



POLICY: Attendance

**Date of Board Approval:
2/12/2015**

I. Purpose

Gaining an education is an individual responsibility. Regular attendance and positive participation is essential for academic achievement and personal development. This is especially true with the educational opportunities provided by Valley Academy. Frequent absences from the day-to-day classroom experience disrupt the educational process. The benefits of instruction, once lost, cannot be entirely regained. The entire process of education requires continuity of instruction, class participation, learning experience, and individual study.

As a charter school, Valley Academy has a limited number of available slots for students based on total student capacity of the school. Students wishing to attend the school must do so in order to retain their position at the school. Non-attendance may result in the opportunity to attend Valley Academy being given to another student on the waiting list.

Valley Academy highly encourages families to make it their goal to have 100% attendance. The intent of Valley Academy Attendance Policy is to insure that parents know how important it is for them to plan well in advance so that trips, vacations and other activities occur during those days when school is not in session when possible.

Valley Academy is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the Utah Compulsory Education Requirements for the students who are enrolled in the school and Valley Academy also has the responsibility of ensuring that the school meets the attendance component of Annual Yearly Progress mandate, which is 93% school-wide average attendance.

Utah Administrative Rule *R277-607-5* directs parents and guardians of school-age minors to cooperate with their Charter School Board to secure regular attendance at school.

II. Policy

As directed by Utah Administrative Rule R277-607-3:

1. The Attendance Procedures of Valley Academy are developed with the intention of encouraging regular and punctual attendance and are consistent with Rule R277-607-3, and Utah Code 53A-11-101 through 53A-11-105.
2. The Board of Directors shall annually review attendance data and consider revisions to the Attendance Policy and Procedures to encourage student attendance.



3. The Attendance Policy and Procedures shall be included in the Parent/Student Handbook and the Parent/Student Handbook will be posted on the Valley Academy website.
4. The Director or his designee shall establish programs and incentives which promote regular, punctual student attendance.
5. The Attendance Procedures shall include provisions for:
 - A. Notifying parents of the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
 - B. Notifying parents as discipline or consequences progress.
 - C. An opportunity to appeal disciplinary measures.
 - D. School-age minors age 12 years or older or their parents to contest Notices of Truancy.
6. If a parent of a child currently enrolled at Valley Academy, opts to pursue Homeschooling as the primary location for their child's education, Valley Academy will issue a Certificate of Exemption from the compulsory education requirements of the law within 30 days following the receipt of a notarized affidavit from the parent indicating that they are choosing to home school their child pursuant to state law 53A-11-102.

III. Definitions

The definitions of terms used in Valley Academy Attendance Policy and Procedures are consistent with the definitions found in the Utah Administrative Rule R277-607-1 and Utah Code 53A-11-101.

1. Absences

In accordance with Utah Code 53A-11-101, Valley Academy has approved the following definitions for absences from school:

A. Excused Absences:

- i. The law allows parents of students to excuse their student from school, but only when the student is absent with a "valid excuse." "Valid excuse" is defined by House Bill 207 (2007), Utah Code 53A-11 and Utah Administrative Rule R277-438 and 607 as:
 - a. an illness;
 - b. a family death;
 - c. an approved school activity;
 - d. an absence permitted by a school-age minor's individualized education program, developed pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, as amended; or an accommodation plan, developed pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, as amended; or
 - e. any other excuse established as valid by a local school board, local charter board.



B. Unexcused Absence: Any absence that cannot be defined as an Excused Absence or Educational Leave is unexcused.

C. Educational Leave: Utah Code 53A-11-101.3 dictates that Educational Leave or other preapproved extended absence shall be granted if it is determined that the absence will not adversely impact the school-age minor's education. Examples of Educational Leave are: trips to museums, international travel, service missions, and visits to historical sites, etc. Valley Academy will allow Educational Leave for a maximum of 10 cumulative days per school year. Educational Leave will not be granted during end of the year testing windows.

2. Habitual truant: A school-aged minor who has received more than two truancy citations within one school year from the school in which the minor is or should be enrolled and eight absences without a legitimate or valid excuse or who, in defiance of efforts on the part of school authorities to resolve a student's attendance problem as required under Section 53A-11-103, refuses to regularly attend school or any scheduled period of the school day.

