



Board policy
Ratified

Attendance and Absences Policy

Importance of Attendance and Timeliness

- Students with strong attendance tend to perform better in class, score better on standardized tests, and are more likely to go to college.
- Students who attend school regularly are more likely to build positive relationships with peers and adults.
- It is important to build a strong work ethic early, as our students' future will require that they demonstrate good attendance and responsibility.
- It's the law! Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children go to school. When parents are at work, students should be safe at school. Failure to attend school can lead to legal action, up to and including a \$2500.00 fine.
- Arriving at school in an unhurried and peaceful manner sets the tone for a successful learning day. Arriving late is stressful for the students and disruptive for their classmates and teachers.

Health Guidelines for Attendance

Be sure to keep your contact information and student emergency contact information current so you can be reached if your child needs to go home for any reason. If you cannot be reached, then your emergency contacts will be called to pick up your child.

In particular, children who are experiencing any of the following symptoms should remain at home until they have met the following treatment guidelines:

- ❖ **Fever (100° F or higher):** Must be fever-free for a full 24-hour period before returning to Ocean Charter School ("OCS", the "School," or the "Charter School")
- ❖ **Upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea:** Must be able to tolerate a normal diet AND be completely clear of all vomiting and diarrhea for a full 24-hour period before returning to School.
- ❖ **Uncontrollable cough:** The cough subsides (within reason).
- ❖ **Runny nose:** Thick yellow or green discharge has cleared up. If the runny nose is due to allergies, the child must be able to care for it in a sanitary manner.
- ❖ **Live Lice:** Has completed an initial round of treatment and is clear of all live lice. The student must also undergo a head check before being re-admitted to the classroom. If any live lice are found during the head check, the student will be sent home for additional treatment. [1]
- ❖ **Treatable, contagious diseases (such as strep throat, impetigo, scabies, pink eye):** Has completed a full 24 hours of treatment.



- ❖ **Other communicable diseases (such as chickenpox, measles, mumps):**
Is no longer contagious and is well enough to attend School.

If your child contracts a significant communicable disease (like chickenpox or the measles), please notify the School in a timely manner so that the administration can take appropriate action to notify our community and to limit its spread within the school community.

Absences

As parents/guardians, you are an important part of your child's success and future achievement. We encourage all parents/guardians to support their children in attending school daily and on time. Students who are absent from school miss important instruction and assignments, and are more likely to fall behind and even drop out. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are much more likely to be successful both academically and socially, and have a higher graduation rate.

All students are expected to maintain a 97% attendance rate, which translates to no more than 6 unexcused/excused absences per year.

Attendance	Absences	Percent
Perfect	0	100 %
Proficient	1-6	97% - 99%
At Risk	7-9	95% - 97%
Excessive	10 or more	94 %

Excessive Absences

Excessive absences are defined as 10 or more absences (excused or unexcused) in one school year. Each absence beyond 10 days in a given school year must be verified by a health professional. Notes from health professionals must be submitted within 3 days of the absence. The School will make every possible effort to assist students with poor attendance patterns. If excessive absences continue, or if a student or parent is non-responsive or non-compliant with attendance policies, OCS may initiate the involuntary removal process, in accordance with the defined procedures, below.



Compulsory Education Law

Education Code section 48200 states that each person between the ages of 6 and 18 is subject to compulsory full-time education. Parents or guardians are responsible for sending their children to school daily and on time.

Attendance Tips for Parents

- Plan vacations for non-school days only.
- Schedule all appointments for your child after school, on weekend days, or during your child's vacation, whenever possible.
- Make sure OCS has your accurate daytime contact information, including cell phone number and/or email address.
- Let the OCS Administration know about any problems that may affect your child's attendance
- Make sure your child is ready to attend school at the appropriate time. Preparing school supplies and clothes the night before can go a long way.
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Absence Verification

Please call the School to report absences as soon as you know your child will be absent. School staff at the Del Rey campus can be reached at 310-827-5511 and at the Westchester campus at 310-. You can call, speak to a School staff member in person, or complete an attendance verification form at the front office no later than 3 school days following the absence. An excusal must be provided when a student misses part or all of a school day. Excusals may only be submitted by a parent, guardian, or caretaker.

