up to five (5) school days.
7. Preapproved college visits up to three (3) school days.

**Regular attendance** - attending school each day during which school is in session. Students are to attend all sessions unless properly excused by school authorities.

**Tardiness** - the absence of a student at the time any morning or afternoon session begins provided the student is in attendance before the close of that session.

**Truancy** - the failure of a child of compulsory school age to attend school regularly.



## Policy Manual

**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 Pa School Code.

**Excused absence** - shall mean an absence that is approved by both the Charter School and the parent/guardian including illness, religious observance, required court attendance, death in immediate family, violent weather, college visitations, educational tours and trips, state emergency, or health care (medical or dental).

**Person in parental relation** - shall mean a:

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.

**Truant/Truancy** - occurs where a student has accrued three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

**Habitually Truant/Habitual Truancy** - occurs where a student has accrued six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

**Unexcused absence** - shall mean an absence from school which is not permitted by this Policy or for which an approved explanation has not been submitted within the time period and in the manner prescribed by Board and/or by the Executive Director through administrative regulations.

### Delegation:

The Chief Executive Officer shall develop administrative regulations that set forth specific truancy procedures that are consistent with the law and with this Policy. The Principal shall be responsible for addressing truancy issues through consistent implementation of this Policy and the administrative regulations promulgated pursuant to it.

### Guidelines

The Chief Executive Officer's designees shall be responsible for ensuring that the following procedures are consistently followed:

To be "excused," all absences must be supported by a written explanation from the person in parental relation to the child within three (3) school days. After ten (10) cumulative days of absence, the student's absence must be verified by a written excuse from the child's treating physician or supervising physician.

The Innovative Arts Charter School will report unexcused absences directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).



## Policy Manual

Consistent with the requirement of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, the Chief Executive Officer's designee shall provide written notification to the "person in parental relation to the student," as defined, above, in cases where a student has accrued three (3) unexcused absences. In addition, the Principal shall notify the child's school district of residence

Once the notice has been issued, where a student continues to accrue unexcused absences, a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) must be held. This is a conference to discuss where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services. The following individuals shall be invited to the conference:

1. The child.
2. The child's "person in parental relation," as defined, above.
3. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
4. Appropriate school personnel.
5. Recommended service providers.

The outcome of this conference will be documented in a School Attendance Improvement Plan.

Once the SAIC has been held, if a student reaches six (6) or more unexcused absences, the student is considered "habitually truant" pursuant to the law, and the Chief Executive Officer's designee shall take further action which will include one or more of the following, as permitted by law:

1. Referral to an attendance improvement program,
2. Referral to the county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act,
3. Referral to the child's school district of residence for the formal filing of a truancy action with the magisterial district court.

Formal filing of truancy charges with the magisterial district court shall only be utilized only where the School Attendance Improvement Conference / School Attendance Improvement Plan have been unsuccessful. For students under the age of 15, at least one other alternative option must be attempted and has to be unsuccessful in resolving the truancy issue to formally file truancy charges with the magisterial district court.

### LEGAL:

24 PS §13-1326

24 PS §13-1329

24 PS §13-1333

24 PS §13-1327

24 PS §13-1330

22 Pa. Code §11.34

24 PS § 1327.2

24 PS §13-1332

22 Pa. Code §11.41