



Long Valley Charter School

Imagine-Achieve-Inspire

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Board of Directors

Date: 12-13-18

Number: 6001

It is the intent of the governing Board of Long Valley Charter School (“LVCS”) 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.

CLASSROOM BASED ATTENDANCE AT DOYLE SITE:

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 Board policy.

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

- Personal illness;
- Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer;
- Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments;
- Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family. 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;
- Jury duty;
- Illness or medical appointment of a child of whom the student is a custodial parent;
- To serve as a member of a precinct board for an election;
- Spending time with a member of the immediate family who is an active member of the uniformed services 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.

In addition, when a parent or guardian makes a request in writing and that request is approved by the Director or designee, a student's absence may be excused for justifiable personal reasons such as:

- Appearance in court;
- Attendance at a funeral;
- Attendance at an employment conference;
- Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion;
- Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four hours during a semester.

“Immediate Family” is defined as mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather of the student or the spouse of the student, in addition to the spouse, child, child-in-law, brother, and sister of the student and any relative living in the immediate household of the student.

Method of Verification

When students who have been absent return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

- Signed, written note from the parent, guardian, or parent representative;
- 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:
 - Name of student;
 - Name of parent, guardian, or parent representative;
 - Name of verifying employee;
 - Date or dates of absence; and
 - Reason for absence.
- Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method, which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including information outlined above.
- Healthcare provider verification
- When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, LVCS staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
- A healthcare provider's note of illness will be accepted for any reported absence. When a student has had 14 absences in the school year for illness without a healthcare provider's note, any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider.

Insofar as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents, guardians, and students are encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

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

Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

Students shall be classified as truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse three 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 three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Such students shall be reported to the Director or designee. In addition, students shall be classified as a chronic truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one school, from the date of enrollment to the current date.

The Director, or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, including working with the family in an attempt to resolve the attendance problem. A student's progress and learning may be affected by excessive unexcused absences. In addition, LVCS is fiscally dependent on student attendance and is negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences. If all attempts to resolve the student's attendance problem are unsuccessful, LVCS will implement the processes described below.

Process for Upholding the Attendance Policy

First Day of School Process:

- When students are not in attendance on the first five (5) days of school, LVCS will attempt to reach the parent or 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 or guardians must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, consistent with process below, students who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the fifth day of school will be disenrolled from the school roster, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.
- Students who are not in attendance on the first day of school will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll.
- Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the third day will receive a letter indicating the student will be disenrolled after the fifth day of school if the student has not attended school without valid excuse.
- Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the fifth day will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.
- Students who have not attended by the sixth day, and do not have an excused absence, as defined above, for not being in attendance will be disenrolled from LVCS.
- For the purposes of this procedure, LVCS will use the contact information provided by the parent or guardian in the registration packet.
- The student's district of residence will be notified of the student's failure to attend LVCS and the disenrollment.

Truancy Process:

Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences will result in a call home to the parent or guardian by the Director or designee. The student's classroom teacher may also call home. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences will result in a call home to the parent or guardian by the Director or designee. In addition, the student's classroom teacher may also call home and/or LVCS may send the parent or guardian an e-mail notification.

Upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences in a school year, the parent or guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #1" from LVCS. This letter must be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the school. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy. 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. **The student will be referred to a Student Success Team (SST) to consider solutions for improving attendance.**

Upon reaching seven (7) unexcused absences, the parent or guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #2" **and a second SST (pre-SART meeting) will** be scheduled to review the student's records and develop an intervention plan and contract.

Upon reaching ten (10) unexcused absences, the student will be referred to ~~a Student Success Team (SST) and the~~ School Attendance Review Team (SART). In addition, the parent or guardian will receive a "Habitual Truancy Re-classification Letter #3," and will be asked to attend a training for parents and guardians of chronically absent students.

The SART panel will be composed of the Executive Director, Principal, member of the governing board and the student's teacher. The SART panel will discuss the absence problem with the parent or guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and the student's family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue. The SART panel shall direct the

parent or guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies will be tolerated. The parent or guardian will be required to sign a contract formalizing the agreement by the parents or guardians to improve the student'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
- Required school counseling
- Loss of field trip privileges
- Loss of school event privileges
- Required remediation plan as set by the SART
- Notification to the District Attorney

The SART panel may also discuss other school placement options.

Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent or 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, LVCS will use the contact information provided by the parent or guardian in the registration packet. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to update LVCS with any new contact information.

If student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and a parent or guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to LVCS's communication attempts, as set forth above, the student will be in violation of the SART contract, the SART panel will recommend that the student be deemed to have voluntarily disenrolled, and notification of the disenrollment be sent to the student's district of residence.

Removal from Long Valley Charter School

If, after the above procedures have been followed, the student continues to have unexcused absences, the parent or guardian may receive notice that the student is in violation of the SART contract. The student will then be required to appear before the SART panel again to discuss the unexcused absences. After such meeting, or after reasonable attempts by the SART panel to schedule the meeting if the parent or guardian is nonresponsive, the SART panel may recommend that the student be deemed to have voluntarily disenrolled from LVCS. The parent or guardian will receive written notice of the SART panel's recommendation.

The SART panel shall then forward its recommendation to the Governing Board for review of the matter and final decision. The parent or guardian will receive written notice of the date and time of the Governing Board review. Such notice shall be sent at least five (5) days prior to the Board review. The Board's decision shall be final as to that recommendation.

If there is a Board decision to disenroll, notice will be sent to the student's district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A Board decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the SART panel from making a similar recommendation in the future.

Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney:

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

If a student's attendance does not improve after a SART contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents or guardians fail to attend a required SART meeting, LVCS 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.

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 or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

Reports

The Director, 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.

NONCLASSROOM BASED ATTENDANCE

Attendance in a nonclassroom based program is determined by the Student's daily engagement in the education activities assigned by the Supervising Teacher on a school day (M-F, no holidays); and by the Supervising Teacher's judgment of the time value of the work produced in response to assignments. Accordingly, when a student misses assignments, they are deemed absent. **After missing 25% of work assigned or 2 consecutive appointments**, an evaluation shall be conducted by the Director or designee to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain enrolled in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's mandatory interim record. The evaluation may consist of some or all of the following:

- Attendance based on completion of assignments as quantified by the credentialed teacher;
- Demonstration of skills;
- Standardized test scores;
- Written tests and reports if appropriate;
- Oral or written presentations;
- Student's attitude toward learning and achievement;
- Punctual attendance at scheduled appointments
- Ability to meet scheduled appointments;
- Parent and student preparedness for scheduled appointments;
- Student demonstration of adequate and appropriate progress toward
- Common Core State Standards;
- Appropriate learning environment;
- Adequate parent/student relationship as necessary to enhance learning process.

As part of the evaluation process, the parent will be invited to present evidence to the individual or individuals conducting the evaluation. Once the evaluation is complete, if it is determined that it is not in the best interest of the pupil to remain enrolled in the independent study program, a recommendation of disenrollment will be provided to the parent in writing by the Director of

designee. The parent(s) shall be provided an opportunity to appeal the recommendation to disenroll the pupil in accordance with the following procedure:

- a. Parent(s) will be notified of the decision and opportunity to appeal the decision.
- b. Parent(s) may assert counter arguments and present evidence in support of maintaining the student's enrollment in the independent study program at a public meeting to an advisory committee, which shall consist of the Director and two (2) teachers who are not the teacher of the student at issue or retired teachers.
- c. Parent(s) shall have no more than forty-five (45) minutes to present any arguments and/or evidence to the advisory committee.
- d. After a reasonable period of private deliberation, the advisory committee shall issue its decision to the parent(s).
- e. The ultimate decision of the advisory committee shall be final and binding upon the parent(s) and student and cannot be subsequently challenged.

Students with a Section 504 Plan or IEP:

- a) If the student who missed more than 25% of assigned work or missed two consecutive appointments has a Section 504 Plan or IEP, the Charter School shall conduct a manifestation determination ("MD") to evaluate whether the student's failure to complete assignments:
 - i. Was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or
 - ii. Was a direct result of the Charter School's failure to properly implement the student's Section 504 Plan or IEP.
- b) If the answer to either (1) or (2) above is yes, then the missed assignments or appointments are a manifestation of the student's disability.
- c) If the MD finds that the cause of student's missed assignments or appointments is a manifestation of the student's disability, the Charter School shall convene an IEP Meeting or Section 504 Meeting to: 8 Policy #6001 Revised 8-8-2017
 - i. Determine whether the independent study program is in the best interests of the student and providing the student with an educational benefit;
 - ii. Determine whether additional or different accommodations, modifications and/or related services would allow the student to receive an educational benefit in the independent study program of the Charter School.
 - iii. Whether the student should be referred to an alternative placement and educational program that would better satisfy the student's unique needs.
- d) The Charter School shall provide parent(s) with the applicable Procedural Safeguards.