


<p>Bridges Charter School</p> 	<p>Board Policy-</p> <p>Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy</p>	
<p>Policy Number:</p> <p>5110</p>	<p>Adopted:</p> <p>6/21/17</p>	<p>Replaced:</p> <p>5110 Absences and Excuses 5110.10 Student Attendance Review Team 5111 Chronic Absence and Truancy Revised: 05/09/22 Revised 11/7/22</p>

PURPOSE:

The Board of Directors (“Board”) of Bridges Charter School recognizes that Compulsory Attendance is integral to student learning, and that parents are legally required to send their children, between the ages of 6 to 18, to school regularly and to make certain they are on time each day. (EC 48200)

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Bridges parents/guardians and students.

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT:

The Board authorizes the creation of and adherence to an attendance policy and the creation of a Student Attendance Review Team to support compulsory attendance.

This policy is intended to address both chronic absenteeism and truancy.

California Education Code (EC) Section 60901 defines a chronic absentee as a student who has missed 10 percent or more of school days for any reason, including unexcused or excused absences and suspensions, during the days enrolled. California Education Code (EC) Section 48260 defines truancy as missing three days of school or being more than 30 minutes late to class without a valid excuse three times in one school year.

POLICY DETAILS:

The Director will ensure that an annual notification regarding excused absences and the school attendance policy is sent to parents/guardians.

Excused Absences - Reasons for Excused Absences Not withstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

1. Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:
 - 1.1. Due to the pupil’s illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil’s mental or behavioral health. The state board shall update its illness verification regulations, as necessary, to account for including a pupil’s absence for the benefit of the pupil’s mental or behavioral health within the scope of this paragraph.
 - 1.2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.

- 1.3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered.
- 1.4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California.
- 1.5. For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
- 1.6. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child, for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor.
- 1.7. For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at a religious retreat, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization, when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board of the school district.
- 1.8. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.
- 1.9. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district.
- 1.10. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
- 1.11. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.
- 1.12. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.
 - a) A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

- b) For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed four hours per semester.
- c) Absences pursuant to this section are deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance and shall not generate state apportionment payments.
- d) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:
 - i. "Cultural" means relating to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.
 - ii. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

2. Attendance Monitoring

- 2.1 Attendance monitoring will fall within the duties of the Attendance Clerk or alternative employee as defined by the Director. Daily attendance will be monitored through Q Attendance. Every recorded absence will be followed up with a phone call to the student's residence to verify reason of absence.
- 2.2 Attendance reports are generated weekly for teacher review. Teachers validate the accuracy of the report, then sign and file it for future reference. Reports are submitted monthly to the Business Services Authority ("BSA"). Attendance reporting for periods P1, P2, P3 is submitted to the BSA and California Department of Education (CDE).

3. Assignment Makeup Work

- 3.1 A student absent from school with an excused absence shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided.
- 3.2 Makeup assignments and tests must be made up in a reasonable period of time.
 - 3.2.1 Unless otherwise agreed to with teacher upon return from absence, makeup assignments/tests must be completed within a period of time equal to the length of the absence. (e.g. 1 day absence = 1 additional day to make up assignments, 2 day absence = 2 additional days to make up assignments, etc.)
 - 3.2.2 Makeup assignments and tests that are not completed within the agreed upon time period will be considered as non-completed for student grading purposes.

4. Verification of Absences

- 4.1 The school must receive appropriate verification of a legally excused absence by the end of the third day (72 hours) after the student returns for the absence to be considered excused. Otherwise, the absence will be recorded as an unexcused absence.
- 4.2 All absences must be verified by a parent or guardian via phone or in writing establishing that the pupil was absent for an excused reason.
- 4.3 For students who have been reported as ill on more than ten (10) days total for the school year to date, parents may be required by the school to file a doctor's note verifying that the student was too ill to attend school on those days reported. If the requested report is not filed by the parent, then any additional days beyond the ten (10) of illness will be recorded as unexcused absences.

