



Red River Valley Charter School

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

- I. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Policy is to provide support for students experiencing absenteeism and to ensure compliance with the Attendance for Success Act. Pursuant to the Act it shall be the Policy of the School that beginning on the first day of school, a classroom teacher or that teacher's adult designee shall be responsible for taking accurate attendance for every class and reporting absences to the attendance team.
  
- II. **Definitions.**
  - A. "Absent" means not in attendance for a class or school day for any reason, whether excused or not; provided that "absent" does not apply to participation in interscholastic extracurricular activities.
  - B. "Chronically absent" or "Chronic absenteeism" means that a student has been absent for ten percent or more of classes or school days for any reason, whether excused or not, when enrolled for more than ten days.
  - C. "Early intervention" means interventions for students who are missing ten percent or more but less than twenty percent of classes or school days for any reason.
  - D. "Intensive support" means interventions for students who are missing twenty percent or more of classes or school days for any reason.
  - E. "Excessively absent" or "Excessive absenteeism" means a student who is identified as needing intensive support and has not responded to intervention efforts implemented by the School.
  - F. "Excused absence" means absence from a class or school day for a death in the family, medical absence, religious instruction or tribal obligations or any other allowable excuse pursuant to the policies of the School.
  - G. "Individualized prevention" means targeted prevention strategies for individual students who are missing five percent or more but less than ten percent of classes or school days for any reason.
  - H. "Medical absence" or "Medically absent" means that a student is not in attendance for a class or a school day for a parent- or doctor-authorized medical reason or the student is a pregnant or parenting student.
  - I. "School day" means a portion of the school day that is at least one-half of a student's approved program.
  - J. "Unexcused absence" means an absence from a class or school day for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to the Attendance for Success Act or policies of the School.
  - K. "Whole school prevention" means universal, whole-school prevention strategies for all students.

III. **Pre-intervention.**

- A. The School will use an early warning system that includes past attendance history to identify students at risk of chronic absenteeism or excessive absenteeism.
- B. Prevention Strategies implemented to ensure that students will attend classes include parent communication, student discussions, utilizing the SAT process, and family supports appropriate to the situation.
- C. Consequences of failing to adhere to the Attendance Policy include submission of documentation to the JPO at the Eighth Judicial Court with each level of intervention,

IV. **Attendance Improvement Plans.**

- A. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, RRVCS will implement Support Systems that are leveled to help track and identify students having difficulty maintaining consistent attendance. The levels are as follows:
  - a. Level One (Warning)
  - b. Level Two (On Watch)
  - c. Level Three (Chronically Absent)
  - d. Level Four (Excessively Absent)
- B. Any attendance improvement plan developed by the School shall focus on:
  - 1. Keeping students in an educational setting;
  - 2. Prohibiting out-of-school suspension or expulsion as the punishment for absences;
  - 3. Assisting a student's family to remove barriers to the student's regular school attendance or attendance in another educational setting; and
  - 4. Providing additional educational opportunities to students who are struggling with attendance;
  - 5. Limiting the ability of a student to withdraw to only after all intervention efforts by the School or the Children, Youth, and Families department to keep the student in an educational setting have been exhausted;
  - 6. Requiring that accurate class attendance be taken for every instructional class and school day in the School;
  - 7. Providing that the School shall differentiate between different types of absences;
  - 8. Requiring the School to document the following for each chronically or excessively absent student:
    - a. Attempts by the School to notify a parent that the student was absent from class or the school day;
    - b. Attempts to improve attendance by talking to a student or parent to identify barriers to school attendance, identify solutions to improve the student's attendance behavior and discuss necessary interventions for the student or the student's family; and
    - c. Intervention strategies implemented to support keeping the student in an educational setting, including additional educational opportunities offered to the student;

9. Requiring a student or the parent of a student who intends to claim excused absence because of medical condition:
  - a. Attempts to improve attendance by talking to a student or parent to identify barriers to school attendance, identify solutions to improve the student's attendance behavior and discuss necessary interventions for the student or the student's family; and
  - b. Intervention strategies implemented to support keeping the student in an educational setting, including additional educational opportunities offered to the student;
  - c. Encouraging and supporting compliant data sharing, pursuant to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, between a public school and community-based organizations that provide services to students for the purpose of providing more personalized interventions and specialized supports as part of the School's attendance improvement plan.

**V. Interventions.**

- A. The School shall provide interventions to students who are absent or chronically absent, which may include:
  1. Assessing student and family needs and matching those needs with appropriate public or private providers, including civic and corporate sponsors;
  2. Making referrals to health care and social service providers;
  3. Collaborating and coordinating with health and social service agencies and organizations through school-based and off-site delivery systems;
  4. Recruiting service providers and business, community and civic organizations to provide needed services and goods that are not otherwise available to a student or the student's family;
  5. Establishing partnerships between the School and community organizations, such as civic, business and professional groups and organizations and recreational, social and out-of-school programs;
  6. Identifying and coordinating age appropriate resources for students in need of:
    - a. counseling, training and placement for employment;
    - b. drug and alcohol abuse counseling;
    - c. family crisis counseling; and
    - d. mental health counseling;
  7. Promoting family support and parent education programs; and
  8. Seeking out other services or goods that a student or the student's family needs to assist the student to stay in school and succeed.

