

School Lane Charter School
2400 Bristol Pike
Bensalem, PA 19020

Board of Trustees Policy

TRUANCY POLICY

School Lane Charter School (the "Charter School") believes that good attendance is essential if students are to achieve and reach their academic potential. Each day is important for learning. Parents are required to ensure their son/daughter maintains good attendance.

Truancy - Overview

A child is "truant" if he/she has three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year. An unexcused absence is any absence from school without an acceptable excuse (as articulated in the Charter School's Student/Parent Handbook), or without any reason at all. This also includes any student who leaves class without the permission of the teacher.

Students that are absent from school for ten (10) or more consecutive days without appropriate documentation will be removed from the Charter School's rolls.

A child is not considered truant if he/she is absent from school due to not meeting the immunization, exemption or provisional admission requirements of the Department of Health, at 28 Pa. Code Chapter 23, Subchapter C (relating to immunization), or the student has not received from the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") or his/her designee a medical or religious exemption from immunization under 28 Pa. Code § 23.84 (relating to exemption from immunization). 22 Pa. Code. Chapter 11.20.

For the unexcused absences, the Charter School will send the parent/guardian a notice of the unexcused absence as well as In addition to stating the legal consequences, the name and telephone number of a school contact person will be included.

For the third unexcused absence occurs, the Charter School will send the parent/guardian notice by USPS mail within 30 school days of the child's third unexcused absence that the child has been truant. This notice shall 1) a copy of the legal penalties for violation of compulsory attendance requirements; 2) a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future; 3) will be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation; and 4) include the offer of an Attendance Improvement Conference.

Habitually Truant

A child is "habitually truant" if he/she has six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

When a child demonstrates habitually truant behavior, the Charter School will schedule a school/family School Attendance Improvement Conference to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop a mutually agreed upon Attendance Improvement Plan to resolve truant behavior. The plan can include a myriad of options for the elimination of truancy that are mutually agreed upon by the participants.

School Attendance Improvement Conference and the Attendance Improvement Plan

The Attendance Improvement Plan is developed cooperatively with involved stakeholders through an Attendance Improvement Conference, which is required upon the Charter School's notice to the child's parent/guardian following the child's third unexcused absence. The Charter School will invite the following individuals to the conference:

- The child;
- The person in parental relation to the child;
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource (e.g. a grandparent, sibling, family friend, advocate, community member, etc.);
- Appropriate school personnel;
- Appropriate service providers, if applicable (e.g. case managers, behavioral health providers, probation officers, children and youth practitioners, etc.).

The Charter School is permitted to proceed with the Attendance Improvement Conference and Attendance Improvement Plan without the child's parent present at the Conference.

The Attendance Improvement Conference engages all participants involved in the child's life to explore possible solutions to increase the child's attendance. Maintaining open communication between the child and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the Attendance Improvement Conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to assure regular attendance. Issues to be addressed at the Attendance Improvement Conference will include but not be limited to:

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

The participants in the Attendance Improvement Conference should work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the child is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member should have a vested interest in and responsibility for determining an appropriate plan to assist the child to succeed both socially and academically. This Attendance Improvement Conference also provides an opportunity to ensure that both the child and the family clearly understand the legal ramifications of not adhering to the state's compulsory attendance requirements.

The primary goal of the Attendance Improvement Conference is the development of a comprehensive Attendance Improvement Plan which is understood by, agreed upon and supported by the child, the parent/guardian, the Charter School representatives and all other conference participants. The Attendance Improvement Plan should include but not be limited to the following components as appropriate:

- Identification and provision of appropriate academic supports by the Charter School and/or community organization(s);
- Identification and provision of appropriate social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health supports from the Charter School and/or community organization(s);
- Identification of the school environment issues that affect the child's success and solutions to address these issues;
- Explanation of the child's strengths and responsibilities related to the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Explanation of the family's strengths and responsibilities related to the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Clarification of method(s) used for monitoring the effectiveness of the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Explanation of the consequences for each stakeholder if the Attendance Improvement Plan is not fully implemented;
- Discussion of the benefits for successfully implementing the Attendance Improvement Plan; and
- Following up and reporting the outcome of the Attendance Improvement Plan.

The Attendance Improvement Plan substantiates efforts made by the Charter School, the family and other vested third parties to assist the child in addressing and resolving school attendance issues. This comprehensive system of supports and services provides documentation of the good faith effort between the Charter School and the child's family should future action be required.

Excessive Truancy

A child is "excessively truant" if he/she has twelve (12) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.

Excessively truant children under fifteen (15) years of age: The Charter School will refer the child/family to either: 1) a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or 2) the county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. Additionally, the school may file a citation against the parent/guardian of an excessively truant child under fifteen (15) years of age in a magisterial district court.

Habitually truant children fifteen (15) years of age and older: The Charter School will refer the child/family to either: 1) refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or 2) file a citation against the student or parent/guardian in the appropriate magisterial district court.

The Charter School will maintain a record of each student's absences and reasons for absences as part of the student record. The Charter School will report unexcused absences directly to PDE through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

Children who are excessively truant from school while subject to compulsory school attendance are subject to an assessment to determine if there is a need for general protective services. Children will not be referred to the county children and youth agency for assessment as possibly needing services until after the Charter School has made a formal effort to involve the family and child in resolving the cause of the truant behavior.

The Charter School will not impose discipline for truant behavior that excludes the child from the classroom, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

The CEO or designee is directed to develop procedures that may be necessary to implement this policy.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.

ADOPTED this 30th day of August 2018



President



Secretary

Third Unlawful Absence (via First Class USMail)

Parent/Guardian Name
Address
City, PA Zip Code

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF CHILD'S TRUANCY

Dear <PARENT'S (OR GUARDIAN'S) NAME>:

This letter is to officially notify you that <STUDENT NAME> has been absent from SCHOOL LANE CHARTER SCHOOL without an excuse on the following dates: <DATE 1, DATE2, and DATE 3 (add subsequent dates as appropriate)>. These absences are unexcused and, therefore, constitute a violation of the compulsory attendance provision of the Public School Code (24 P.S. 13-1327).

You are therefore notified of your child's repeated unexcused absences and strongly encouraged to ensure that your child receives no subsequent unexcused absences. The series of unexcused absences constitute a summary offense under the Public School Code for which penalties may be imposed against you as parent or guardian. Act 138 of 2016 provides for up to a \$750 fine and allows the court to impose parent education classes with your daughter or son and community service sentences for parents of a truant child who do not show that they took reasonable steps to ensure the child's school attendance. Act 138 also provides that truant students lose their driver's license for ninety (90) days for the first offense, and six (6) months for the second offense.

Be advised that the process for development of an Attendance Improvement Plan for your child has now begun, if your child receives six (6) unexcused absences, SCHOOL LANE CHARTER SCHOOL will require your participation in an attendance improvement conference and develop with you an attendance improvement plan. If your child accumulates twelve (12) unexcused absences, SCHOOL LANE CHARTER SCHOOL may initiate a proceeding against you before a magisterial district judge, and a referral for general protective services made to the local children and youth agency. SCHOOL LANE CHARTER SCHOOL will not contact the local children and youth agency prior to our contacting you. Please refer to the enclosed sections in the Public School Code for specific penalties for violation of compulsory attendance requirements for both you and your child.

Sincerely,

<Principal>

(Enclosures: Law)

cc: Attendance Officer
Guidance Counselor