

<h1>SEVEN GENERATIONS CHARTER SCHOOL</h1>	SECTION: STUDENTS
	TITLE: 266 – TRUANCY
	ADOPTED: May 10, 2011
	REVISED: April 11, 2017

Policy	<p>The Seven Generations Charter School (the “Charter School”) believes that good attendance is essential if students are to achieve and reach their potential. Each day is important for learning. Parents are required to ensure their son/daughter maintains good attendance.</p> <p>This Policy will be effective at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.</p> <p>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. An out of school suspension shall be considered an excused absence.</p> <p>A child is “habitually truant” if he/she has six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year.</p> <p>When a child demonstrates truant behavior, the Charter School will schedule a school/family 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.</p> <p>For the first and second unexcused absences, the Charter School will send the parent/guardian a notice of the unexcused absence as well as attach a copy of the legal penalties for violation of compulsory attendance requirements. In addition to stating the legal consequences, the name and telephone number of a school contact person will be included.</p> <p>For the third unexcused absence, the Charter School will send the parent/guardian notice by certified mail within 10 school days of the child’s third unexcused absence that the child has been truant. This notice shall 1) include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future; 2) will be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation; and 3) include the offer of an Attendance Improvement Conference.</p>
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Procedure when child is habitually truant:

- Habitually truant children under fifteen (15) years of age: The Charter School will refer the child 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 Charter School may file a citation against the parent/guardian of a habitually truant child under fifteen (15) years of age in a magisterial district court. The venue of the filing shall be based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled or shall be enrolled.

- Habitually truant children fifteen (15) years of age and older: The Charter School will 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 venue of the filing shall be based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled or shall be enrolled. If a habitually truant child aged fifteen (15) or older incurs additional absences after a school refers that child to an attendance improvement program or the child refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, the Charter School may refer the child to the local CYS agency for possible disposition as a dependent child.

In all cases, regardless of age, where the Charter School refers a habitually truant child to a magisterial district court or CYS, the Charter School will provide verification that it convened and held an Attendance Improvement Conference.

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

The Charter School will report unexcused absences directly to PDE through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

Children who are habitually 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.

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.

Teachers are the first line of defense for compulsory attendance, as they are the first to recognize students with possible attendance issues. Therefore, the Board of Trustees directs the CEO or designee to work with the Charter School's teachers to implement a plan of action that includes but not limited to:

- Sharing and reviewing the Charter School's policy on attendance and student responsibilities with students and families;
- Contacting a child's parent/guardian upon the child's absence from school;
- Meeting individually with students to discuss reason(s) for absence;
- Following up with the CEO (or assigned attendance officer);
- Making referrals to guidance counselors; and
- Collaborating with Student Assistance Teams as appropriate.

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:

- Appropriateness of the child's educational environment;
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success;
- Child's current academic level and needs;
- 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 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 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, 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;

<p>Delegation of Responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees of Seven Generations Charter School authorizes the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or his/her designee to enforce this policy. The CEO or designee is directed to develop procedures that may be necessary to implement this policy.</p>
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