



NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy

Statement of Overall Objectives

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop his or her fullest potential. Attendance policies are based on the principle that regular school attendance maximizes the student's interaction with his or her teachers and peers and is a major component of academic success. Improved school attendance generally increases student achievement. Therefore, attendance policies that provide for the early identification of attendance problems and effective methods to address them are most likely to succeed. Successful implementation of any attendance policy requires cooperation among all members of the education community, including parents/persons in parental relation, students, teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The School will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- b) Maintain accurate record keeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.
- c) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

The School only offers full-time enrollment to its students. To be considered a full-time enrollee, a student must be attending classes for the entire school day (from 8:30 to 2:30) throughout the entire school year (from September to June). Students are tardy if they arrive to school after 8:30 a.m., and students will have made an early departure if they leave school before 2:30 p.m.

Based upon our School's values, priorities, and evaluation of community needs, the School has determined that absences, tardiness, and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

Excused

An absence, tardiness, or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance and education, approved field trip, "Student to Work" Day, suspension (formal and informal), approved college visits, or other such reasons as may be approved by the School. A student

may have up to 7 excused absences in a school year without jeopardizing their status as a full-time enrollee.

Unexcused

An absence, tardiness, or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories [e.g., lack of required immunization without a religious or medical exemption, family vacation, babysitting, unlawful employment, expressing solidarity with a cause, wrongfully detained by parent, no transportation, wrongful pickup by a parent, missed bus, lack of proper clothing, truant (out of school without parental consent) obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping].

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with the Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education. An absence (denoted by "A"), tardiness (denoted by "T"), or early departure (denoted by "ED") will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the School code for the reason:

Description	School Code
Excused – Due to student's health issues	E/H
Excused – Due to illness or death in student's family	E/F
Excused – Inclement weather affected travel	E/W
Excused – Religious observance	E/R
Excused – Attending approved trip or college visit	E/T
Excused – Suspension	E/S
Excused – Other	E/O
Unexcused for any reason	U

For instance, a student who was tardy because of weather conditions that made travel difficult would be marked in the attendance register as T (E/W). Similarly, a student who departed early because of an illness would be marked in the attendance register as ED (E/H).

Attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a) The Attendance Policy begins upon the first day of formal enrollment in each class. Enrollment in class begins when a teacher is notified of placement. Attendance is marked beginning the first day of school.
- b) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- c) If a student is absent for more than fifty percent (50%) of a given class period, it will be considered an absence.

Student Attendance/Course Credit

The School believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes for the entire time allotted for each class. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

As a requisite part of course attendance and in order to gain admission to final examinations, students must not fall below the 85% attendance level for their course(s).

Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early without Proper Excuse

The school staff will be responsible for notifying the parent/person in parental relation for a student who is absent, tardy, or departs early without proper excuse within an hour of the absence, tardiness, or early departure. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. A log will kept of all communications made to families regarding absences, tardiness, and early departures.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, each school will develop and implement grade-appropriate/building-level strategies and programs, for example, classroom acknowledgment of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, and bulletin boards).

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the School's Code of Conduct. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities. Parents/persons in parental relation will be notified by designated School personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent/person in parental relation.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated School personnel will pursue the following:

- a) Identify root causes of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b) Contact the School staff most closely associated with the root causes. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent/person in parental relation will be contacted;
- c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific pattern(s);
- d) Recommend intervention to Superintendent or his/her designee if it relates to change in School policy or procedure;
- e) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f) Utilize appropriate School and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Building Review of Attendance Records

The principal will work in conjunction with the secretary and teachers in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205,
3206, 3210, 3211, and 3213

8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations
(NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6