

OSACPS Attendance Policy

Effective Date: 2018-2019 school year

Participation

Attendance is the first step in ensuring mastery of knowledge and skills, character development, and high-quality work. In order for our students to reach their personal best, they must show up and make their strongest effort at school each and every day. The goal of the student attendance policy is to promote consistent, daily school and class attendance. The expectation is that all students will have, at a minimum, at least a 96% attendance in school and in each class during each school day. To achieve this, students would be attending school 182 out of 190 days, which is a total of eight (8) absences.

Massachusetts law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires all children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school. The Academy must uphold state laws relative to student attendance. A student who is truant, frequently absent, or frequently tardy to school without adequate reason is in violation of this policy.

At the Academy, regular attendance is required. Our curriculum is ambitious, and every day attendance is essential for students to keep pace. Parents/guardians/families are expected to ensure that their children are in school.

Examples of an excusable absences may include the following:

- Serious illness, quarantine, or other serious medical event with an accompanying doctor's note
- Court attendance with documentation
- Death in the immediate family
- Observance or practice of a religious holiday

Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but may not be limited to:

- Repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional
- Truancy from school or individual classes
- Family vacations
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situations
- Oversleeping or otherwise being tardy to school

Notifying and Documenting Absences, Tardies, and Dismissals

If a student is not going to be in school, we would like to know about it as early as possible. If your child is absent, please call the school no later than 9:00 AM and speak to the Administrative Assistant or leave a message stating your child's name, teacher's name and reason for the absence. Please do not email or call teachers or administrators with absence, tardy, or dismissal information. Our attendance and dismissal system goes through the Administrative Assistant. If the school has not received notification of the absences from the parent or guardian within three (3) days of the absence, the school will notify the parent or guardian of a student absence.

Parents/guardians must provide written documentation from dentist, doctor, or other health care provider if a child is seen during the school day and want it to be counted as excused. If the school nurse or designee dismisses a student due to health reasons, this will be considered an excused dismissal.

The school shall notify that parent/guardian of a student who has at least five (5) days in which the student has missed two (2) or more classes unexcused in the school year or who has missed five (5) or more school days unexcused in the school year.

School staff will make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of a student who has five (5) or more unexcused absences to develop action steps for student attendance. Communication concerning the attendance policy will follow the following process: notification from the Teacher, notification from the School Adjustment Counselor, and if improvement is not evident, the Principal. The action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the school staff, the student and the student's parent/guardian, and with input from officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies, as appropriate.

It shall be the duty of the school to report ten (10) unexcused absences to the OSACPS Board of Trustees.

Students who are tardy more than twenty-five (25) times or absent (excused or unexcused) for more than thirteen (13) days over the course of the year may be required to attend summer school and are at risk of being retained the following year. Days served on suspension are included in a student's total absences.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be notified after fifteen (15) unexcused absences.

The school reserves the right to file criminal charges in "An Adult Failure to Cause" (ADF) through Juvenile Court against the parent/guardian if unexcused absences exceed twenty (20).

No credit will be given to students who miss school work due to truancy, tardiness or class -cutting, unless the student makes up the missed work as directed by his teacher. Teachers should afford students a reasonable amount of time upon their return to class to make up missed homework, quizzes, exams, papers, projects, and other assignments.

No adverse, prejudicial, or discriminatory effect shall result to any student because she/he is absent to observe a religious holiday. Teachers should, to the extent feasible, refrain from scheduling any important tests, culminating activities, and/or major papers/reports during religious holidays.

Tardies

School begins promptly at 8:00 AM. Students are marked tardy if they arrive after 8:10 AM. We require that parent/guardian who brings a child to school, arriving after 8:10 AM, accompany their child as they enter the building to sign them in and report to the office. Unexcused arrival after 10:30 AM is considered to be an absence. Three (3) tardies will be counted as one (1) unexcused absence.

Dismissals

Unexcused dismissal prior to 12:00 PM is considered to be an absence if the student does not return to finish the school day. We require that parent/guardian who dismisses a child from school, report to the main office to sign them out for the day.