3. Truant minor: Any school-age minor who is subject to the state's compulsory education law and who is absent from school without a legitimate or valid excuse.

IV. Attendance Procedure

The Director or his designee will establish programs and incentives which promote regular, punctual student attendance.

When a student is absent, the parent or guardian needs to notify the school office before 8:30 AM on any day the child is absent. If a parent does not call, Valley Academy will attempt to contact the parent to notify the parent that the child is absent. If a parent does not communicate with the Attendance Secretary, the absence will be unexcused.

In accordance with Utah law, Valley Academy students who are absent without excuse for more than 10 consecutive days in any given quarter, will be removed from the school rolls, as per Utah State Law. They may reapply for enrollment upon return, but must go to the end of the waiting list for their grade level. The only exception to this policy is if the absence was the result of a medically verifiable reason and the school was notified prior to the end of the 10-day period. In case of a medically verifiable incident, continuing contact with the school must be maintained.



While we recognize and support the need for families to have time to play together and know that synchronizing parent work demands and requirements of the school schedule usually requires conscientious planning-ahead, the summer, winter and spring breaks, along with multiple long weekends should provide adequate time for coordination. Valley Academy's expectation is that parents will plan family trips during days when school is not in session.

1. **Monitoring Absences**

- A. Parents will be notified by automated phone system for each unexcused absence, within 24 hours of the unexcused absence.
- B. Students who accumulate more than 5 excused absences and/or 3 unexcused absences per quarter will be monitored by the Valley Academy Attendance Secretary and/or teachers and reported to the Director or his designee to determine if intervention is appropriate.
- C. When a student has accumulated 5 or more unexcused absences in a quarter the parent shall receive a request from the Attendance Secretary to report to the Director in person or by email to provide an explanation for the unexcused absences, and may receive:
 - i. Notice of Compulsory Education Violation and/or:
 - ii. A student who is 12 years old or older may be given a Notice of Truancy indicating that they have accumulated 5 or more truanancies (unexcused absences). The Notice of Truancy will be mailed to the Student's parent. It will direct the student and his parent to meet with the Director or his designee and to cooperate with the school board to secure regular attendance by the student. Notices of Truancy may be contested by the student through his/her parents by contacting the Director or his designee.
- D. The Notice of Compulsory Education Violation will include the required language outlined in Utah Code 53A-11-101.5, as amended from time to time:

“(4) The notice of compulsory education violation, described in Subsection (3):

(a) shall direct the parent of the school-age child to:

(i) meet with school authorities to discuss the school-age child's school attendance problems; and

(ii) cooperate with the school board, local charter board, or school district in securing regular attendance by the school-age child;

(b) shall designate the school authorities with whom the parent is required to meet;



(c) shall state that it is a class B misdemeanor for the parent of the school-age child to intentionally or recklessly:

(i) fail to meet with the designated school authorities to discuss the school-age child's school attendance problems; or

(ii) fail to prevent the school-age child from being absent without a valid excuse five or more times during the remainder of the school year;

(d) shall be served on the school-age child's parent by personal service or certified mail; and

(e) may not be issued unless the school-age child has been truant at least five times during the school year.

(5) It is a class B misdemeanor for a parent of a school-age minor to intentionally or recklessly fail to enroll the school-age minor in school, unless the school-age minor is exempt from enrollment under Section 53A-11-102 or 53A-11-102.5.

(6) It is a class B misdemeanor for a parent of a school-age child to, after being served with a notice of compulsory education violation in accordance with Subsections (3) and (4), intentionally or recklessly:

(a) fail to meet with the school authorities designated in the notice of compulsory education violation to discuss the school-age child's school attendance problems; or

(b) fail to prevent the school-age child from being absent without a valid excuse five or more times during the remainder of the school year.

(7) A local school board, local charter board, or school district shall report violations of this section to the appropriate county or district attorney."

E. A Notice of Compulsory Education Violation will be mailed to the parent by certified mail. A parent who receives a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation will be directed to meet with the Director or his designee to discuss the student's attendance problems.

F. Students who continue to accumulate unexcused absences will be monitored to determine if the parent is intentionally and recklessly failing to cooperate with the Director or his designee to secure regular attendance by the student. The School Board and the Director or his designee shall initiate efforts, as reasonably as possible, to



resolve attendance problems in accordance with Utah Code 53A-II-103. Notice may also be given indicating that the student will lose his/her slot at Valley Academy and that opportunity given to another student on the waiting list if the student continues to be absent.

