

Tapestry Public Charter School Policy Manual

Student Attendance

Adopted: 8/18/2014

Revised: 10/22/19

Revised: 1/13/20

The Tapestry Public Charter School Board adopts the following policy, effective on the date of adoption by the Board.

Sections: I. PURPOSE

II. DEFINITIONS

III. PARENT/STUDENT NOTIFICATION

IV. INTERVENTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR TRUANCY

I. PURPOSE

In view of the deleterious effects of excessive tardiness and absenteeism, the Student Attendance Policy of the Tapestry Public Charter School shall be in accordance with the provisions herein and shall be read in conjunction with the provisions and requirements of Board policies and administrative regulations.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Tardy:** A student is tardy when he/she arrives to school after the beginning of the official school day or is not in the assigned class at the official beginning of the class period
1. Excused tardy: late arrival to school or class as a result of reasons defined herein as excused absences or as a result of events physically out of one's control such as inclement weather, documented transportation delays (MARTA delays, etc.), immediate family health-related emergencies, documented power outage, compliance with a court order, etc.
 2. Unexcused tardy: arriving late to school or class with or without the knowledge of parent/guardian, as a result of events within one's control, such as oversleeping, parent errands, etc., unless it is an excused tardy.
- B. Early Checkouts:** Being removed from classes and leaving the school prior to the official end of the school day by a parent or legal guardian.

1. To be considered “in attendance” for a school day (as it applies to Early Checkouts), a student must be present for at least one-half of the school day, excluding the lunch period. A student who leaves school before meeting that requirement will be considered absent for the day.
 2. Whenever a student is released from school prior to the end of the regular school day, the student shall bring a written note from his/her parent/legal guardian stating the reason for the early dismissal. The student shall only be released to his/her parent/legal guardian or to a person designated by the parent/legal guardian, as documented by school records, and upon presentation of proper identification or confirmation by telephone or fax
- C. **Truant:** Any student who is subject to the compulsory attendance law who has more than 10 days of unexcused absences during a calendar school year. The school will accept excuses from parents/guardians for five (5) total days of absence each semester and will use the Georgia Board of Education Rules to determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused. A parent can write an excuse for five (5) total days each semester, but after five (5) total days each semester, a medical excuse will be required from a doctor or other qualified medical practitioner.
1. Excused absence: excused absences are those that are for the following reasons.
 - a) Personal illness of the student or when attendance in school would endanger the health of the student or the health of others. Upon the student’s return to school following three or more consecutive days of absence due to illness or other health-related reasons, appropriate documentation from a medical provider is required within three days of the absence.
 - b) Serious illness or death in student’s immediate family necessitating the absence. In the case of serious illness, the student is required to present medical documentation to validate the absence as an excused absence within three days of the student’s return to school.
 - c) Court order by a governmental agency mandating the student’s absence from school.
 - d) Special or recognized religious holidays observed by the faith of the student.
 - e) Weather or environmental condition rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to the student’s health or safety.
 - f) An absence not to exceed one (1) day for registering to vote.
 - g) A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called for duty for or is on leave from

overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require a local school system to revise any policies relating to maximum number of excused and unexcused absences for any purpose. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-692.1)

- h) Students serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly as set forth in O.C.G.A. 20-2-692 shall be counted as present.
- i) Some pre-arranged absences can qualify as "excused." These absences include scholarship interviews/college visitations, travel opportunity with educational benefits, graduation or wedding of an immediate family member, specialized education experience, or circumstances mutually agreed to by the parent and principal. Any pre-arranged absences must be approved with the principal or designee before the absence occurs and cannot exceed 4 days per year.
- j) Other absences to be determined by, and at the discretion of the Principal.

2. Unexcused absences:

- a) Failure to attend school, with or without the knowledge of the parent/legal guardian, for reasons other than those specifically outlined as excused absences.
- b) School days missed as a result of an out-of-school suspension shall not be counted as unexcused for the purpose of determining truancy.

III. PARENT/STUDENT NOTIFICATION

- A. Tapestry Public Charter School will provide each student and his/her parent or guardian with the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law (provided in the DeKalb County School District Student Code of Conduct) and a written summary of the possible consequences and penalties for non-compliance at the beginning of each school year.
- B. By September 1st of each school year or within 30 days of a student's enrollment in the school, the parent or guardian must sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties.
- C. When a student reaches six (6) or more unexcused absences and/or tardies and/or early checkouts greater than or equal to 15% of school days to date, the school will

notify the parent or guardian. The notice will outline the penalty and consequences of such absences and that each subsequent absence will constitute a separate offense.

- D. After two reasonable attempts (including but not limited to: phone calls to the parent or guardian, letters to the parent or guardian, either through US mail or sent home with the student or both, home visits, etc.) to notify the parent or guardian, Tapestry shall send written notice via certified mail with the return receipt requested.

IV. INTERVENTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR TRUANCY

- A. The school will identify separate, formal written interventions and consequences for truancy for middle and high school.
- B. Prior to Court Involvement
 - 1. Before any court referral is considered, school officials must detail efforts made by the school to intervene with students and their families, including a minimum of three (3) calls, letters and/or home visits to the parent or legal guardian.
 - 2. After ten (10) unexcused absences, a letter will be sent from a school administrator to the parent or guardian regarding attendance. For a student aged 14 – 18 whose ten (10) unexcused absences are within one semester or two quarters, the letter shall state that the student's eligibility to obtain or retain a driver's permit or license may be impacted.
 - 3. A referral shall be made to the school counselor along with all relevant correspondence and documentation. The counselor will work with the student and family in order to address the attendance problems. The counselor will take any of the following actions that he/she deems appropriate.
 - a) Function as a child advocate to promote good school attendance for all students.
 - b) Consult with all school personnel to encourage early identification of students with a pattern of irregular or poor school attendance.
 - c) Conference with students at school to identify factors that may cause or contribute to poor school attendance.
 - d) Inform students and parents of their individual and collective responsibility in regard to the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law.
 - e) If necessary, provide direct social services to students and families at school and during home visitations.
 - f) Collaborate with parents to identify problems at the home and school level that may contribute to poor school attendance.
 - g) When appropriate, provide parents with a list of community resources that provide a variety of services to families (physical and mental health, financial, etc.).

- h) Identify personnel and programs within the school that can provide additional support for students (psychological services, guidance and counseling, etc.).
 - i) Monitor the student's attendance on a weekly basis.
 - j) Provide ongoing written correspondence to parents regarding the student's school attendance (Pre-legal, First and Final legal notices).
 - 4. When administrative actions taken to correct truancy have proven ineffective, the school may file proceedings with the Department of Family and Children's Services and/or Juvenile Court and furnish evidence for the conviction of parents and/or child for non-compliance with compulsory attendance laws.
- C. Student Withdrawals
- 1. Tapestry Public Charter School is authorized to withdraw a student who:
 - a) Has missed more than 10 consecutive days of school due to unexcused absences; or
 - b) Is no longer a resident of the local school system
 - 2. Withdrawal Notification
 - a) Each principal or principal's designee shall use his/her best efforts to notify the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) who has charge of a student if the school system plans to withdraw such student who is younger than 18 years of age and is not subject to compulsory school attendance.
 - b) Tapestry Public Charter School is authorized to withdraw a student subject to compulsory attendance only if the principal or principal designee has determined the student is no longer a resident of the local school system or is enrolled in a private school or home study program.
 - c) Tapestry Public Charter School shall withdraw students retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.