

Surry Village Charter School

Absence and Tardy Policy

March 2015

Purpose and Intent

At Surry Village Charter School, we view each day as an essential learning opportunity. A significant part of your child's education experience is derived from classroom participation, activities, discussion and relationships. Regular attendance is crucial for your child to attain the maximum benefit from the school experience. Therefore, we expect excellent attendance of our students. Missing school regularly not only is detrimental to a child's learning, but also can create poor learning habits. Of course, if your child is sick or has a communicable illness, he or she should stay at home to rest and recover.

All children between 6 and 16 years of age shall attend school unless they have been excused from attending on the grounds that their physical or mental condition is such to prevent their attendance or make it undesirable (see NH Revised Statutes Annotated relating to Public Schools 1974 section 193.1). A child who reaches his or her sixth birthday after September 30th will not attend school until the following school year.

Student attendance will be measured as follows: the morning session will be from 8:30 am to 11:45 am. The afternoon session will be from 11:45 am to 3:15 pm. A student must be in school for 15 minutes in each session to qualify as present for that session.

Absence Procedures

To report an absence:

If a child will be absent, parents should call the school phone – 357-9700. Only parents or legal guardians should make this phone call.

If leaving a message please leave the following information:

1. Day of the week
2. Parent's name
3. Child's name and grade level
4. Reason for child's absence

The school office will call the home if the parents have not contacted the school.

If the absence is planned, parents may send a note to the child's teacher indicating the date and reason for the absence.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are absences where a student is too ill to report to school, or has a communicable disease, family emergency, health care appointment or justifiable personal reason. The school office should be informed promptly if your child has a communicable disease so that we can notify other parents if necessary.

Excused Absences Include:

1. Personal illness (may require physician's documentation)
2. Death in the family
3. Professional appointments (medical, dental, counseling)
4. Religious holidays
5. School-related functions
6. College visitations
7. Dismissal by a school official
8. Recovery from an accident

Long-term Illness: A doctor's note is required for long-term illnesses. In the event of a medically documented long-term illness or accident which necessitates more than 2 weeks absence, parents and teachers will work together to create a home study plan.

Parents requesting makeup work for students who are absent for reasons other than illness should make the request at least 3 school days in advance.

Family Vacations/Educational Opportunities: Generally, absences other than for illness during the school year are discouraged. The school director or his/her designee may, however, grant special approval of absence for family vacations, provided written approval is given in advance. Parents are asked to write a note to their child's teacher at least two weeks before the trip. This advance planning will allow the teacher enough time to work with parents and the student regarding homework completion.

In the case of weekly recurrent out of school absences, these will be considered unexcused absences.

Unexcused Absences:

A half-day absence is defined as missing up to half of the total minutes in a school day. Missing more than half the total minutes in a school day is two half-day absences.

Unexcused absences from school are considered truancy. A student who skips class or a scheduled activity, arrives late for class or a scheduled activity, or leaves a class or scheduled activity without permission of school personnel is considered truant and will be deemed to have missed the entire class or scheduled activity.

According to 189:35-a ten unexcused half days of absences renders a student habitually truant. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed above will be considered an

unexcused absence as well as excessive parent/guardian-verified absences. A truant officer or school official shall file a petition alleging that the child is in need of services (pursuant to RSA 169-D:2, IIa) after all steps in the school's intervention process have been followed (see below).

Frequent absenteeism (excused)

1. In the case of frequent absenteeism, after a student is absent for 10 excused days during the academic year, SVCS will contact the home(s) to discuss the importance of daily attendance and to review any extenuating circumstance. A letter will also be sent describing the importance of daily attendance.
2. At 15 excused absences, a conference will be held between the school and parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop a plan to address absenteeism.

Students who miss more than 20 days of school may be required to receive tutoring over the summer in order to be promoted to the next grade.

Frequent absenteeism (unexcused) – Intervention Process

The Director shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by including a process that identifies students who are habitually truant, as defined above.

When the Director identifies a student who is in danger of becoming habitually truant, he/she shall commence an intervention with the student, the student's parents, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary, by the following procedure will be followed:

1. The Director will send a letter to the student's parent with a statement that the student is in danger of becoming habitually truant and of the parent's responsibility to ensure that the student attends school.
2. The Director will request a meeting between the parents and the Director to discuss the student's truancy and to develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.
3. If the child continues to be absent, the Director will contact the local police department. The school resource officer, will act as a liaison with local police departments if there is a need.
4. The CHINS (Child in Need of Services) diversion representative will be notified of the continuing problem with the child's attendance. The CHINS diversion representative will contact the parents and either take the case to court or set up a program with the parent to ensure that the child attends school.
5. If the problem continues a CHINS petition will be filed with the courts. In cases of neglect, DCYF will be notified

Frequent Tardiness:

All students are considered tardy if they are not in class by 8:35 in Surry or 8:05 in Keene. They are to report to the office when late.

Students will be given a warning after their fifth tardy in the trimester.

Parents will be contacted and advised of the concern and need for a conference after the 8th tardy.

Excessive tardiness shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance.