

Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School

POLICY: Student Attendance and Truancy

Adopted: August 17, 2022

Student Attendance Policy

Adopted Aug. 24, 2005

Amended Aug 19, 2009

Truancy Policy

Adopted: August 21, 2019

Amended: December 18, 2019

The Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School believes that good attendance is essential if students are to achieve and reach their potential.

As a public school, FACTS must comply with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Compulsory Attendance Requirements.

Need for Consistent Attendance

Consistent attendance assures that our students will not miss valuable instructional time and opportunities that will enhance their success in school. Students are required to be at school every day except for:

- Illness
- Approved religious holidays
- Death in the family
- Medical and dental appointments
- Court appearances
- Legal Quarantine
- Family Emergency
- Educational travel with prior approval by the Principal
- Emergency conditions as determined by the Executive Director or their designee

The school will accept up to 10 excused absences verified by parental notification in one school year. For all absences beyond this maximum amount, an excuse from a physician will be required for an absence to be considered excused. The maximum number of excused absences may be waived by the Executive Director or their designee during times of health or other public emergencies.

Notification of Absences Required

If a child is absent, the parent must notify the office by 8:30 am the morning of the absence. For each absence, an automated phone call will be sent alerting the family. All absent students are expected to submit a parental note within three days of the student's return including the date of absence, the reason for the absence, and a parent/guardian signature with a contact number.

If a student is absent 3 or more consecutive days due to an illness, parents must provide a doctor's note except for absences related to or due to legal quarantine. We must make every effort to record attendance accurately and if a student misses school, it must be for a valid reason. If no reason is provided or our office is unable to verify an absence as excused, it will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Please notify the school's nurse if your child is ill with a communicable disease, i.e., chicken pox, strep throat, COVID-19, etc.

Attendance Policy for Unexcused Absences

1 absence - Whenever a student is absent, an automated call and/or email will be sent to the family.

3 absences - A student with three unexcused absences in a year is considered truant. For the third unexcused absence, FACTS will send the parent/guardian notice by mail within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence.

This notice will 1) include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future; 2) will be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation; and 3) include the offer of an Attendance Improvement Conference.

6 absences - A student with six unexcused absences in a year must be reported as habitually truant. A Student Attendance Conference will be convened and a Student Attendance Improvement Plan will be developed and shared.

One of the Directors of School Culture will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the date, time and place of the Student Attendance Conference.

The purpose of the Attendance Improvement Conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to assure regular attendance.

While every effort will be made to engage and include the parent/guardian in the Student Attendance Conference, the Charter School is permitted to proceed with the Attendance Improvement Conference and Attendance Improvement Plan without the child's parent present at the Conference.

10 or more absences - If the child is six (6) years of age or in grades 1-3 and has ten (10) or more unexcused absences, the parent or guardian, may be referred to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for truancy. If the child is in grades 4-8, they may be referred to Truancy Court. A DHS or Truancy Court referral can only occur after an attendance improvement conference has occurred

If the child is referred to DHS or to Truancy Court, a DHS agency provider may be assigned to their case and begin home visits. If the attendance does not improve or the parent/guardian does not participate in the voluntary services offered by the DHS provider, the case may be referred to the District Attorney's office for prosecution.

The Charter School will not impose discipline for truant behavior that excludes the child from the classroom, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or transfer.

Students who are absent from school for ten (10) or more consecutive days without appropriate documentation will be removed from FACTS's rolls. The lack of appropriate documentation includes failure to provide absence notes; failure to provide a doctor's note for absences of three or more consecutive days; exceeding the maximum number of allowable absences without a doctor's note; and providing absence notes for reasons not approved by the school.

The school will determine whether there is a possibility that a child is truant or chronically absent due to a disability or a medical condition. A student with a disability who is truant or chronically absent for health-related reasons must still produce a valid excuse for any absence, which may include a written excuse from a physician. Standard disenrollment procedures do not apply when a student with an IEP has been absent for 10 consecutive days. Instead, schools must comply with the procedures required by IDEA and 22 Pa Code Chapter 14 when disenrolling a student with an IEP.

Lateness

Being prompt to school is a habit that will remain throughout life and will benefit a child's efforts. If a child is late for school, they must report to the front desk, sign in, and receive a pass to enter the classroom. A parental conference will be requested if a student is habitually late to school, and Saturday School may be assigned.

Early Dismissal

Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled after school hours as they can interfere with the child's learning program. When children have appointments that require them to leave early, the following procedure must be followed:

- Send in a note stating the reason for early dismissal that morning.
- Notify the office if someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up your child (the person must be on the list of approved pick-up persons submitted, and must have a photo ID for security reasons);
- A designated pick-up person must sign your child out at the office;

- Those picking up students, including parents, may not go directly to the child's classroom.

There will be no early dismissals permitted after 1:30 p.m on regular school days, or one hour prior to dismissal time on early dismissal days.

No kindergarten through eighth grade student will be released from school during regular hours without being accompanied by an adult on their pick up list. This will be strictly enforced.