

Title: Student Attendance Policy - Onsite Program

Effective Date: December 12, 2017

Last Revised Date: April 14, 2020

References:

UCA 53A-11-101 through 105, Students in Public Schools, *Compulsory Education Requirements*
Utah Administrative Rule R277-419-5, Pupil Accounting, *Student Membership Eligibility and Continuing Enrollment Measurements.*

Utah Administrative Rule R277-607, Truancy Prevention

Purpose

Regular attendance at school is required by law and is a major key to students' success. Students who attend school regularly learn more and are more successful in school than students who do not. Parents who make regular school attendance a priority also are helping their children learn to accept responsibility, and that's an important lesson for a successful life. Attendance patterns are formed early in life. Children who develop good attendance habits in the early grades will be more likely to continue them throughout their school career, as well as into their chosen career. Regular attendance is critically important, because students who miss school miss out on carefully planned sequences of instruction. They miss out on active learning experiences and class participation. They miss out on the opportunity to ask questions. As a result, they are more likely to fall behind, and they are more likely to drop out.

Ignite Entrepreneurship Academy (IEA) 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.

This policy applies to students participating in IEA's Onsite Program. The Attendance Policy for the Distance Education Program is presented separately.

Definitions

Absence. Non-attendance at school for at least four consecutive hours of a full school day or 50% of a non-full school day.

Activity Absences: Students participating in activities that do not involve the entire student body will be excused by an administratively approved Activity Release form. Students are not penalized for the absence, but must make-up assigned work per teacher's disclosure statement.

Excused Absence. An absence from school or class which has been verified by a parent/guardian or school administrator in accordance with established procedures and is for a valid reason, including:

- 1) illness;
- 2) in accordance with a student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan;
- 3) death of family member;
- 4) approved school activity;

- 5) any other excuse established as valid by the Director.

Extended Absence. Absence from school of five or more consecutive school days.

Suspensions: The suspended student is counted present on attendance records and cannot be penalized for non-attendance on days of suspension. Make-up work must be provided for suspended students. Work must be completed within the time requirements of the individual teacher.

Tardy: The student comes to class late up to fifteen (15) minutes after the bell rings. A student is tardy when he/she is not ready to work when the bell rings, as determined by the teacher.

Truancy: Either parents/guardians or the school are not aware of the student's absence or the student did not follow proper checkout procedure. Parents/guardians, police, or school personnel verified the student's absence as truancy.

Unexcused Absence. An absence that does not meet the requirements for an Excused Absence.

Policy

Attendance

1. Utah law requires school attendance for every child between the ages of six and seventeen years ("school-age child"). Attendance in class is a vital and integral part of the educational process. Students are required to be in attendance every school day during each academic year.
2. IEA expects at least 95% attendance, which equals nine (9) or fewer absences during one academic year.
3. Parents/guardians have primary responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Parents are encouraged to minimize the impact of planned vacations, trips, family events, medical appointments, and so forth that occur during school time.
4. Attendance for students in grades K-5 will be taken every school day at the beginning of the day. Attendance for students in grades 6-8 will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Student attendance shall be recorded in the student information system and may only be changed with administrative approval.
5. Administration shall provide a secure and efficient procedure for parents/guardians to check out students when they need to leave campus.
6. This policy and applicable procedures shall be available for review by parents or interested parties on IEA's website or in hard copy by request.

Student Attendance and Absences1. Generally

- a. Students shall attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused. All other exceptions to a full-day schedule must be approved on an individual basis by the Director.
- b. Student attendance shall be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations.

2. Excused Absences

- a. Excused absences are absences resulting from conditions beyond the control of the student, the parent or guardian, or the school. The following are acceptable excuses for absences from school: (a) personal illness; (b) personal court appearance; (c) death in the family (including mother, father, spouse, son, daughter, sister, brother, grandparent; aunt, uncle, nephew or niece); (d) religious holidays regularly observed by the student as part of his or her personal religious practice; and (e) extenuating circumstances as approved by the school administration. For personal illness beyond three days, a doctor's note may be required. School administration, in its discretion, may require documentation of any court appearance.
- b. Students are considered present and are marked present on all school records when participating in field trips, athletic events, student government activities, and other functions sanctioned by the school. All other absences (including tardiness and leaving school without permission) are deemed unexcused absences.
- c. A parent/guardian must notify the school, preferably in advance, but in any event, within five school days of the date of absence, of the reason for and expected duration of each non-consecutive absence. Acceptable forms of notification are through a link on the school's website, or by phone call, text, or email to the administrative office. If notification is not received, the office will attempt to contact the student's parent/guardian to verify the absence. If notification is not provided within five (5) school days of the last day of school missed, the period of absences will be considered unexcused.

