

Year: 2018	
Policy Number: 6110	
Section:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Business Procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Community Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction	

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy

Statement of Overall Objectives

The Heath Sciences Charter School is committed to providing students with a quality educational program. At Heath Sciences Charter School, the students are provided the opportunity to attend a safe and orderly school environment where they will receive a quality educational program. The Health Sciences Charter School is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. Heath Sciences Charter School recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation. Heath Sciences Charter Schools Board of Trustees designates the Schools' Principal or their designee to develop, review and, if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy and to create Attendance Procedures to meet the following objectives:

- a) To maintain adequate attendance records, in accordance with New York State Education Department guidelines on each of its' school-aged pupils, in order to ensure that each student maximizes achievement of academic standards;
- b) To increase school completion for all students;
- c) To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) To account for students' whereabouts throughout the school day;
- e) To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance; and
- g) To determine the school's average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The Health Sciences Charter School will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourage respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding in the school, which in turn should lead to increased

attendance.

- b) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of the school Principal or their designee that includes representation from administration, teachers, students and parents. The school will hold at least (1) public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.
- c) Maintain accurate recordkeeping in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absences, tardiness and early departures of each student.
- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop and engage in early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students by developing a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program and providing incentives to encourage attendance and discourage absences, tardiness and early departures.
- f) Communicate to students and parents any areas of concern as well as positive trends in attendance.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our education and community needs, values and priorities, Health Sciences Charter School has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

- a. **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, issues with the NFTA-METRO, religious observations, participation in school approved internships, MASH camps, quarantine, required court appearances, medical appointments, pre-approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, school-sponsored field trips, or other such reasons as may be approved by the Health Sciences Charter School administration.
- b. **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g. babysitting, family vacations, oversleeping, missed the bus or train, hair cut or other.)

At Health Sciences Charter School, all students are expected to attend school for instruction for the entire time it is in session, unless there is an excused reason for not attending school. All absences require a written note, including the date and reason for the absence, from a doctor or the parent/guardian. The student must present the written note within a certain time frame determine by the schools' Principal or designee. Absences without a written note will be classified as unexcused absences. Excuses may be verified for authenticity.

Student Attendance / Course Credit

At Health Sciences Charter School, the Principal may withhold academic credit from any student with sixteen (16) or more unexcused absences. For courses meeting ½ year or ¼ year, the same policy will apply and a calculation of the absences will be prorated accordingly.

Transfer students will be expected to attend a prorated minimum number of the scheduled class meetings during their time of enrollment.

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departures shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the Health Sciences Charter Schools code for the reason.

Commencing July 1, 2003, attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a. For students in grades nine through twelve or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.
- b. Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- c. In the event that a student at any instructional level from ninth through grade twelve arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established Health Sciences Charter Schools procedures.

Student Attendance/Course Credit

The Health Sciences Charter School believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Consequently, for each marking period, a certain percentage of a student's final grade will be based on 21st century skills as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the building administrator and/or classroom teacher.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes consistent with the importance of classroom participation, student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student's grade, including

credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a. Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or
- b. Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c. Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a Health Sciences Charter School sponsored activity are to arrange with their teacher to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Attendance at Health Sciences Charter School sponsored events where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction, which was missed, shall be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, it shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding missed assignments and to schedule a timely manner for their completion.

Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without Proper Excuse

A designated staff member shall notify by telephone the parent/person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. The staff member shall explain the Health Sciences Charter School Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the Health Sciences Charter School /building level intervention procedures, and, if appropriate, the relationship between student attendance and course credit. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. Further, the Health Sciences Charter School Attendance Policy will be mailed to the parent/person in parental relation to promote awareness and help ensure compliance with the policy.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, Health Sciences Charter School will develop and implement grade-appropriate/building-level strategies and programs that may include but are not limited to:

- a. Granting incentives and rewards, within the classroom or school wide, for improved or perfect attendance at school or work (may include opportunities utilizing technology);
- b. Hosting special events (e.g., field trips, assemblies, guest speakers, field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism (e.g., Monday, Fridays, day before vacation);
- c. Providing classroom acknowledgement of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);
- d. Providing a classroom management system, which stresses daily attendance, yielding an end

- of the week reward for improved or perfect attendance (e.g., pizza party, movie);
- e. Providing daily opportunities to develop relationships between students and teachers (e.g., home base or free period at the end of the day);
- f. Encouraging community participation highlighting relevance of instructional activities; and
- g. Encouraging parental involvement (e.g., invitation to participate in classroom or program activity).

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the Health Sciences Charter School Code of Conduct. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention and denial of participation in extracurricular activities.

Parent/persons in parental relation will be notified by designated Health Sciences Charter School personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions.

Intervention Strategies

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated Health Sciences Charter School personnel will pursue the following:

- a. Notification by designated staff member(s) by telephone to the parent/persons in parental relation of the student's absences, tardiness, or early departure to explain the relationship of the attendance to his/her success in class. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, a home visit or a letter shall be sent detailing this information.
- b. Copies of the Health Sciences Charter Schools Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be mailed to parents/persons in parental relation and provide to students at the beginning of each school year or at time of enrollment in the district.
- c. Designated staff member will review the Health Sciences Charter School attendance policy with students who have excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures.
- d. Copies of the attendance policy will also be included in the student handbooks.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record.

Quarterly Review of Attendance Records

The School Principal or their designee shall review the attendance records at the end of each marking period. The review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review of Attendance Records

The School Principal or their designee shall annually review the student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Principal or their designee shall make any revisions to

the policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student's attendance.

Community Awareness

The Health Sciences Charter School shall promote necessary community awareness of the Health Sciences Charter Schools Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a. Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;
- b. Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- c. Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Supporting Procedures:

Student Handbook

Staff Handbook

Related Laws, Regulations & Acts:

NYSED Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211 and

3213 Social Services Law Section

8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations

NY Code 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: 05/09/2013

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