

## **JYK Discovery Charter Truancy Policy (Adopted and Updated 4/2023)**

**According to Pennsylvania law, a child is truant if they have three or more unexcused absences during one year. A child is "habitually truant" if they have six or more unexcused absences in one school year.**

### **Compulsory School Attendance Requirements**

All students of compulsory school age who reside in the District shall be subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements.

A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; if receiving approved tutorial instruction or health or therapeutic services; if engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study, or career education program; if receiving approved homebound instruction; or if the student's placement is instruction in the home.

The following students shall be excused from the requirements of attendance at District schools, upon request and with the required approval:

- L. On certification by a physician or submission of other satisfactory evidence and on approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, children who are unable to attend school or apply themselves to study for mental, physical, or other reasons that preclude regular attendance.
2. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught.
3. Students attending a home education program or private tutoring in accordance with law. The District will honor any exceptions to compulsory school attendance permitted by law under the School Code

### **Excused/Lawful Absence**

The following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

- Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts.
- Upon written request by a person in parental relation, a student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service only if the following requirements are met:
  - n (1) The health or therapeutic services are to be rendered by licensed practitioners;
  - (2) It is not practical or possible for the student to receive the services outside of school hours; and
  - (3) The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with the student's regular program of studies.

Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated District staff during school hours for health-related reasons.

Quarantine

Recovery from accident

Required court appearance

Death in family

Educational trip/tour if the following conditions are met:

The person in parental relation submits the documentation required for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate time frame.

The student's participation has been approved by the CEO or principal.

The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation.

The District may limit the number and duration of non-school-sponsored educational tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.

Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation. Out-of-school suspension

Family Emergency (An unexpected, serious event that is outside of the control of the student's family)

o Requires parental note explaining the emergency received within 3 school days of the student's return. School staff will evaluate if the situation constitutes a family emergency.

Other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness and foster care.

### **Temporary Excusals**

The following students may be temporarily excused from the requirements of attendance at District schools:

1. For the purpose of receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the District's curricula, only if the following requirements are met:
  - a. A person in parental relation submits a written request;
  - b. The excuse does not interfere with the student's regular program of studies.
  - c. The qualifications of the instructor are approved by the Superintendent or designee.
2. Students participating in a religious instruction program, if the following conditions are
  - a. The person in parental relation submits a written request for excusal. The request shall identify and describe the instruction and the dates and hours of instruction.
  - b. The student shall not miss more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
  - c. Following each absence, the person in parental relation shall submit a statement attesting that the student attended the instruction, and the dates and hours of attendance.
3. School-age children unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

### **Unexcused/Unlawful Absences**

For purposes of this policy, absences which do not meet the criteria indicated above shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

## **Parental Notice of Absence**

Absences shall be treated as unexcused until the school receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

## **Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Requirements**

### **Notice of Truancy**

When a student has been absent for three (3) days during the current school year without a lawful excuse, JYK DCS staff shall provide notice to the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.

The notice shall:

Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation;  
Include a description of the consequences if the student becomes habitually truant; and when transmitted to a person who is not the biological or adoptive parent, also be provided to the student's biological or adoptive parent, if the parent's mailing address is on file with the school and the parent is not precluded from receiving the information by court order.

The notice will include the appointment information of a required attendance intervention conference.

If the student incurs additional unexcused absences after prior notice, the student and parent will be interviewed by attendance intervention team, composed of the Principal, the Social worker and the School counselor. The purpose of this conference is to improve student attendance. Please review steps below for the student attendance improvement conference.

### **School Attendance Improvement Conference**

The JYK Discovery Charter School attendance intervention team shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the conference. The purpose of the conference is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.

The following individuals shall be invited to the attendance intervention conference: The student;  
The student's person in parental relation;  
Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource;  
Appropriate school personnel; and  
• Recommended service providers.

The attendance intervention conference shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend.

The outcome of the intervention shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the Student Information System. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student, and appropriate staff. Students may be referred to the district

attorney program "Project Go" (when in session). The program holds parents responsible for student truancy.

### **Special Needs and Accommodations**

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the Individual Education Plan team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

The student may also be referred to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) to determine if absences are affecting the academic progress of the student and how the school can assist the student to improve their attendance.

### **Withdrawal Procedure:**

#### Parent's Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of their intent to withdraw a student. A withdrawal form must be completed. The parent or guardian will be asked to complete an exit interview. All financial obligations must be satisfied and all books and or other school property must be returned before a withdrawal will be completed at which time clearance will be granted.

#### School's Responsibility:

Pending clearance, the school will complete the withdrawal process within 48 hours of written notification. Records will be forwarded to receiving school immediately. In case of expulsion or administrative withdrawals, parents will be notified in writing and all records will be forwarded to the feeder school.