Bridges Charter School	Board Policy- **Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy**	
Policy Number: **5110**	Adopted: **6/21/17**	**Replaced: 6110 Absences and Excuses** **5110.10 Student Attendance Review Team 5111 Chronic Absence and Truancy** **Revised: 05/09/22** **Revised 8-12-24**

PURPOSE:

The Board of Directors ("Board") of Bridges Charter School ("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.

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

DEFINITIONS

- "*Tardy*": Charter School starts at 8:20am. Students shall be classified as tardy if the student arrives after that time.

- "*Unexcused Absence*": A student shall have an unexcused absence if the student is absent or is tardy for more than thirty (30) minutes without a valid excuse.

- "*Truant":* A student shall be classified as a truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse three (3) full days in one school year, or if the student is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three (3) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Any student who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be deemed a truant. Such students shall be reported to the Executive Director or designee.

- "*Habitual Truant*": A student shall be classified as a habitual truant if the student is reported for truancy three (3) or more times within the same school year. This generally occurs when the student is absent from school without a valid excuse

- for five (5) full days in one school year or if the student is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on five (5) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof.

- "*Chronic Truant*": A student shall be classified as a chronic truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for ten (10) percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date.

- *"School Attendance Review Team ("SART"):* The SART panel will be composed of the attendance clerk, one (1) staff member, and one (1) administrator. The SART panel will discuss the absence problem with the student's parent/guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and student's family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.

1. The SART panel shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.

2. The parent/guardian shall be required to sign a contract formalizing the agreement by the parent/guardian to improve the child's attendance or face additional administrative action. The contract will identify the corrective actions required in the future, and indicate that the SART panel shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the contract:

   a. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day
   b. Student retention
   c. After school detention program
   d. Required school counseling
   e. Loss of field trip privileges
   f. Loss of school store privileges
   g. Loss of school event privileges
   h. Mandatory Saturday school
   i. Required remediation plan as set by the SART
   j. Notification to the County District Attorney

3. Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.

EXCUSED ABSENCES -

A pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

1. Due to the pupil's illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health.
2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. For the purpose of having medical dental optometric, or chiropractic services rendered.
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the pupil's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five (5) days per incident. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

5. For any of the following reasons, if an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, has died:
6. To access services from a victim services organization or agency.
7. To access grief support services.
8. To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the pupil or an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation.
9. Absences under this section shall not be excused for more than three (3) days per incident, unless extended on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the school administrator. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.
10. For the purpose of attending jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
11. Participation in religious instruction or exercises as follows: The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four (4) school days per month.
12. 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.
13. Authorized parental leave for a pregnant or parenting student for up to eight (8) weeks, which may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician.
14. 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.
15. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.
16. 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 tile superintendent of the school district.
17. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
18. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.
19. A student who holds a work permit to work for a period of not more than five (5) consecutive days in the entertainment or allied industries shall be excused from school during the period that the student is working in the entertainment or allied industry for a maximum of up to five (5) absences per school year subject to the requirements of Education Code section 48225.5.
20. In order to participate with a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public-school student audience for a maximum of up to five (5) days per school year provided the student's parent or guardian provides a written note to the school authorities explaining the reason for the student's absence.

21. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.
22. 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 de1ermine 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.

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 (COE).

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.

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.

PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING TRUANCY

1. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Executive Director or designee. The student's classroom teacher may also call home.

2. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Executive Director or designee. In addition, the student's classroom teacher may also call home and/or the Charter School may send the parent an e-mail notification. In addition, upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes in a school year, the parent/guardian will receive **"Truancy Letter #1 – Truancy Classification Notice"** from the Charter School notifying the parent/guardian of the student's "Truant" status. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Charter School. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy. This letter, and all subsequent letter(s) sent home, shall be sent by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, or some other form of mail that can be tracked. This letter shall be re-sent after a fourth (4th) unexcused absence.

3. Upon reaching five (5) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive **"Truancy Letter #2 – Habitual Truant Classification Notice and Conference Request,"** notifying the parent/guardian of the student's "Habitual Truant" status and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to review the student's records and develop an intervention plan/contract. In addition, the Charter School will consult with a school counselor regarding the appropriateness of a home visitation and/or case management.

4. Upon reaching six (6) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive a **"Truancy Letter #3 – Referral to SART Meeting"** and the student will be referred to a Student Success Team (SST) and the SART.

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.

6. If a student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and the student's 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 this Policy and the SART contract (if any) and may be subject to disenrollment in compliance 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 school district of residence.

7. Any documentation received by the Charter School regarding a student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., CALPADS report) shall be deemed evidence of a voluntary disenrollment and shall not trigger the Involuntary Removal Process below

8. For all communications set forth in this process, the Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to update the Charter School with any new contact information.

PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT IN ATTENDANCE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

When a student is not in attendance on the first five (5) days of the school year, the Charter School will attempt to reach the student's parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first five (5) days to determine whether the student has an excused absence, consistent with the process outlined in this policy. If the student has a basis for an excused absence, the student's parent/guardian must notify the Charter School of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, consistent with process below, students who are not in attendance by the sixth (6th) day of the school year due to an unexcused absence will be disenrolled from the Charter School roster after following the Involuntary Removal Process described below, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first (1st) day of the school year will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll in the Charter School.

2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the third (3rd) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive a letter indicating the student's risk of disenrollment.

3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the fifth (5th) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.

4. Students who are not in attendance by the sixth (6th) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive an Involuntary Removal Notice and the CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form. The Charter School will follow the Involuntary Removal Process described below, which includes an additional five (5) schooldays for the parent/guardian to respond to the Charter School and request a hearing before disenrollment.

5. The Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.

6. Within thirty (30) calendar days of disenrollment, the Charter School will send the student's last known school district of residence a letter notifying it of the student's failure to attend the Charter School.

7. Any documentation received by the Charter School regarding a student's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., CALPADS report) shall be deemed evidence of a voluntary disenrollment and shall not trigger the Involuntary Removal Process below.

INVOLUNTARY REMOVAL PROCESS

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:

1. the charges against the pupil;
2. an explanation of the pupil's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action; and
3. the CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form

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.

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.

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 dis- enrolled effective the date of the hearing.

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. 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.

Charter School will abide by all additional legal requirements afforded to students with disabilities, including convening a manifestation determination review (“MRD”) meeting prior to involuntary removal.

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.

REFERRAL TO APPROPRIATE AGENCIES OR COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

It is the Charter School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student's success, and the Charter School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, the Charter School may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a student's attendance does not improve after a SART contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents/guardians fail to attend a required SART meeting, the Charter School shall notify the County District Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Students twelve (12) years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Penal Code section 422.55, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

REPORTS

The Executive Director, or designee, shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as students who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.

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.