

Approved by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

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POLICY 300 - TURQUOISE TRAIL CHARTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Turquoise Trail Charter School (TTCS) requires a high level of participation in engaged learning. Regular classroom attendance enables students to benefit from classroom discussions, presentations and interactive activities. These shared academic experiences are integral to the learning process.

The presence or absence of each student must be recorded each school day. Teachers follow TTCS directives and state requirements in coding unexcused/excused absences and tardiness.

The New Mexico Attendance for Success Act requires that all school-age children attend school until the age of eighteen, or until they graduate from high school or receive a GED certificate. This Policy implements state law; to the extent that any portion of this Policy conflicts with state law, the state law shall control.

This policy applies to students and their parents or legal guardians.

A. DEFINITIONS

- a. "Absence" is when a child is not at school for a class or school day, whether excused or not, provided that "absence" does not apply to participation in interscholastic extracurricular activities.
- b. "Excused absence" is an absence due to illness, appointments with health or mental health care providers, death in the family, religious instruction or tribal obligations. At TTCS' discretion, a written confirmation may be required by the office when the student returns to school. If requested, such letter should come from medical practitioner, funeral service provider, provider of religious education or tribal official. Special family situations may be considered appropriate for excused absence when subject to *prior* written notice from the parents/guardians and *prior* approval is received from the Principal. The Principal's decision on the request shall be considered final.
 - i. Excused Absence due to Religious Instruction: A student may, subject to prior written notice from parents/guardians and the prior approval of the Principal, be absent from school to participate in religious instruction for not more than 1 class period of the school day with the written consent of the parent/guardian, at a time that is not in conflict with the academic program of the school. TTCS does not assume responsibility for the religious instruction for any student, nor does it permit religious

instruction to be conducted on school property. TTCS shall provide time for the student to make up the school work missed during the absence.

- ii. Excused Absence due to Tribal Obligations: A student will, subject to prior written notice from parents/guardians and the prior approval of the Principal, be absent from school to participate in tribal obligations with the written consent of the parent/guardian. TTCS shall provide time for the student to make up the school work missed during the absence.
- c. “Unexcused absence” is an absence from school or from a class for which the student does not have an allowable excuse as identified in this Policy.
- d. “Half Day Absence” is an absence from school for less than 49% of the school day or class period.
 - i. “Excused half day absence” is a half day absence from school for excused reasons identified in this Policy.
 - ii. “Unexcused half day absence” is a half day absence from school or from a class for which the student does not have an allowable excuse as identified in this Policy.
- e. Absence equivalencies:
 - 1. Any combination of two half-day excused absences will equate to one excused absence.
 - 2. Any combination of two half day unexcused absences will equate to one unexcused absence.
 - 3. Percentages are based on absences from *class periods* for the Middle School and *daily absences* for the Elementary School.
- f. “Tardy” is an arrival to school after the start of the day. Late arrivals in excess of 30 minutes or half a class period for Middle School, will be considered a “half day absent.”
 - i. “Excused tardy” is a tardy for excused reasons listed in this Policy.
 - ii. “Unexcused tardy” is a tardy for reasons not listed in this Policy.
- g. “Early Release” is a student’s departure from school 30 minutes or less prior to dismissal for reasons listed in this Policy. Early releases longer than 30 minutes will be considered a “half day absence.”
 - i. “Excused early release” is an early release for excused reasons listed in this Policy.
 - ii. “Unexcused early release” is an early release for reasons not listed in this Policy.

- h. “Chronically Absent” is a student with an absenteeism rate of 10%, but less than 20%, regardless of the reason for absence, and/or whether excused or not. Chronically absent students require Early Intervention; see below.
- i. “Excessively Absent” is a student with an absenteeism of 20% or greater, regardless of the reason for the absence and/or whether excused or not. Excessively absent students require Intensive Support; see below.
- j. “Voluntary Withdrawal” is TTCS interpreting a student’s continued unexcused absences to constitute a voluntary disenrollment of the child from the school, after all TTCS’ intervention attempts have been exhausted. Voluntary withdrawal is not an expulsion of a student and does not require the due process for expulsion.

B. PROCEDURES

a. Attendance Requirement

- a. The New Mexico Attendance for Success Act requires that all persons between the ages of five and eighteen attend a public, private, or home school, or a state institution, unless that person has graduated from high school or has received a general education development certificate, or that person’s parent or guardian provides written, signed permission for that person to leave school for health reasons or in case of hardship, and that permission is approved by the Principal.
- b. Students enrolled in TTCS shall attend school for the length of time of the school year as established by the school charter and any resulting reauthorization thereof.
- c. Students are expected to have no more than 5% absentee rate per school year, which includes both excused and unexcused absences.
- d. Students are expected to arrive on time to school each day and to remain in school until the scheduled dismissal.

b. Whole School Efforts to Ensure Student Attendance

- i. Notification of an Absence by a Parent or Guardian: The parent or guardian shall notify TTCS’ front office each day that his or her student will be absent from any part of the school day, except in the case of an emergency, and shall give the reason for the absence and shall provide a written parental verification upon the child’s return to school.
- ii. Notification of an Unexcused Absence by the School: If a student is absent from school or class without a parent or guardian’s notification of absence, TTCS’ front office will, as soon as practicable, contact the parent or legal guardian by telephone or e-mail to give notice of the student’s unexcused absence and to ascertain and document the reason for absence.

