



# TECH FREIRE

## CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

### BOARD POLICY 206A: STUDENT ATTENDANCE

#### STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is a primary factor in a student's successful academic and social development and lays the groundwork for a successful and productive life beyond school. Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the learning process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained, even with extra after-school instruction. Many students who miss school frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of schooling.

Because learning opportunity is lost regardless of the reason for a student's absence, TECH Freire does not "excuse" absences. (However, parents should still explain student absences to the school so that the student is not considered truant. Please see the Truancy section below.)

#### EXCUSED VS. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

##### EXCUSED ABSENCE

**An excused absence is any absence that is documented for official business.** Examples include, but are not limited to: court dates, death in family, doctor or dentist appointments, etc. Excuses of this kind must be documented on official letterhead or back to work slips from a doctor, court, or other professional. Handwritten notes or parent notes will not be accepted as proof of official business. In addition, suspensions will be counted as excused absences. Students will also be excused for participation in a project sponsored by an organization eligible for Pennsylvania Agricultural Fair Act grants (such as FFA for 4-H), to participate in a musical performance for an event or funeral with a national veterans' organization, or if health or sanitation laws or regulations prevent a student from attending school.

##### UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

An unexcused absence is any other kind of absence from school. Examples include, but are not limited to: sickness, family trips, etc. **While parents should still send a note to school explaining the absence in order to mitigate truancy, parent notes do not excuse absences. The Head of School is authorized to develop a system of consequences for attendance. See below for the School's Truancy Policy and Procedures.**

Pennsylvania regulation requires that we remove any student from the roll who has accumulated 10 consecutive unexcused absences. A certified letter will be sent to notify parents of their child's removal from the school roll.

## **PROCEDURE 206A: STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

### UNEXCUSED ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Potential consequences for sustained absences include the following:

- Upon reaching 20 absences, a student may fail their courses regardless of end of year grades, at the discretion of a Head of School.

### LATENESS PROCEDURES

A student is considered late if they are not present in their first period class by the official start of the school day.

Lateness can lead to serious consequences, including the following:

- Students who arrive forty-five (45) minutes after the start of school on full days, or thirty (30) minutes late on half days, will not be admitted to school. The student's parent/guardian will be notified and the student will be sent home and marked as an unexcused absence for the day.
- Repeated unnecessary lateness may result in disciplinary or other corrective action at the discretion of school administration.
- Additionally, three (3) instances of lateness are equivalent to one (1) unexcused absence.

Note: These procedures are subject to change based on state and/or federal health regulations and recommendations.

### EARLY DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

To protect student safety, the school reserves the right to only release students to a parent/guardian or an emergency contact on file with the school. In emergency situations, the Head of School may permit the release to another individual with written or emailed consent from the parent/guardian. For non-emergent or anticipated early dismissals, such as doctor's appointments, etc., students must present a note detailing the time and reason for early dismissal. This note, which must have the parent/guardian name and phone number listed, must be presented by 9:00AM. If the student does not have a note, a parent/guardian must pick the student up and sign them out of school. For the safety of your student, please limit emergency requests.

A student must be present in second period (official attendance period) in order to be marked present for that day. Therefore, any student who receives an early dismissal prior to this time will be marked absent for the remainder of the day.

All students must swipe out using their student ID key card in the event of an early dismissal.

**Please note: For the safety of our students, the school will deny an early dismissal in the event that any of the above procedures are not followed.**

### IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL DUE TO HEALTH EMERGENCIES

In the event that there is a public health emergency and a student begins showing signs or symptoms of an illness, parents/guardians must be able to accommodate an immediate dismissal of the student from school.

### MAKE-UP PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of a student who has been absent to obtain missed work, homework, and assignments from their teachers.

### **PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES**

If a student knows ahead of time he or she will be absent or miss a class, he or she should make every effort to collect work from teachers the day before and/or contact teachers or classmates about missed assignments before returning to school. Alternately, students or parents can reach out to academic advisors to assist in collecting work.

## **MISSED HOMEWORK/CLASS WORK POLICY**

Students who are absent must make up missed homework/classwork assignments as soon as possible. The number of days a student is absent is equal to the number of days a student has to make up an assignment.

## **MISSED QUIZZES/TESTS**

Students who are absent (excused or unexcused) **on the day of a test or quiz will be expected to take the test or quiz on the day that they return to school**, unless other arrangements have been made with their teachers. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with a teacher to make up this missed test or quiz. More specific procedures are outlined in class syllabi.

## **MISSED PROJECTS/PAPERS**

At a teacher's discretion, papers and other assignments that students knew about before being absent are due upon the student's return or by email.

## **PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

A student absent from school may not participate in any after school activity on the day they were absent. It is the responsibility of the student to make up any and all assignments missed as a result of an absence (illness, suspension, field trip, etc.).

