

Renaissance Academy Charter School

NO: 204

SECTION: Pupils
TITLE: Attendance
ADOPTED: January 12, 2004
REVISED: September 13, 2004
2ND REVISION: August 20, 2007
3rd REVISION: August 23, 2010

1. Purpose
SC 1301
Title 22
Sec. 11.12, 12.1

2. Authority
SC 1327, 1329,
1330
Title 22
Sec. 11.11, 11.23,
11.25, 11.41, 12.1

204. Attendance

The Board of School Directors requires that school aged pupils enrolled in the Renaissance Academy attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State. The educational program offered by this charter school is predicated upon the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.

Renaissance Academy will enforce attendance rules in accordance with Pennsylvania law and this policy.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the Renaissance Academy during the days and hours that the school is in session, except that the Principal or Academy Director may excuse a student for temporary absences when s/he receives satisfactory evidence of such mental, physical, or other urgent conditions which may reasonably cause the student's absence.

The Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Observance of major religious holidays.
2. Religious instruction with a maximum of thirty-six (36) hours per year.
3. Educational Travel: trips to exhibitions, colleges, or places for academic purposes, maximum five (5) days per year.
4. Planned vacations up to a maximum of five (5) school days, with no less than three (3) days prior written notification.
5. Medical/health related appointments which cannot be scheduled after school hours.
6. Illness or recovery from an accident.
7. Quarantine.
8. Death in the family / funeral.
9. Court appearances.
10. Unavoidable family emergencies.
11. Graduation ceremonies of members of immediate family.
12. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child or make

Title 22
Sec 11.22; 11.28
SC 1327, 1329

Title 22
Sec. 11.21

SC 1546
Title 22
Sec 11.21

Title 22
Sec. 11.23, 11.25

roads impassable.

Attendance need not always be within the school facilities, a student will be considered to be in attendance if present at any place where school is in session as approved by the Board; the student is receiving approved tutorial instruction or health or therapeutic services; the student is engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study or career education program; the student is receiving approved homebound instruction.

All absences occasioned by observance of the student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused. No penalties shall be attached to an absence for a religious holiday.

The Board shall, upon written request of the parents or guardians, release from attendance a student participating in a religious instruction program acknowledged by the Board. Such instruction shall not require the child's absence from school for more than thirty-six (36) hours per school year and its organizers must inform the Board of the child's attendance. No penalties shall be attached to an absence for a religious holiday.

The Board may permit a student to be excused for participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H or FFA group upon written request prior to the event.

In the belief that attendance is closely related to successful performance and that academic performance usually suffers when students are late or absent frequently, the following procedures have been adopted by the Renaissance Academy with regard to excuses for vacations, trips, court appearances, illness in the immediate family, or special reasons:

1. College tours, family vacations and educational travel trips may be excused by the principal if permission is sought ahead of time. Student academic records will be examined prior to approval. Requests are to be submitted no less than three (3) days in advance.
2. Work missed due to approved tours, family trips, court appearances, or illness in the immediate family may be made up, but the responsibility for the completion of that work will remain with the students and/or the parents/guardians. After the return of an approved absence, the teacher will work with the student and parent/guardian to "bridge the gap" of missed instruction.
3. The maximum number of days allotted for family vacations is not to exceed five (5) days.
4. Unauthorized absences will be recorded as illegal (unexcused) and students will not be permitted to make-up work unless authorized by the Principal or designee.

3. Definitions

4. Delegation of
Responsibility
Title 22
Sec. 11.1, 11.3
SC 1332, 1339
SC 1333, 1388

5. College tours, family vacations, educational trips, and illnesses in the immediate family do not permit irregular attendance.

Parents/guardians are discouraged from making vacation plans during the school year on a regular or yearly basis. It is understood that it may occasionally be necessary to take a family trip during the school year, but it is believed that frequent trips are an unnecessary detriment to the children.

Compulsory School Age

Refers to the period of a child's life from the earliest admission age for Renaissance Academy's kindergarten program until graduation from high school or the end of the school term in which a student reaches the age of 17 years, whichever occurs first.

Absence

Refers to not attending school, not attending class, and/or both.

Educational Travel

Refers to trips to exhibitions or colleges, participation in organized group presentations with an academic focus, attendance at conferences such as People to People or places for academic purposes.

Renaissance Academy will report to the sending school district, infractions of the law regarding the attendance of compulsory school aged students. The School shall issue notice to those parents/guardians of students who fail to comply with the statutory requirements of compulsory attendance informing them that such infractions of the statute may be prosecuted by the sending school district.

The Board shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session that conforms to the requirements of the State Regulations.
2. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with State statutes.
3. Distribute through the most appropriate school publication annually, to students, parents and/or guardians, Board policies and school rules and regulations governing attendance, absences and excusals.
4. Impose on truant students appropriate incremental disciplinary measures for infractions of school rules.
5. Ensure that students who are legally absent have an opportunity to make-up class work.
6. Identify the habitually truant, investigate the causes of truant behavior and consider modification of the student's behavior utilizing the Chester County Truancy Elimination Plan.
7. Provide written notice to sending school districts of any student who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance statute.

5. Guidelines

Parents shall provide a written explanation for the absences of a student. These shall be required in advance for types of absence where advance notice is possible.

