

SUGAR VALLEY RURAL CHARTER SCHOOL

POLICY NUMBER: 204
SECTION: PUPILS
TITLE: **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**
DATE ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 1998
DATE LAST REVISED: MARCH 2020

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

PURPOSE

The Board requires that school-aged students enrolled in Sugar Valley Rural Charter School attend school regularly, in accordance with state laws. The educational program offered by this school is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for student to achieve academic standards consistent educational progress.

AUTHORITY

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in SVRCS during the days and hours that the school is in session, except that an administrator may excuse a student for temporary absences when s/he receives satisfactory evidence of mental, physical, or other urgent conditions which may reasonably cause the student's absence. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness.
2. Quarantine.
3. Recovery from accident.
4. Required court attendance.
5. Death in family.
6. Family educational trips, with prior approval.
7. Educational tours and trips, with prior approval.
8. Religious holidays.
9. Other "urgent reasons" to be considered only if it directly affects the student and is agreed to by the school principal such as a verified medical or dental appointment, family emergency, or impassable roads.

Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed physician.

The Board or its designee shall report to appropriate authorities' infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of seventeen (17). The Board shall issue notice to those parents/guardians who fail to comply with the requirements of compulsory attendance that such infractions will be prosecuted according to law

Attendance need not always be within school facilities. A student will be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction or health care; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work study or career education program; the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.

Upon written request by a parent/guardian, an absence for observance of a student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused. A penalty shall not be attached to an absence for a religious holiday.

The Board shall, upon written request of the parents/guardians, release from attendance a student participating in a religious instruction program acknowledged by the Board. Such instruction shall not require the child's absence from school for more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year, and its organizers must inform the Board of the child's attendance record. The Board shall not provide transportation to religious instruction.

The Board shall permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group upon written request prior to the event.

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These shall include:

1. Medical or dental appointments.
2. Court appearances.
3. Family emergencies.
4. Other urgent reasons.

The Board shall excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at district schools, upon request and with the required approval:

1. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.

2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught.
3. Students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in district schools.
4. Students attending a home education program in accordance with law.
5. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business schools has been approved.
6. Students fifteen (15) years of age, and fourteen (14) years of age who have completed the highest elementary grade, engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.
7. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully issued employment certificate.

The Board may excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance at SVRCS:

1. Students receiving instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula from a properly qualified tutor approved by the CEO, when the excusal does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.
2. School age children unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education.
3. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by the Central Intermediate Unit or the Department of Education.

Educational Tours/Trips

The Board may excuse a student from school attendance to participate in an educational tour or trip not sponsored by the district if the following conditions are met:

1. To be approved, a family educational trip must be under the direct supervision of a parent/guardian, or legal custodian, and must be preceded by the completion of all necessary paperwork delivered to the building principal at least five (5) days prior to the trip unless waived by the building principal.
2. The building principal shall review the responsibilities of the student and family with the parent/guardian, as well as initiate the formal approval process by assisting with any questions regarding the completion of the Request for a Family Educational Trip form.
3. Students may be excused for family educational tours or trips for no more than seven (7) school days in any one (1) year.

4. Trips will not be approved during the PSSA for grades 3-8 based on the current year's testing window and during the Keystone testing window.
5. The CEO shall have the authority to limit such absences to a lesser number if the student's pattern of absences to that date appear to be detrimental to his/her educational progress. The CEO shall indicate such limitation on the Request for a Family Educational Trip form before it is filed with the Superintendent for final approval or disapproval.
6. Trips shall be denied to students with more than ten (10) days' absence per semester or twenty (20) days overall, excluding physician's excuses and suspensions/expulsions. Trips shall also be denied to students with three (3) or more days of unexcused/illegal absence.

All absences that result from an approved family educational tour or trip shall be excused.

Delegation of Responsibility

The CEO or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the district's attendance policy by publishing such policy in the student handbook, parent newsletters, district website and other efficient methods.

The CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session that conforms with requirements of state law and regulations.
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with law.
3. Distribute annually to staff, students, and parents/guardians Board policies and school rules and regulations governing student attendance, absences tardiness, partial-day absences, and excusals.
4. Impose on truant students' appropriate incremental disciplinary measures for infractions of school rules, but no penalty may have an irredeemably negative effect on the student's record beyond that which naturally follows absence from classroom learning experiences.
5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of truant behavior, and consider modification of the student's educational program to meet particular needs and interests.
6. Ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.
7. Issue written notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance law, within three (3) days of any proceeding brought under that law. Such notice shall inform the parent/guardian of the date(s) the absence occurred; that the absence was unexcused and in violation of law; that the parent/guardian is being notified and informed of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student; and that further violations during the school term will be prosecuted without notice.

Repeated infractions of Board policy requiring the attendance of enrolled students may constitute misconduct and disobedience that warrant the student's suspension or expulsion from the regular school program or provision of alternative education services.

REFERENCES:

School Code 510, 1301, 1302, 1318, 1327, 1329, 1330, 1332, 1333, 1338, 1339, 1354, 1546
PA Code Title 22 Sec. 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.5, 11.11, 11.13, 11.21, 11.22, 11.23, 11.24, 11.25,
11.28, 11.32, 11.34, 11.41