3. Religious Holidays

- a. Absence from school because of a religious holiday shall be considered an excused absence. The Director will include procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations will ensure that a student is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which was missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner.

4. Maximum Allowable Absences

- a. Students shall not be absent from school (for excused or unexcused reasons, excluding suspensions) for nine (9) or more school days per year.
- b. Any student who exceeds this total will not be eligible to receive course credit and/or may be subject to retention.

5. Transfer Students

- a. Students who transfer from other schools are not penalized for absences prior to the day of enrollment at IEA; however, transfer students may not be absent for more than the prorated share of the allowable number of unexcused absences per nine-week period or per semester. When a student transfers from one school to another, the number of absences is transferred and applied toward the maximum allowable number.

6. Make-Up Work

- a. Students shall be required to complete make up work for all absences.
- b. Students absent from school due to long-term and short-term suspensions shall be required to make up work missed during the suspension pursuant to School Board policy.

Compulsory Attendance

1. Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information has been received by school personnel that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence, a reasonable effort shall be made by the school principal, principal's designee, attendance officer or other school personnel or volunteer to notify the parent by phone, email or other electronic means to obtain an explanation. School staff will record the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused." Early intervention with the student and parent or parents will take place for repeated unexcused absences.

a. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support: If

- (1) a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year,
- (2) there is no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence; and
- (3) reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the absences have failed, then the principal or principal's designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of

other communication devices to obtain an explanation for the student's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or principal's designee, the student, and the student's parent shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance. Such a plan shall include documentation of the reasons for the student's nonattendance as well as the consequences of continued non-attendance.

b. Upon Additional Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support: If the student is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the student's parent and the school personnel have received no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the student's absence, the school principal or principal's designee shall schedule a conference with the student, the student's parent and school personnel. Such a conference will include the director and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the student's nonattendance. The conference team shall monitor the student's attendance and may meet again as necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. Interventions may include, but are not limited to, the following as a means of resolving the attendance issue:

- i. Referral to School Administration, or appropriate designee
- ii. Meetings with student and parents
- iii. Adjustments to the student's schedule
- iv. Attendance monitoring
- v. Attendance contracts
- vi. Truancy citation (for students 12 and over) 159
- vii. School suspension
- viii. Parent attending school with student
- ix. Referral to Juvenile Court (for students 12 and over)

Extended Absence/Vacation Release

Except in the case of an unforeseen illness or family emergency, an extended absence of five (5) or more consecutive school days requires prior approval from IEA Administration. These prior-approved release days will not contribute to the accumulated total of absences. Forms are available in the main office and should be received by the administrative office at least one week prior to the absence following procedures established by IEA Administration. Parents and students should work with teachers to coordinate a plan for the student to make up the class work that will occur during extended absences.

Unexcused Tardies to School or Early Departure from School

1. The School Board believes that for students to benefit from instruction, the student must be present at the time instruction is scheduled to start and remain in school for the entirety of the school day. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make medical and other appointments outside of school hours.

2. For the purposes of this policy, the student must be more than fifteen (15) minutes late to school, or leave fifteen (15) or more minutes early, without an excuse approved by the principal or his/her designee.
3. Students who have excessive unexcused tardies, early dismissals, or a combination thereof may receive sanctions as determined by the director or his/her designee, including those sanctions also issued for students with excessive absences.

Waiver of Attendance

1. Under certain conditions, a waiver of these attendance policies may be considered by the director. The student and his parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may request, and the director may grant, a waiver for the following reason(s): (1) medical hardship (condition whereby a student could not attend as certified by a licensed physician); (2) other very unique circumstances, as determined by the director.
2. The request for a waiver shall be made in writing to the director and may be made at any time during the school year once absences exceed the allowed amount. The request shall include (a) the total number of student absences, (b) an explanation of the medical hardship or other very unique circumstances, and (c) verification that make-up work was completed.

Truancy

1. A student is considered "truant" if he/she has five (5) or more Unexcused Absences during the school year. A student is considered "habitually truant" if he/she has ten (10) or more Unexcused Absences during the school year.
2. Habitual truancies may result in academic and other discipline such as referral to a mobile crisis outreach team, a receiving center operated by the Division of Juvenile Justice Services, or a youth court in accordance with UCA 53A-11-911.

Appeals

IEA Administrators will meet with students and their parents or guardians to resolve disputes whenever parents or guardians wish to 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 through IEA's grievance process.

Sources used in preparation of this policy

Bonneville Academy, Attendance and Truancy Policy
Weilenmann School of Discovery, Student Attendance Policy

Date originally approved: _December 12, 2017

Attest:

Board Chair/President

Board Secretary

Signature

Signature

Printed Name

Printed Name