Absences of 4 consecutive days or more for illness require a note from a doctor or appropriate health professional. As noted above, after 10 or more absences (excused or unexcused) a note from a doctor or appropriate health professional will also be required.

^[2]Therefore, School-site staff authorized to verify absence excuses may, when presented facts that call into question the authenticity of the excuse, request additional information in support of the absence excuse, and/or may refuse to excuse an absence. ^[3]If your child is absent or needs to miss part of the school day, please have your child attend school prior to the appointment and/or return to school before/after the appointment to complete the school day.

Type of Absences

There are five (5) types of absences: Excused, Unexcused, Un-cleared, Tardies, and Early Leaves. Please see below for definitions and information.

(1) Excused Absences

A student shall be excused from school when the absence is due to:

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- Personal Illness
- Quarantine by health officials
- Medical, optometric, chiropractic, or dental appointments or services
 - Students in grades 7-8, inclusive, may be excused from school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.
- Attendance of a funeral of an immediate family member (1 day within the state, 3 days outside the state)(“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.)
- Participation in religious instruction or exercises (no more than 4 school days per month)
- Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent. (The school does not require a note from the doctor for this excusal.)
- To permit the pupil to spend time with an immediate family member 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.
- Attendance at the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen
- For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the student's religion, attendance at religious retreats for no more than 4 hours during a semester or attendance at an employment conference when the pupil's absence has been requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative.
- For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 1230 of the Election Code.

(2) Unexcused Absences

Any absence for any reasons other than those listed above are not excused, and will result in a student being classified as truant after the third (3) day of unexcused absence for the school year.

(3) Un-cleared Absences

An un-cleared absence is any absence for which no confirmation or documentation has been provided by a student's parent/guardian within three (3) school days following the absence. Families need to communicate with the School staff regarding reasons for their child's absences. Every effort shall be made by the School staff to notify parents/guardians of student's un-cleared absences and to clear these and all absences. Students returning to school after an un-cleared absence must present documentation to the main office to clear their un-cleared absences. If attempts are made to clear absences with sufficient due diligence, yet no excuse is provided, these absences will be converted to unexcused absences or trancies. Thus, it is vital that parents communicate the reasons for absences to the School.

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(4) Tardies

A student is marked tardy when they are not in class when the appropriate bell rings. Tardiness is disruptive to the class and places a burden on both the teacher and the tardy student. Any time a student arrives late to class, valuable instructional time is lost. Tardies are marked as excused, unexcused or truant. Parents/guardians must write a note of explanation when they have knowledge of their child's tardiness. Any unexcused tardy in excess of 30 minutes will be counted toward truancy.

In the event of being tardy upon the start of the school day, your child must:

- ❖ Report to the office before proceeding to the classroom.
- ❖ Sign in and obtain a tardy slip stating the reason for arriving late.

Teachers may require that late students wait by the classroom door to be admitted at a less disruptive time. For children in kindergarten, first, and second grades, a parent/guardian must accompany the student to the door and wait for the teacher to admit them. Students who are tardy to class are responsible for making up missed time with the individual teacher.

In order to participate in an extracurricular or after-school activity, *a student must be at school by 11:00 a.m. on the day of the activity.* Exceptions to this rule include emergency dental or medical appointments, school-sponsored field trips, and family emergencies.

(5) Early Leaves

When picking up a student early, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student out in the main office. Parents may not enter the classroom without approval from the office. The office staff will verify and/or enter appropriate tardy/absence reason code for the period of time the student was off campus. Any unexcused early leaves in excess of 30 minutes may be counted toward truancy.

Truancy and Attendance Intervention

A student who is absent three (3) full days without a valid excuse, or on three (3) occasions is tardy or absent for more than thirty (30) minutes in one school year, or any combination thereof, may be classified as truant. Truancy can lead to severe consequences, including fines and criminal prosecution.