G. After a parent has been served with a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation, if the student accumulates 5 or more additional Unexcused absences during the remainder of the school year and it is determined that the parent is intentionally or recklessly failing to comply with the Compulsory Education Law, then the parent's violation will be reported to the County Attorney for referral to Juvenile Court.

H. A student who accumulates 10 unexcused absences in one school year may be unenrolled from Valley Academy and his/her slot given to another student on the waiting list.

I. If a student accumulates 20 absences (unexcused or excused—excluding educational leave) in one school year, they will need to reapply for admission for the following year with preference given to applicants who are already on the wait-list.

2. Late Arrivals

It is important that students arrive on time for school. Having a few extra minutes prior to the late bell helps them unwind, relax, and prepare for the day. Late arrival, on the other hand, is disruptive to the class and the teacher, and puts the late arriving student at a disadvantage.

The morning Drop-Off Period for students is 8:00 AM to 8:25 AM. The Late Bell rings at 8:30 AM. Anyone arriving in the classroom after 8:30 AM may be marked tardy. A tardy is excused only for the following reasons: medical or dental appointments, traffic delays that affect several school families traveling the same route, or family emergencies. Tardy students must check-in at the office for a tardy slip before reporting to class. If the student is more than five (5) minutes late, the parent should accompany the student to the office.

To encourage punctuality, the Attendance Secretary will use the following procedure: (unless the secretary is made aware of extraordinary circumstances contributing to tardiness).

- A. The following will happen at the designated intervals. All accumulated tardies are on a per-quarter basis
 - i. Four (4) Unexcused Tardies - Parents will be notified by email.
 - ii. Eight (8) Unexcused Tardies – The Attendance Secretary will send a request to the parents to contact the Director in person or by email to discuss a solution.



- iii. Twelve (12) Tardies - Disciplinary action (student may be suspended).
- iv. Twenty (20) Tardies- Parents will need to reapply for admission for the following year with preference given to applicants who are already on the wait-list.

The Director or his designee will establish programs and incentives which promote regular, punctual student attendance.

3. Educational Leave Procedure: The following procedures must be followed in order to take Educational Leave:

A. Parents must fill out a Request for Educational Leave form and submit it to the child's teacher, and a copy to the front office, regarding their planned trip a minimum of two weeks before the proposed trip. The form may be found on the school website and in the front office.

- i. Teacher will submit recommendations regarding the student and proposal for possible make-up work and/or alternative solutions.
- ii. Parent(s) must then meet with the Director, who will make the final determination of whether the absence can be excused through Educational Leave. A copy of the determination will be given to the teacher and the parent.
- iii. When an absence is excused through the process outlined above, an arrangement will be made for the child's teacher to collect make-up work for the child and/or an alternative assignment(s) will be arranged. Upon the child's return the child will be given the make- up work and reasonable date will be set for completion and evaluation of the work. Parents should be aware that the pace of a classroom day is somewhat unpredictable, due to individual needs, enrichment that may grow out of planned lessons, etc. If presentation of new concepts has been missed, parents may need to seek tutorial support and/or make adjustments to the family schedule to allow for catch-up time. Educational Leave may not exceed 10 cumulative school days per year.

4. Make-Up Work Due To Absences:

In general, school-work resulting from absences may be collected from the teacher after the child returns to school (the teacher will gather the school work as assignments are given). At their discretion, teachers may provide routine assignments for students before they leave, if convenient, however assignments requiring significant preparation or explanation must wait until the student returns. Students are responsible for requesting and collecting missed work from their teacher. Refer to the student's teacher for specific deadlines for returning make-up work.



Request for Educational Leave

This form must be completed prior to the leave.

I (we) as parents/guardians of _____ in grade _____ request educational leave for the following dates:

For the following reason (leave must have an educational component):

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teachers, please complete the blanks below:

Course	Assignments

Turn in as many assignments as possible before you leave. Many activities are difficult to make up outside of class. Work with your teachers to make up anything you missed while you were gone.

REQUEST APPROVED:

Administrator's Signature _____ Date: _____