Excuse forms shall be completed and turned into the school by the student within three (3) days after return from an absence. *The absence of any student failing to comply with this time period will automatically become unexcused and illegal and the relevant school laws shall be applied.*

The following measures will be implemented when a student accrues three (3) or more unexcused absences:

1. Official written notice shall be sent to the parents/guardian.
2. After the first notice has been issued, upon the next unexcused absence, the sending school district will be notified to issue a citation with the proper state authorities regarding noncompliance of compulsory school attendance.
3. Thereafter, each subsequent unexcused absence will be reported to the sending district and may result in additional criminal citations.

All students who are under the age of 17, and therefore covered by the Pennsylvania Compulsory School Attendance laws, require the filing of truancy charges by the students sending school district under Act 29 of 1995 before a Magistrate or District Justice. This act provides for penalties to be levied on truant students and/or their parent(s). The law now permits school officials to charge either the parent of the truant student, the truant student him/herself, or both. The law also provides for fines up to \$300 and subsequent costs.

The ruling District Justice may also sentence parent(s) found guilty to a special parenting program. When a student is found guilty of truancy, he/she is subject to the same fines and costs and may also be remanded to an adjudicated alternative educational program for a period of time to be determined by the ruling District Justice. Act 29 also removes from the truant student his/her Pennsylvania motor vehicle driving privileges for ninety (90) days on the first offense and for six (6) months for each subsequent offense. Unlicensed truant students are prohibited from applying for a learner's permit for ninety (90) days on the first offense and for six (6) months for all succeeding offenses after their 16th birthday.

Absence Relative to Promotion/Retention

Lower School (grades K-6): A student who accumulates fifteen (15) or more days of unexcused or excused absence from school within one (1) school year will be considered as failing to meet the requirements for promotion. As such, he/she may be required to repeat the school year

during which the fifteenth (15) unexcused absences occurred (with the exception of suspension and religious observance).

Upper School (grades 7-12): A student who accumulates twelve (12) or more days of unexcused or excused absence from school within one (1) school year will be considered as failing to meet the requirements for promotion. As such, he/she may be required to repeat the school year during which the twelfth (12) unexcused absences occurred (with the exception of suspension and religious observance).

Absence Relative to Credit and Graduation in the High School

Any high school student who exceeds twelve (12) or more absences in any year-long class during the school year, excused or unexcused, will be subject to failure in that class and will not receive graduation credit (with the exception of suspension and religious observance). Any high school student who exceeds six (6) or more absences in any class that is worth a half (.5) of credit during the school year, excused or unexcused, will be subject to failure in that class and will not receive graduation credit (with the exception of suspension and religious observance).

Excused/Legal Absences

A student is considered excused/legally absent from school when he/she returns an absentee note, with an approved excuse, to the attendance office of school within three (3) school days of return to classes and the absence satisfies the expectation of the previously defined reasonable cause for absence. A student who is excused/legally absent from school is entitled to make up work according to the following guidelines:

1. Make up work is defined as work which was assigned and/or covered in classes on the day(s) the student was absent. This implies that all work assigned through the student's last day of attendance is due on the first day of the student's return to classes. All work assigned and/or covered during a student's absence must be completed in a reasonable period of time not to exceed two (2) days for each day of absence. Additional time to complete the work may be allotted at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
2. Students excluded from school through suspension will retain the same make-up rights and responsibilities as indicated in (1) above, but students will not be provided with formal classroom assignments while on suspension.
3. In all cases, it shall be the responsibility of the student to approach the classroom teacher in order to ascertain make-up assignments.

On days of absence, students may not sign in and out to attend specific classes.

Unaccounted absences

Students whose names appear on the active membership roll who are at anytime in the school term absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days, shall be removed from the active member roll unless the school has been provided with evidence that the absence may be legally excused, or compulsory attendance prosecution by the sending school district has been or is being pursued.

Unexcused Lateness to School

Renaissance Academy will distribute procedures and rules related to unexcused lateness to school or class, including the consequences for accumulating an unacceptable number of unexcused latenesses within a marking period, semester, or school term.

Post-Secondary School Attendance

A student is not required to attend Renaissance Academy if the student is attending a post-secondary institution full-time prior to graduation from high school. A student may be excused on a part-time basis from attending Renaissance Academy if the student is attending a post-secondary institution part-time.

Truancy Intervention

Recognizing that a student's truant behavior is often symptomatic of a larger problem, administrators will utilize the Chester County Truancy Intervention Program to deal with chronic truancy problems.

Physician's Excuse Requirement

After a number of days of absence from school in any one school term which is judged by the administrator in charge to be excessive, a physician's certificate of illness may be required for any or all additional days of absence from the parents/guardians of a student. Any absence not so certified by a physician's certificate of illness may be declared unexcused/illegal, and all the penalties of this policy shall be applicable.

Medical/Dental Appointments

The Board will recognize other justifiable absences for part of the school day. These will include medical or dental appointments. Parents are encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments near the close of the school day or outside of regular school hours.

Early Dismissal

The Board will recognize requests for early dismissal from school and will establish procedures to validate requests to assure that students are released only for proper reasons and into proper hands. No student may be released on the basis of a telephone call that has not been validated by authorized school personnel.