Education is a partnership between parents, students and the School. This Attendance and Absence Policy is not intended to be punitive for the parent or student. OCS will work with parents/guardian(s) to address issues or concerns which may be preventing students from attending school regularly, and will collaborate in order to overcome attendance problems. Attendance interventions that may be used by OCS in order to reduce barriers to regular school attendance may include:

- Phones calls
- Letters home
- Parent Conferences

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- Home visits
- Parent Attendance Assemblies
- Case management services
- Referral to school and community resources

Resources provided to a parent/guardian(s) and student(s) through school-based intervention teams; Student Success Team (“SST”); and Student Attendance Review Team (“SART”)

Failure to comply with this Attendance and Absence Policy may result in:

- Referral to the SART
- Referral to the District Attorney for possible prosecution
- Pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil’s driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code
- Cal Works or TANF may reduce your monthly allowance per child
- You may be fined up to \$2,500.00 per child

Do not allow your child to have “parent-permitted truanancies.” These truanancies are best described as absences for reasons other than what the law allows. They may include the following: personal business, car problems, babysitting, rain, walk outs/demonstration, etc. Absences for these reasons are still counted as truanancies.

Process for Addressing Truancy

1. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Principal or designee. The student’s classroom teacher may also call home.
2. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by Principal or designee. In addition, the student’s classroom teacher may also call home and/or the Charter School may send the parent an e-mail notification. In addition, upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes in a school year, the parent/guardian will receive “Truancy Letter #1” from the Charter School notifying the parent/guardian of the student’s “Truant” status. 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. 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.
3. Upon reaching five (5) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive “Truancy Letter #2 – Conference Request,” notifying the parent/guardian of the student’s “Habitual Truant” status and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to review the student’s records and develop an intervention plan/contract. In addition, the Charter School will consult with a school counselor regarding the appropriateness of a home visitation and/or case management.

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4. Upon reaching six (6) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the student will be referred to a Student Success Team (SST) and the School Attendance Review Team (SART). In addition, the parent/guardian will receive a Truancy Letter #3," and will be asked/invited to attend an evening assembly for parents/guardians of chronically absent students.
5. The SART panel will be composed of 1 Board Trustee, 1 Administrator, 1 Certificated Faculty member, and/or Attendance Counselor. 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.
 - a. The SART panel shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.
 - b. 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:
 - i. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day
 - ii. Student retention
 - iii. After school detention program
 - iv. Required school counseling
 - v. Loss of field trip privileges
 - vi. Loss of school store privileges
 - vii. Loss of school event privileges
 - viii. Mandatory Saturday school
 - ix. Required remediation plan as set by the SART
 - x. Notification to the District Attorney
 - c. The SART panel may discuss other school placement options.
 - d. Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.
6. If the conditions of the SART contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from the Charter School, consistent with the Involuntary Removal Process described below. If the student is disenrolled after the Involuntary Removal Process has been followed, notification will be sent within thirty (30) days to the student's last known district of residence.
7. 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.
8. If student is absent ten (10) 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 the school year, 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 Charter 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 the school year will be disenrolled from the Charter School roster after following 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 pupil and an explanation of the pupil'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

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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 pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil 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, 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.

Extended or Anticipated Absences/Independent Study

In the interest of maintaining a student's academic progress and minimizing disruption to the educational program, OCS may consider an Independent Study plan for students who experience an extended absence. Any use of independent study shall be restricted to occasional, incidental instances of extended absences, and shall fully comply with all applicable independent study laws and regulations.

Independent study applications must be turned in 2 weeks before the student's leave, must be for at least 5 days, and must be pre-approved by the teacher and administration. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students' attendance records and overall performance records will be considered in granting independent study applications. In addition, during the state mandated testing window, no independent study requests will be granted for students in grades 3rd -8th. Independent study requests should be made in writing no later than 2 weeks prior to an anticipated absence in order to provide sufficient time for teacher to assign make-up coursework, and to review the student's attendance record and overall performance record.

Parents/guardians should ensure that the student has all necessary coursework prior to beginning the independent study. All coursework must be completed according to school guidelines for the absence to be excused and the master agreement. The completed coursework must be turned in on the first school day after the student returns. If the faculty member reports that the work is not complete, or that they did not receive the completed work, administration will code the absences as "unexcused".

Although an independent study plan can be educationally profitable, please consider the following:

- ❖ It is impossible to "make up" a missed classroom experience.
- ❖ Since many assignments grow out of the daily classroom interaction, it is not possible to furnish all materials in advance or to do so accurately.
- ❖ Your child will not have the resource of teacher direction during a trip or other absence.