



CLASSROOM-BASED ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the intent of the Governing Board (“Board”) of the Edison-Bethune Charter Academy (“EBCA” or the “Charter School”) to ensure that students attend school every day on time. Consistent school attendance is critical to school success. Being present for classroom instructional time is essential for students to reach their goals and achieve their dreams. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, disengagement from school and behavior problems.

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law or this Attendance Policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness.
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments:
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family:
 - a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state.
 - b. "Immediate family" shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister or any relative living in the student's household.
5. Participation in religious instruction or exercises as follows:
 - a. The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four school days per month.
6. For the purposes of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
7. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child. (The school does not require a note from the doctor for this excusal.)
8. To permit the pupil to spend time with an immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Charter School.

9. For purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Election Code Section 12302.
10. Attendance at the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
11. Authorized parental leave for a pregnant or parenting pupil for up to eight (8) weeks.
12. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, based on the facts of the pupil's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse. A pupil who holds a work permit to work for a period of not more than five consecutive days in the entertainment or allied industries shall be excused from school during the period that the pupil is working in the entertainment or allied industry for a maximum of up to five absences per school year subject to the requirements of Education Code Section 48225.5.
13. In order to participate with a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public-school pupil audience for a maximum of up to five days per school year provided the pupil's parent or guardian provides a written note to the school authorities explaining the reason for the pupil's absence.

In addition, a student's absence shall be excused for justifiable personal reasons such as:

1. Appearance in court.
2. Attendance at a funeral.
3. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion.
4. Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four hours during a semester.
5. Attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization upon written request by parent and approval by the Executive Director/Principal or designee pursuant to uniform standards established by the Board.

Method of Verification

When students who have been absent return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. When your child is absent, please follow these procedures below.

Upon returning to school after an absence, a child's absence may be cleared by (1) calling the Charter School at (559) 457-2530, (2) providing a doctor's or healthcare provider note, or (3) having your child bring in a note signed by a parent or guardian.

1. Signed, written note from parent/guardian, parent representative, presented to your child's teacher or the front office. The note should state the following:
 - a) Date note written
 - b) Student's first and last name
 - c) Specific reason for absence (in alignment with the excused absences list above)
 - d) Date of absence
 - e) Parent Signature

This note should be presented to your child's teacher or the front office.

2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student;
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative;
 - c. Name of verifying employee;
 - d. Date or dates of absence; and
 - e. Reason for absence.

3. Healthcare Provider Verification:
 - a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, Charter School staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
 - b. A healthcare provider's note of illness will be accepted for any reported absence. When a student has had fourteen (14) absences in the school year for illness verified by the student's parent without a healthcare provider's note, any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider.

Students should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency. Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be considered excused subject to administrative regulations and law.

Make Up Work

If the parent calls in the morning of the child's absence and requests make up work, we will notify the teacher and have them make arrangements for missed homework. Please pick up the work if you request it. Students need to make up work they miss for absences. Students should ask their teachers for missing assignments when they return to school. Teachers will generally allow one day for each day of absence to make up missed work.

Tardies

Like absences, tardies are also disruptive to your child's education. Please have your child arrive at school on time. Students arriving late to school will report to the office to receive a pass to class. Excessive tardies may lead to lunch detention. Tardies are only excused with a signed doctor's or parent/guardian's note.

Children Leaving School Early

If you are picking up a child during school hours for any reason, please report to the school office and inform the secretary. The child will then be called to the office for you. Children will not be called out of class before an adult is in the office for the child and may not wait in the office. Children will only be released to parents or adults listed on the emergency card (who provide a picture I.D.). This is a safety measure for the protection of your child. Keep in mind pulling your child out early excessively may interfere with their education. Limit the times you pull them out early to emergencies only.

Leaving School for Appointments

Medical or other appointments should be made after school hours whenever possible. Students with medical appointments during school hours must be signed out and signed back in through the school office. On these occasions, the student must present a medical verification regarding time and date of the appointment.

Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

If a pupil has missed more than three (3) days of school without a valid excuse per school year or is tardy 30 minutes or more for more than three (3) days per school year, the student meets the criteria for classification as a “truant.” Any pupil who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be deemed a truant. Such students shall be reported to the Executive Director/Principal or designee.

