

3A.01.005 School Attendance and Truancy

Regular attendance is required by law and is a major key to students' success. Frequent absence of students from day-to-day classroom instruction disrupts the learning process. A quality education requires a continuity of instruction, class participation, learning experience, and study. Activities, discussions, simulations, and presentations take place every day and cannot be duplicated even by after-school instruction or make-up work.

Excelsior Academy makes every effort, within the following guidelines, to encourage regular attendance for all students and to assist parents in their responsibility to have their children attend school regularly. Excelsior Academy has a goal of 96% attendance school-wide. Our academic goals will be achieved only if our students attend school regularly.

GUIDELINES

1. If a student is unable to attend school, a parent or guardian must call or email before 9:00 am on the day of the absence to report the absence. If the absence is illness related, we ask parents to report the reason for the child's absence. If a parent does not call or email the absence will be considered unexcused.
2. Any student who has unexcused absences for more than ten consecutive days of school may be removed from enrollment.
3. Attendance will be kept each day at Excelsior Academy and will be reported to the administration by each teacher.
4. A student needs to attend at least four hours of a school day to be considered present.
5. Absences may affect a student's grade according to the class disclosures in the middle school and depending upon work missed in the elementary grades.
6. There are two categories of absence:
 - a. Excused Absences: An absence for which a parent/guardian notifies the school within three days of the absence.
 - i. Scheduled Absence Form: When a student needs to be absent from school for a special purpose that is known to the family in advance, the parents/guardians need to fill out a "Scheduled Absence Form" and submit it to the front office.
 - ii. Extenuating Circumstances: If the student encounters absences due to extenuating circumstances the parent/guardian may submit a letter of extenuating circumstances to the executive director who will accept or deny the request. This may include, but not limited to: homebound illness or injury, chronic illness or a family emergency.
 - iii. An absence will also be designated as "excused" when such an absence is consistent with student's IEP, Section 504 Accommodation Plan, even if it falls outside the regular "excused" absence category according to general school policy.
 - b. Unexcused Absences: Any for which the school is not given notice within three days of the absence. Make up work will be permitted at the discretion of the student's teachers.
7. Excessive Absences: any absences beyond 12 percent in a quarter are excessive, whether excused or unexcused, or a combination of the two.

8. Truancy: a student will be considered “truant” if that student has missed school at least five (5) times without a valid excuse or, in other words, for reasons other than those authorized under school policy. A student will be considered “habitually truant” if that student is twelve (12) years of age or older and has missed school at least ten (10) times without a valid excuse.
9. Administrators shall work cooperatively with students, parents or guardians, teachers, and staff to improve student attendance. Administrators shall use earnest and persistent effort, including parent notification, to deter excessive and unexcused student absences.
10. Administrators will notify a parent or guardian as well as the involved student concerning possible consequences for excessive absenteeism, including academic consequences or District Court referral. Notification will be in the form of state mandated truancy letters, phone calls, emails, or conferences, or disciplinary meetings. Habitual truant citations may be issued to students consistent with Section 53A-11-101.7.
11. Administrators will meet with school-age minors and their parents or guardians to resolve disputes whenever parents or guardians contest notices of truancy, the designation of absences as “unexcused,” or the implementation of academic or disciplinary consequences due to absences. Unresolved disputes may be appealed to the Board of Trustees.
12. The attendance policy shall be available for review by parents or interested parties. The administration and the board of trustees shall review attendance data and the attendance policy annually in order to consider revisions to the policy in an effort to encourage student attendance.
13. Tardiness: Any student who isn’t in the classroom when the final tardy bell rings.