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES**

The school will use the following methods to notify parents and guardians of their student's attendance record:

- Daily, automated attendance call to all the primary contact number of all students who are absent (please make sure that the school has the most up-to-date contact number for you at all times).
- Attendance will be printed on all official grade reports that are sent home on a quarterly basis
- A letter will be sent to the student's home when they have accumulated 3, 6, 10, 15, and 20 unexcused absences (see the Truancy section below for more information)

**NOTE:** Parents and guardians may view attendance through their personal access to the PowerSchool system.

## **ILLNESS PROCEDURES**

### **When the nurse is on site:**

When the nurse is on site, they are the person who will determine whether or not the student is able to return to class. If the nurse determines that a student needs to leave, then they will contact the parents/guardian and request that they either pick up their student or request permission for the student to travel home on their own. If the nurse is unable to get in contact with the parent/guardian, they will contact someone else on the students' contact list in PowerSchool to get permission to send the student home. The nurse is the only person who has the authority to determine a student must leave for the day. Reasons for sending a student home sick include:

- A fever of 100.4 or higher
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Asthma that is not being controlled with inhalers
- Conjunctivitis

### **When the nurse is NOT on site:**

In the event that the School Nurse is not at the school, the school will honor the wishes of the parents/guardians as to whether the student should stay in school for the day. In the event the nurse is not available and the school and parent do not agree about the resolution, the Director of School Operations will determine whether the student is too ill to stay in school. In the event a student is too ill to remain in school, the student **MUST** be picked up by the parent or guardian or their designee. Please refer to the early dismissal

policy. Students who are determined to be too ill to remain in school will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to leave school without being picked up by a parent/guardian or person they designate.

### **Medical Emergencies & Accidents:**

In the event your child has a medical emergency (defined as an incident that requires immediate medical attention), we will make him/her comfortable and begin appropriate first aid procedures. If your child needs to be transported to a hospital, an ambulance will be called. A school staff member may accompany your child to the hospital and may or may not stay with him/her until you arrive. If you cannot be reached, we will attempt to contact the emergency numbers you have listed as emergency contacts.

## **BOARD POLICY 206B: TRUANCY**

A student is considered truant after 3 truant absences. A child is considered habitually truant after 6 or more truant absences. To avoid truant absences, students must always bring a parent note explaining their absence when they return to school. The standards to avoid a truant absence are less strict than those to have an absence excused. However, while a parent note may be used to avoid a truant absence, the School must still determine that the absence was for a legitimate reason. Parent notes can only be used to prevent up to 6 truant absences per year. After 6 absences with parent notes, any further such unexcused absences will be considered truant.

Within 10 days of a student's third truant absence, TECH Freire will notify the student's family of the child's violation of compulsory school attendance. The notification will be sent in writing to the person in parental relation with the child who resides in the same household as the child. When transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, the notice will also be provided to the child's biological or adoptive parent if the parent's mailing address is on file with the School and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order. The notice will:

- Include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant
- Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT CONFERENCE**

After a student reaches 6 unexcused absences, the School will hold a School Attendance Improvement Conference to address barriers to a student's attendance. The School will send a second notice to the family as described above which will additionally include notice of the conference. Neither the child nor the person in parental relation may be legally compelled to attend the conference, but TECH Freire strongly urges both to participate. The conference must occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference after written notice sent in advance and attempts to communicate via telephone. TECH Freire reserves the right to provide notice and subsequently hold a conference at its discretion regardless of whether a student has yet accumulated 6 unexcused absences.

The conference should ideally engage the student, family, school, and all participants involved in the student's life to explore possible solutions to increase the student's school attendance. In the case of a follow-up conference after a student has already been referred to the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, Truancy Court, or Family Court, the conference will also include a representative from the appropriate office. Maintaining open communication between the student and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to facilitate regular school attendance. The conference provides both parties with the opportunity to identify, understand, and explore all issues contributing to the student's truant behavior. Participation by the student and family is an integral component for this conference. In addition, representatives from relevant and/or involved community-based agencies, community and school services, and school personnel should be invited to participate, as needed. During the conference, Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) shall be developed cooperatively with the student and other meeting participants.

Issues to be addressed at the conference should include but not be limited to:

- Appropriateness of the student's educational environment
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success
- Student's current academic level and needs
- Social, emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral health issues
- Issues concerning family and home environment
- Any other issues affecting the student's attendance

The participants in the school-family conference should work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the student is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member should have a vested interest in and responsibility for determining an appropriate plan to assist the student to succeed both socially and academically. This conference should also provide an opportunity to ensure that both the student and the family clearly understand the School's attendance requirements and the legal ramifications of not adhering to the state's compulsory attendance requirements. This methodology promotes full understanding and appreciation of the root causes of truancy as well as the resultant personal and societal impacts when truant behavior is not adequately addressed.

The School may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until the conference has occurred. The outcome of the conference must be documented in a SAIP.. The SAIP must be documented on an official form substantially similar to one developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This plan substantiates efforts made by the school, the family and other vested third parties to assist the student in addressing and resolving school attendance issues.

#### LEGAL CONSEQUENCES FOR SUSTAINED TRUANCY

TECH Freire must report incidences of truancy to the Pennsylvania Department of Education and may report them to the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Attendance and Truancy, the Philadelphia District Attorney, the Philadelphia Family Court, and/or the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. Families may be required to appear at court hearings or be assigned a case worker who will make home visits. Parents or guardians convicted of violating compulsory attendance can be fined, required to complete an appropriate course, or perform community service. In order to support legal proceedings conducted under Pennsylvania's truancy law, TECH Freire will document all truant absences, all outreach efforts made, any conferences held, and any interventions pursued.