- 5 Truant
 - 5.1 Any student who is absent from school without valid excuse for three full days in one school year; or tardy or absent for more than any 30 minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on more than three days in one school year; or any combination thereof, is truant. (EC 48260) Upon each determination of truancy for a student, notification of the truancy shall be sent to the student's parent or guardian first class mail or other reasonable means.
 - 5.1.1 As clarification, a student with a 4th unexcused absence during the school year would be considered truant. All consecutive days of unexcused absence within that 4th unexcused absence occurrence would be a continuation of the 1st truancy, not a separate 2nd truancy.
 - 5.2 Any student who has been reported truant three or more times in one school year, and after an appropriate school employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one meeting with the parent and student, the student shall be deemed a habitual truant. Once designated as a habitual truant or the student has irregular attendance, the pupil shall be referred to the School Attendance Review Team ("SART") for further action.
- 6 Parent or Guardian Notification of truancy (EC 48260.5)
 - 6.1 At the first and each subsequent determination of truancy for a student, the school shall notify the student's parent or guardian by first class mail or other reasonable means of the following (Exhibit "A" – Initial Letter Regarding Attendance):
 - 6.1.1 That the student is truant.
 - 6.1.2 That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the student at school.
 - 6.1.3 That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (EC 48290) of Chapter 2 of Part 27.
 - 6.1.4 That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the student's truancy.
 - 6.1.5 That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the student to school and attend classes with the student for one day.
- 7 School Attendance Review Team Referral
 - 7.1 Any student deemed to be a habitual truant or to have irregular attendance at school may be referred to the School Attendance Review Team for further action. The parent may also be cited by law enforcement for violation of the compulsory attendance laws. The Director or designee shall notify the parent or guardian of the referral.
 - 7.2 After three unexcused absences or tardies of more than 30 minutes during the school year, or for absences or tardies constituting 10% or more of the school year (on or after October 1st of each school year), the school sends the parent or guardian Truancy Letter #1 (Exhibit "B"). This initiates the SART referral process.
 - 7.3 After four unexcused absences during the school year, or continued unexcused absences or tardies following Truancy Letter #1, Truancy Letter #2 (Exhibit "C") is sent. Note the clarification within section 5.1.1. of this policy related to accounting of unexcused absences.
 - 7.3.1 School Representative will make at least one documented in person or phone call attempt to parent or guardian to inform them verbally of the components contained in Truancy Letter #2
 - 7.4 After five unexcused absences during the school year, or continued unexcused absences or tardies following Truancy Letter #2, Truancy Letter #3 (Exhibit "D") is sent.

Note the clarification within section 5.1.1. of this policy related to accounting of unexcused absences.

7.4.1 At this time the school will hold a SART meeting. The SART will formalize a contract with the student and the parent or guardian to resolve the problem (The contract is signed by the student, parents, or guardians. The contract is an agreement by the parents to improve the child's attendance or face escalated actions (Exhibit "E"—SART Parents Attendance Contract). The SART committee will consist of a minimum of 5 (five) members which shall be made up of the Bridges Attendance Clerk, 2 (two) Bridges teachers, 1(one) Bridges Board Member, and the Director or designee.

7.5 If the conditions of the SART contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including an involuntary removal from the school, consistent with the involuntary removal process described below. If the student is disenrolled after the involuntary removal process has been followed, notification will be sent within thirty (30) days to the student's last known district of residence.

7.5.1 No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the action ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with the Charter School's expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School's suspension and expulsion policy.

7.5.2 Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder and shall include a copy of the Charter School's expulsion hearing process.

7.5.3 If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the Student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the Student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

7.5.4 If as a result of the hearing the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known district of residence within thirty (30) days.

7.5.5 A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter

School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

7.5.6 For special education students, before consideration of involuntary withdrawal, the Charter School must hold an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) meeting to review: 1) the appropriateness of the student’s educational placement; 2) the student’s current academic difficulties; 3) the student’s physical or behavioral health issues. Additionally, the IEP team must comprehensively assess a student, including the student’s functional performance and social/emotional functioning.

7.5.6.1 If the results of these assessments identify a need, the results will be utilized to develop an appropriate Positive Behavior Support Plan.

7.5.6.2 If the results of these assessments do not identify a need, and the truant behavior continues, then the Charter School may hold a manifestation determination meeting.

7.6 If student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and parent/guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to the Charter School’s communication attempts, as set forth above, the student will be in violation of the SART contract, and the SART panel will recommend that the student be disenrolled in compliance with the involuntary removal process described above. The involuntary removal process can be started immediately upon the Charter School receiving documentation of student’s enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e. a CALPADS report).

7.7 Unexcused Absence and Truancy counts are refreshed each school year. All unexcused absence or truancy counts accrued at the end of a school year are not carried over to the next school year.

NON-COMPLIANCE TO POLICY:

Violations of this policy may result in the student being subject to return to their home school/district and/or the parent guardian being referred to the District Attorney’s office for legal action (Exhibit “F” - Truancy).

GOVERNANCE:

The Bridges Board and Director will be responsible for monitoring adherence to the policy.

REVIEW CYCLE:

The Bridges Board will be responsible for reviewing the policy every two years or more frequently as required.