

Windham Academy Public Charter School

JH - ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

Absences

The Board requires that school-aged children enrolled in Windham Academy attend school in accordance with all applicable state laws and Board policies. The educational program offered by the School is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the school during the days and hours that school is in session, except that the Director may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Recovery from an accident
3. Required court attendance
4. Medical and dental appointments
5. Death in the immediate family
6. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
7. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Director or permitted by law

Any absence that has not been excused for any of these reasons will be considered an unexcused absence.

In the event of an illness, parents must contact the school and inform the District of the student's illness and absence. For other absences, parents must provide written notice or a written excuse that states one of these reasons for non-attendance. The Director may require parents to provide additional documentation in support of their written notice, including but not limited to doctor's notes, court documents, obituaries, or other documents supporting the claimed reason for non-attendance.

If parents wish for their child to be absent for a reason not listed above, the parent must provide a written explanation of the reason for such absence, including why the student will be absent and for how long the student will be absent. The Director will make a determination as to whether the stated reason for the student's absence constitutes good cause and will notify the parents via telephone and writing of his/her decision. If the Director determines that good cause does not exist, the parents may request a conference with the Director to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The Director may then reconsider the initial determination. However, at this juncture, the Director's decision shall be final.

Family Vacations/Educational Opportunities

Generally, absences other than for illness during the school year are discouraged. The school director or his/her designee may, however, grant special approval of absence for family vacations, provided written approval is given in advance. Students are required to complete all

work assigned during any special approved absence. Supplemental instruction is not to be expected.

Repetitive Tardiness

If a student's repeated tardiness impacts classroom instruction, the teacher shall report this to the Director. The Director has the authority to devise a remedial plan. Such plan may allow for a certain number of tardy incidents to equal an unexcused ½ day absence.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. Any absence that has not been excused or any of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

Ten half-days of unexcused absence during a school year constitutes habitual truancy.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time.

Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Director or Truant Officer is hereby designated as the School employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Intervention Process to Address Truancy

The Director shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by including a process that identifies students who are habitually truant, as defined above.

When the Director identifies a student who is habitually truant, or who is in danger of becoming habitually truant, he/she shall commence an intervention with the student, the student's parents, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary. The intervention shall include processes including, but not limited to:

1. Investigates the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
2. Considers, when appropriate, modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy;
3. Involves the parents in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy;
4. Seeks alternative disciplinary measures, but still retains the right to impose discipline in accordance with the School's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline;

Parental Involvement in Truancy Intervention

When a student reaches habitual truancy status or is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, the Director will send the student's parent a letter which includes:

1. A statement that the student has become or is in danger of becoming habitually truant;
2. A statement of the parent's responsibility to ensure that the student attends school; and
3. A request for a meeting between the parents and the Director to discuss the student's truancy and to develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.

Parental Notification of Truancy Policy

The Director shall ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the student handbook and is emailed to parents annually at the beginning of each school year.

WA Board Approved: _____
Date

Legal References:

RSA 189:34, Appointment

RSA 189:35-a, Truancy Defined

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil

RSA 193:7 Penalty

RSA 193:8, Notice Requirements

RSA 193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (a)(1), Attendance and Absenteeism

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (c), Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism

NHSBA