A child may also be considered a “chronic truant” if they have been absent for ten (10) percent or more of the school days in one school year since their date of enrollment. Students shall be classified as a “habitual truant” if the student is reported for truancy three (3) or more times within the same school year. This generally occurs when the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for five (5) full days in one school year or if the student is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on five (5) occasions in one school year.

EBCA has designed the following person as the Truancy Mediator Liaison:

Marty Solis
m.solis@myebca.com
(559) 457-2530

The following procedures/steps regarding class absences and excessive late tardies:

- All unexcused absences/tardies beyond 3 days will result in a written letter mailed home and phone contact by Truancy Mediation Liaison. This letter, and all subsequent letter(s) sent home, shall be sent by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, or some other form of mail that can be tracked. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Charter School. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy.
- Upon reaching 5 unexcused absences/tardies, a second letter will be mailed home requesting a meeting with parent, student, Truancy Mediator Liaison, and Executive Director/Principal to review the student’s records and develop an intervention plan/contract. At this time, the student will be assigned to case management and monitoring.
- Upon reaching 6 unexcused absences/tardies, the student will be referred to a second meeting with the Truancy Mediator Liaison and Executive Director/Principal for further

intervention through our Student Success Team (“SST”) and the student will also be referred to a Student Attendance Review Team (“SART”). Parent/Guardians will also receive a third letter mailed home and may be asked to attend a meeting regarding habitual truancy and chronic absenteeism.

- The SART panel will be composed of Rodolfo Garcia – Executive Director/Principal, Karl Sprattling – Curriculum & Instruction Director, and Marty Solis – Truancy Mediation Liaison. The SART panel will discuss the absence problem with the Parent/Guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and his/her family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.
 - The SART panel shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.
 - The parent shall be required to sign a contract formalizing the agreement by the parents to improve the child’s attendance or face additional administrative action. The contract will identify the corrective actions required in the future, and indicate that the SART panel shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the contract:
 - Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day
 - Student retention
 - After school detention program
 - Required school counseling
 - Loss of field trip privileges
 - Loss of school store privileges
 - Loss of school event privileges
 - Required remediation plan as set by the SART
 - Notification to the District Attorney
 - The SART panel may discuss other school placement options.
 - Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.
- If the conditions of the SART contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from the school and notification of the disenrollment sent to the student’s district of residence.
- For all communications set forth in this process, the Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet. It is the parent’s or guardian’s responsibility to update the Charter School with any new contact information.
- If student is absent five (5) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and parent/guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to the Charter School’s communication attempts, as set forth above, the student will be in violation of the SART contract, and the SART panel will recommend that the student be disenrolled in compliance with the Involuntary Removal Process described below. The Involuntary Removal Process can be started immediately upon the Charter School receiving documentation of Student’s enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e. a CALPADS report).

Process for Students Who Are Not in Attendance at the Beginning of the School Year

When students are not in attendance on the first five (5) days of school, the Charter School will attempt to reach the parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first five days to determine whether the student has an excused absence, consistent with the process outlined in this policy. If the student has a basis for an excused absence, parents must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, students who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the fifth day of school will be disenrolled in compliance with the Involuntary Removal Process described below, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first day of the school year will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll in the Charter School.
2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the third day of the school year will receive a letter indicating the student's risk of disenrollment.
3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the fifth day of the school year will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.
4. The Charter School will send the Involuntary Removal Notice to the Parent/Guardian and follow the Involuntary Removal Process described below for any students who have not attended by the sixth day, and do not have an excused absence.
5. The Involuntary Removal Process can be started immediately upon the Charter School receiving documentation of Student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e. a CALPADS report).
6. The Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.
7. Upon removal, the last known school district of residence will be notified of the student's failure to attend the Charter School and the disenrollment within thirty days of the disenrollment.

Involuntary Removal Process

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the action ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with the Charter School's expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to

present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder and shall include a copy of the Charter School's expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the Student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the Student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If as a result of the hearing the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney

It is the Charter School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student's success, and the Charter School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, the Charter School may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a child's attendance does not improve after a SART contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents fail to attend a required SART meeting, the Charter School shall notify the District's Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Students 12 years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

Non-Discrimination

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

Reports

The Executive Director/Principal, or designee, shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as students who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.