

NORTHWOOD ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ATTENDANCE & TRUANCY

Adopted: August 2016

Revised: January 2020

I. PURPOSE:

To provide procedures and general guidelines for the attendance and truancy process for the Northwood Academy Charter School

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Attendance & Truancy, under the supervision of the Principal, will be reviewed and truancy referrals submitted for students with 10 or more unexcused absences to either Family Court or Department of Human Services (DHS) for interventions and services. The interventions and services are designed to help remove barriers to attendance.

III. CRITERIA:

The Pennsylvania School Compulsory Law requires students from the ages of 8-17 to attend school on a daily basis. Once a student is enrolled in school, he/she can only be withdrawn if he/she transfers to another district. The student will remain on Northwood's roll and the child/family is subjected to Truancy Court if they do not attend school.

IV. PROCESS FOR ATTENDANCE:

A. School Process

1. Parents ***must submit*** an absence note to the school ***within three days*** of the children's unexcused absence. After 3 days, the School Principal/Designee will make a determination if the note will be accepted. If the note has been accepted, the teacher will make the corrections on the roll sheet and then submit to the main office so that it can be changed in the Student Information System (SIS).
2. At the 3rd unexcused absence, the Three Day Legal Notice will be sent to the Parent/Guardian to make them aware that the child has missed 3 days (consecutive/nonconsecutive) of school.
3. At the 6th unexcused absence, the school will contact the parent directly in an effort to remediate the situation. The school will also arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian of the child to inquire about the truancy and come up with a plan to help remove any barriers to the student's truancy.
4. At the 10th unexcused absence, the Truancy Referral should be submitted to the Office of Attendance & Truancy.
5. Once the referral has been submitted to the Office of Attendance & Truancy, it may take up to 6 weeks for the student/family to receive a citation for Truancy Court.
6. Grades K-3 must be submitted on the DHS Referral Sheet, which is available on the office's web site.
7. Grades 4-8th must be submitted on the Family Court Referral Sheet, which is available on the office's web site
8. Siblings should be submitted together on the referral sheets.

B. How to submit a Truancy Referral:

Schools are required to submit Truancy Referrals to the Office of Attendance and Truancy at 440 North Broad Street on the 25th of every month. The referrals can be submitted via email at

attendanceandtruancy@philasd.org, fax at 215-400-4223, or hand delivered to the Office of Attendance & Truancy, at 440 (Education Center).

C. What happens after the referral is submitted:

The family will receive a subpoena/citation from Philadelphia Family Court to appear in Truancy Court. The subpoena will have the date, time and location of where the family should appear. In addition, a DHS contracted truancy provider will make contact with the family to arrange a meeting. The meeting is to extend services to help reduce/remove any barriers that are contributing to the truancy. The provider will work with the family until the case is discharged from truancy court. The truancy court process can last up to 120 days depending on the severity of the case. Each case is handled individually and different factors are taken into account.

D. How to make corrections to a student's attendance record:

If a parent or guardian feels that there is an error in their student's attendance record, they have the right to address it with the school. They must provide proper documentation in order for a change to be made. This documentation should consist of a handwritten note from the parent if it is less than 3 days from the date of absence. A doctor's note is required if the absence totals 3 consecutive days or more. Once the information is given to the school, either the principal or their designee will approve the change. If the change is approved, the change should be reflected on the roll sheet as well.

E. Attendance Policy Changes A. Excused Absence Policy: i. Pursuant to Northwood's attendance policy, all illnesses resulting in a total of 3 or more consecutive days absent require a doctor's note. For absences due to illness that do not total 3 consecutive days, parents may submit a note stating the illness. When a student has been absent due to illness and excused with a parent note more than 8 times (cumulative), a doctor's note must be provided to the school to excuse the 9th or more absence due to illness.

F. Lateness Policy: i. Any student coming to school at 10:00 AM or after and/or leaving school at 1:00 PM or before without an excuse note pursuant to Northwood's attendance policy will be coded as half a day unexcused. Two half day unexcused absences will add up to 1 full day of an unexcused absence. After 5 instances of lateness and/or early dismissal in a single trimester, a letter will be sent home. Continuing chronic lateness will be reported to the Truancy Office for disposition via DHS.

G. Parents/guardians of students for whom attendance is still an issue following the steps outlined above may be called before representatives of the Northwood Board of Directors and counseled out of the program for attendance at the elementary school local to their address.

H. Questions or Concerns:

Contact the Principal at 215-289-5606 or write to ccarey@northwoodcs.org.