

OSACPS Attendance Policy

Effective Date: 2/24/21 (board approved)

COVID-19 Update: During the 2020-2021 school year, parents and guardians have a choice of remote or in-person learning. At this time, OSACPS is requiring families to opt in to a model (remote or in-person) for the remainder of the year. **In order to switch models, advance notice must be given by the parent/guardians and written confirmation from the school acknowledging this request.** *At this time, since it takes our teachers time to prepare supplies for hands-on learning and projects, students can not move from in-person to remote learning unless they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or quarantining.* Students experiencing symptoms should seek medical advice and possible testing prior to returning to school. Students with symptoms of COVID-19 (student's health permitting) or quarantining are expected to fully participate in the remote learning model for the duration of their symptoms or quarantine (as advised by the school nurse). **We are unable to accommodate temporary remote learning that is NOT related to the COVID-19 pandemic.** This could include sleeping in, missing the bus, non-COVID related appointments, and following the school's policy on being absent from school.

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 all classes during each school day. To meet this objective for the 2020-2021 school year, students would be attending 173 out of 180 days, which is a total of seven (7) absences.

At OSACPS, regular attendance is required. Our curriculum is ambitious and every day attendance is essential for students to keep pace. Chapter 76, Section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven days or fourteen half-day sessions in any period of six months. Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school daily. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions within any sixth-month time period, the school may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian.

OSACPS 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.

COVID-19 Update: During all remote learning, attendance at all (remote) class meetings will be recorded and all regular attendance policies apply. Remote classes meetings occur a minimum of three times a day and therefore a student must sign in in order to be recorded as remote present.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences are considered excused or unexcused, but are still recorded as absences. When sufficient documentation is provided, OSACPS will excuse absences for documented medical (subject to review by the school's consulting pediatrician) reasons, legal or school related reasons, and for documented family emergencies and personal reasons, at the principal's discretion.

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

All other absences will be considered unexcused. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside the school day, during breaks, or outside of school hours whenever possible so as to not miss valuable class time. If such appointments are scheduled during the school day and result in a student missing class time, documentation from the health care provider must be produced for the absence (subject to review by the school's consulting physician), specifically outlining the hours of the appointment. Students are not excused for the entire day when they have medical or dental appointments. Families should take care not to schedule trips or vacations during scheduled school days which are not counted as excused absences.

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

Covid-19 Update

Families should be in contact with the school nurse at 774-922-1841 or jmarinelli@osacharter.org with information regarding any COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis. OSACPS reserves the right to require a doctor's note.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, students must stay home if they show any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 (see following list). **Before** leaving home for school or getting on the bus, families should assess their child's state of wellness by checking for the above symptoms and completing the required health screen. If the student has any symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school. The family should notify the nurse that the child will be absent and the reason for the absence. The school nurse will follow-up with the family regarding the child's symptoms, whether the child was seen by a medical professional and any testing that was done. The child can return to school once cleared by the school nurse and/or a medical professional. It is important to know that the symptoms of COVID-19 mimic the symptoms of many other illnesses. To protect all students and staff, any symptoms of Covid-19 will be cared for as a suspected case until determined otherwise.

COVID-19 symptoms:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

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 at 774-922-1840 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 OSACPS does not receive a message from the parent/guardian at the designated time, then the school shall call the telephone numbers provided to inquire about the student's absence. Parents/guardians will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the parent/guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

Parents/guardians must provide written documentation from a 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 parent/guardian will also be notified when a student's absences are deemed excessive (when the student has at least five (5) days in which the student has missed two (2) or more classes/periods 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. A meeting will be scheduled with the principal (or his/her designee), the parent/guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.

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, call 774-922-1840 to have someone meet them to sign their child in. During the 2020-2021 school year, unexcused arrival after 11:15 AM is considered to be an absence.

Dismissals

Unexcused dismissal prior to 11:30 AM 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, call the main office at 774-922-1840 to sign them out for the day.