

Valley Academy Attendance Policy

1. Purpose

- a. Consistent attendance is the first necessary requirement for academic achievement and personal development. This is especially true in the academically rigorous environment of Valley Academy (Valley). Frequent absences from the day-to-day classroom experience disrupt the instructional 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 study.
- b. Valley highly encourages families to make it their goal to have 100% attendance. The intent of Valley's Attendance Policy is to ensure 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. VAC administration supports families and have planned summer, winter, and spring breaks and multiple long weekends to provide adequate time for families. Valley's expectation is that parents will plan family activities during days when school is not in session.
- c. Valley is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the Utah Compulsory Education Requirements (53G-6-2) for the students who are enrolled in the school.

2. Compliance with Utah State Board of Education Rules: Attendance Procedures shall include provisions for:

- a. Notifying parents of the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
- b. Notifying parents as discipline or consequences for non-attendance progress.
- c. Notifying parents of the opportunity to appeal disciplinary measures.
- d. Direction to parents and guardians of school-age minors to cooperate with their Charter School Board to secure regular attendance at school.
- e. Assurance that definitions used in Valley's Attendance Policy and Procedures are consistent with the definitions found in the Utah law.

3. Attendance Procedures

- a. The Executive Director or designee will establish programs and incentives which promote regular student attendance and punctuality.
- b. When a student is absent, the parent or guardian shall notify the school office before 9:00 AM, possible, on a day the child is absent. The parent is expected to inform the Attendance Secretary of the reason for the student's absence. If a parent does not communicate with the Attendance Secretary, the absence may be unexcused.
- c. The school will notify parents within 24 hours, either by phone or by email, whenever a student is absent from class. However, primary responsibility for attendance of students lies with the parents. (See Utah Code 53G-6-2). The school shall assure that parents are informed of the school calendar and bell schedule. Parents have the responsibility to make sure that the school has a current phone number and email address, and that parents are receiving regular phone calls and emails from the school.

- d. Utah Administrative Code R277-419 allows a school to appeal to the State Superintendent for a waiver of the days and hours required to be offered by a Utah public school due to an emergency. Consistent with this waiver opportunity, VAC administrators may modify the school calendar and seek waivers if and when necessary. Scheduled school days or hours may be modified or canceled due to inclement weather that would make travel to school or school attendance hazardous for students or families, natural disasters or emergencies, community-wide health emergencies, school threats, or other unexpected events that would put students and/or staff at risk. To the extent possible, VAC administrators will do the following if an emergency necessitates the cancellation or modification of the school schedule:
- i. VAC administrators will always consult with and follow the direction and guidance of local and state medical and government authorities when making school modification/closure decisions.
 - ii. VAC will notify parents primarily by text or email and, if necessary, by personal parent contact, giving parents as much notice as possible prior to modification or closure.
 - iii. VAC will follow the direction of public education and government authorities regarding continuing education services to students in the event of an emergency.
 - iv. If VAC finds it necessary to cancel school or modify school hours with minimal time to notify parents, VAC employees will always stay with any students at the school until parents are contacted and able to pick up children.
 - v. If school hours are cancelled or modified, VAC administrators will arrange for continuing student instruction (as directed), grade level completion, required assessments, school meals and other activities as appropriate to provide services and protection to students.

4. Excused Absences

- a. In accordance with Utah law, Valley has approved the following reasons for VALID EXCUSED ABSENCES:
- i. Illness (for illnesses lasting more than four days, a medical professional's note is required.)
 - ii. Family death or emergency (parents must notify both the teacher and the office as soon as the parents know an absence will be necessary.)
 - iii. Scheduled, proactive medical and dental appointments (parents are strongly encouraged to schedule appointments outside of school hours.)
 - iv. School-sponsored or supported activity
 - v. Absence(s) permitted by a student's IEP
 - vi. Scheduled family event.
 - vii. An extended absence may be a valid excuse if the VAC governing board determines that such an absence will not adversely affect the student's education.

5. Unexcused Absences

- a. Unexcused absence is defined as any absence other than an excused absence.
- b. In accordance with R277-419, Valley students who are absent for more than 10 consecutive days, without parent contact, may no longer be counted and funded in the public education system. VAC administrators and employees will continue to work with

the student and family to encourage the student to return to school, unless the parent requests that the student be unenrolled in VAC.

6. Excessive Unexcused Absences

- a. When a student in grades 1-6 has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences during the school year, the school will contact parents by: telephone, text, e-mail, mail, or in person. The notice to the parent shall direct the parent to contact school authorities to discuss the child's school attendance problems and direct the parent to cooperate with school personnel to secure regular attendance by the child. The notice shall provide the parent with the names or titles of the school personnel whom the parent should contact.
- b. If the parent does not contact school authorities, or if the contact does not resolve the problem and the student accumulates no less than a total of ten (10) unexcused absences during the remainder of the school year, a certified or hand delivered letter home shall be sent to the child's home. The notice shall:
 - i. describe the problem
 - ii. describe necessary corrective action
 - iii. direct the parents to meet with school authorities to discuss strategies to improve student's attendance
 - iv. inform the parent(s):
 1. that it is a class B misdemeanor for the parent to intentionally or recklessly fail to meet with school personnel to resolve the problems; or fail to prevent further absences without valid excuse
 2. that if the situation is not corrected, a referral shall be sent to the 5th District Court.
 - v. If school personnel believe that after this notice has been sent, parents fail to make a good faith effort to ensure that a child receives an appropriate education, VAC administrators shall make a report detailing the student's attendance problems and the school's efforts to resolve them to the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS).

7. Make-up Work Due to Absences

In general, schoolwork resulting from absences may be provided by the teacher AFTER the child returns to school (the teacher will gather the schoolwork as assignments are given). At their discretion, teachers may provide routine assignments for students before they leave if convenient. However, assignments requiring a lot of prep or explanation must wait until the student returns. Students/Parents are responsible for requesting and collecting missed work from their teacher.

8. Homebound/Hospital Services Policy

Valley does not provide instruction for homebound or convalescing students at the student's home or place of convalescence. In the event that a student is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the parent is responsible for notifying school administration in writing (email or written letter), including a medical professional's note, explaining the extenuating circumstances and the estimated length of time that the student will miss school. Decisions about possible educational services are made at the administration's discretion and are generally considered to be short-term.

9. Late Arrivals (Tardies)

- a.** 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.
- b.** Students arriving at their classroom after the late bell may be marked tardy. A tardy is excused 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.
- c.** When a student has accumulated ten (10) tardies during the school year, the school will contact parents by: telephone, text, e-mail, mail, or in person. The notice to the parent shall direct the parent to contact school administrators to discuss the child's school attendance problems and direct the parent to cooperate with school personnel to secure regular attendance by the child. The notice shall provide the parent with the names or titles of school personnel the parent should contact.
- d.** The school may impose student discipline for ongoing student tardiness.

10. Early Pick-ups

While it is understood that there may be rare occasions when a student must be excused early for a medical appointment or another important reason, a pattern of early checkouts will be reported to administration with the understanding that interrupting the classroom to pull out students at the end of the day is disruptive to student learning and distracting to the teachers.

11. Late Pick-ups

Students must be picked up from Valley no later than 15 minutes after the final dismissal bell. Valley does not have the ability to supervise and care for students left at school beyond the end of school.