**VI. Medical Appointments. Special Situations. Make-Up Work.**

- A. A student may be excused for parent or doctor authorized medical reasons. The School shall provide time for the student to make up the school-work missed during the absence.
- B. A student may, subject to the approval of the Head Administrator, be absent from school to participate in religious instruction for not more than one class period per school day with the written consent of the student's parent at a time that is not in conflict with the academic program of the school. The School shall provide time for the student to make up the school-work missed during the absence. The School shall not assume responsibility for the religious instruction of any student or permit religious instruction to be conducted on school property.
- C. The School, with the written consent of the student's parent and subject to the approval of the school principal, may be absent from school to participate in tribal obligations. The School shall provide time for the student to make up the school-work missed during the absence.

**VII. Progressive Interventions and Notifications for Absent, Chronically Absent, and Excessively Absent Students.**

- A. The School shall provide interventions for students who are missing school, depending on the number of absences.
- B. The process for notification and interventions is (Level One-Level Two):
  - 1. For a student who has been identified as in need of individualized prevention, the attendance team shall:
    - a. For an elementary student, talk to the parent and inform the parent of the student's attendance history, the impact of student absences on student academic outcomes, the interventions or services available to the student or family and the consequences of further absences, which
    - b. may include referral to the children, youth and families' department for excessive absenteeism; and
    - c. For a middle or high school student, talk to the parent and the student about the student's attendance history and the impact of student absences on student academic outcomes, interventions or services available to the student or family and the consequences of further absences, which may include referral to the children, youth and families' department for excessive absenteeism;
    - d. For a student who has been identified as in need of early intervention, the attendance team shall notify the parent in writing by mail or personal service on the parent of the student's absenteeism. The notice shall include a date, time and place for the parent to meet with the School to develop a SAT-Student Assistance Team intervention plan that focus on keeping the student in an educational setting. The SAT and attendance teams shall be convened to establish a specific

- intervention plan for the student that includes establishing weekly progress monitoring and a contract for attendance; and
2. For a student who has been identified as in need of intensive support, the SAT and attendance teams shall (Level Three):
    - a. Give written notice to the parent, including a date, time and place for the parent to meet with the school principal, the SAT team and the attendance team;
    - b. Establish non-punitive consequences at the school level;
    - c. Identify appropriate specialized supports that may be needed to help the student address the underlying causes of excessive absenteeism; and
    - d. Apprise the student and the parent of the consequences of further absences.
  3. For a student who has been identified as in need of additional supports beyond the school (Level Four):
    - a. If unexcused absences continue after written notice of excessive absenteeism as provided in Section 11 of the Attendance for Success Act, the School shall report the excessively absent student to the probation services office of the judicial district in which the School sits. The School shall provide the documentation to the juvenile probation services office within ten business days of the student being identified as excessively absent.

#### **VIII. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

- A. Parents should make every effort to have their child(ren) present and on time each school day.
- B. Parents are required to keep their child(ren) home from school in the event that the child is ill. The child(ren) are expected back at school once the child...
  - a. has been fever-free, without medication, for a minimum of 24 hours
  - b. has not had an episode of vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours
  - c. is free from any contagious rash
- C. Parents should call the school office at 575-754-6117 to inform the school of an absence by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence; a call should be made whether the absence is excused or not excused
- D. Students who are absent more than three days require a doctor's note upon their return to school. (A copy will be made for the parent and the original will be placed in the student file)
- E. For students in grades kindergarten through fourth, it is the joint responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to discuss missing work and make-up assignments with the teacher(s)
- F. Family vacations, although valuable, may put the child(ren) behind academically if taken during instructional time. Vacations should be scheduled during regular school breaks. Teachers are not expected or required to prepare assignments ahead of time for days missed due to vacations taken during regularly scheduled school days.

**IX. Student Responsibilities**

- A. Students are required to be in the cafeteria by 7:55 a.m.
- B. Students are not to leave the classroom, building, or campus without permission.
- C. Students may not dismiss themselves from school, or sign themselves out from school for any reason or at any time.
- D. Students who are in grades 5 and up are responsible for contacting their teacher(s) regarding missed assignments.
- E. Students who become ill during the school day, must get permission from the teacher to go to the office for determination as to whether or not to call the parent/guardian, Students should never communicate to be picked up from school without permission from staff.

**X. Interscholastic Extracurricular Activities--Student Participation.**

- A. A student shall have at least a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, either cumulatively or for the grading period immediately preceding participation, to be eligible to participate in any interscholastic extracurricular activity. For purposes of this section, "grading period" is a period of time not less than six weeks. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to students receiving C or D level special education services.
- B. A student shall not be absent from school for interscholastic extracurricular activities in excess of fifteen days per semester, and no class shall be missed in excess of fifteen times per semester for interscholastic extracurricular activities.
- C. The Secretary of the New Mexico Public Education Department may issue a waiver relating to the number of absences for participation in any state or national competition that is not an interscholastic extracurricular activity.

**XI. Reporting**

The School shall report absences, chronic absences and excessive absences data to the Public Education Department at each reporting date and the end of the school year and shall document intervention efforts made to keep students in an educational setting.

At the end of each school year, the School will report to its Governing Council and to the public on the School's website, the progress made on its attendance improvement plan if applicable. This report will include: (1) a description of the supports and resources provided to public schools at each tier of the attendance improvement plan; (2) the extent to which public schools with chronic absence rates greater than ten percent achieved their attendance improvement targets; (3) the extent to which the School achieved its attendance improvement targets; (4) barriers and challenges to reducing chronic absence rates, as reported by the School and its personnel; (5) effective school-based practices, as evidenced by decreased chronic absence rates; and (6) recommendations for improvement during the next school year at both the public school and school district level.

*Approved by the Red River Valley Charter School Governing Council on \_\_\_\_\_.*