- iii. The School Counselor shall notify parent/guardian of a child who has reached a 5% absentee rate regardless of reason for absence and shall keep a record of notification(s).
- c. Make up of Work Missed
- i. Following an **excused** absence, parent or guardians shall discuss make-up work with the student's teacher. A student shall be given a reasonable time by the teacher within which to make up the work the student missed during the absence. Following an **unexcused** absence, make-up work is at the discretion of the teacher.
- d. School Actions Regarding Attendance Issues
- i. Out-of-school suspension and expulsion will not be used as punishment for truancy or unexcused absences. **However**, after explicit notification to the parent/guardian that the student is excessively absent despite exhaustion of all intervention efforts described in this Policy, the school may consider further unexcused absences to constitute a voluntary withdrawal of the child from school enrollment.
 - ii. Students in need of individualized prevention (5-9% absent)
 - 1. The School Counselor shall talk to the parent/guardian (either in writing or in person) and inform them of the student's attendance history, the impact of student absenteeism on student academic outcomes, the intervention or services available to the family, and the consequences of further absences, which may include referral to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for chronic absenteeism.
 - iii. Early Intervention for Chronically Absent Students (10 – 19% absent)
 - 1. Parents/guardians of students found to be Chronically Absent shall meet with the School Counselor. .
 - a. The Attendance Administrator shall notify parent/guardian of a child found to be chronically absent in writing, and include the date, time and location for parent/guardian to meet with the School Counselor. .
 - b. The purpose of the meeting will be to establish an Early Intervention Plan. This plan will include an Attendance Contract and weekly monitoring and reporting of student attendance to the parent/guardian.
 - 2. Parents of students with any further unexcused absence after meeting with the Principal to develop an Early Intervention Plan may be

referred to the Children Youth and Families Department for suspected neglect.

- iv. Intensive Support for Excessively Absent Students (20% or greater absent)
 1. Parents/guardians of students found to be Excessively Absent shall meet with the Principal and the School Counselor.
 - a. TTCS' School Counselor shall notify the parent/guardian of the student found to be excessively absent in writing, and include the date, time and location for parent/guardian to meet with the Principal and the School Counselor.
 - b. The purpose of this meeting will be to establish non-punitive consequences and school level supports to eliminate future absences, and to apprise the student and parent of the consequences of further absences.
 - c. Parents of students with any future absences of any type after meeting with the Principal for Intensive Support shall be reported to the probation services office of the local judicial district within 10 days after such absence. Such referrals shall include documentation of interventions provided to the family.
- v. Voluntary withdrawal for 10 Consecutive Unexcused Absences: The school will consider 10 consecutive unexcused absences as a voluntary withdrawal from enrollment at TTCS. Voluntary withdrawal will be processed by the school only after:
 1. TTCS has documented and exhausted intervention efforts to keep the child in school per this Policy.
 2. TTCS has contacted the juvenile probation department.
 3. TTCS has notified the parent/guardian in writing upon the fifth consecutive unexcused absence that accumulating ten consecutive unexcused absences will constitute a voluntary disenrollment of the child. Such notice will require a scheduled meeting between the parent and the Principal.
- vi. The Public Education Department's truancy prevention coordinator (or designate) or Children Youth and Families Department representative, or representative of the Probation Services Office, shall be permitted access to any records and information related to chronically absent students or excessively absent students.
- vii. TTCS shall provide a parent/guardian, within 5 days of parent's written request, access to attendance data of the student, including information about any intervention strategies that have been employed.

e. School Action for Tardy/Early Release

i. The School Counselor shall notify parent/guardian of a child when the child has accumulated 15 or more of any combination of Tardies or Early Releases.

1. Chronically late/leaving early: When a child's combined total of Tardies and/or Early Releases reaches 25, the parents/guardians shall be required to meet with the School Counselor and the division principal.

2. The School Counselor shall notify the parent/guardian of the student found to have 25 Tardies and/or Early Releases, and include the date, time and location for parent/guardian to meet with the School Counselor and the division principal. .

a. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss methods of ensuring on-time arrival and/or limiting early dismissal of students.

b. The School Counselor and the Principal will decide on appropriate consequences for continued Tardies or Early Releases.

c. Continued meetings will be scheduled for every 10 instances of tardies or early releases.

ii. Excessively late/leaving early: When a child's combined total of Tardies and/or Early Releases reaches 55, the parents/guardians shall be required to meet with the Principal and the School Counselor.

1. The School Counselor shall notify the parent/guardian of the student found to have 55 Tardies and/or Early Releases, and include the date, time and location for parent/guardian to meet with the Principal and the School Counselor.

a. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss methods of ensuring on-time arrival and/or limiting early dismissal of students.

b. The School Counselor and the Principal will decide on appropriate consequences for continued Tardies or Early Releases.

iii. The Principal and/or the Head Administrator may create and implement additional measures to address chronic or excessive late arrivals/early releases.

f. Native American Students.

i. In carrying out its duties under this rule and the school attendance law, TTCS shall take into consideration the sovereignty of a Native American tribe. While all children attending public schools will still be subject to being reported to the Public Education Department or other authorities per this Policy, TTCS shall respect tribal laws and traditions in carrying out its duties of early identification,

intervention, and parental notification and will furthermore collaborate with tribes to provide support for Native American students.

g. If a student becomes pregnant in elementary school, a 504 plan (if not on an IEP) will be devised to support the student's educational needs through their pregnancy. The recommendations in the 504 would be on a case-by-case basis, but would fully support their education through homebound or in school education. Decisions about excused and unexcused absences would be discussed and agreed upon in the 504 meeting.

A copy of this Policy shall be placed on the TTCS website.

References: NMSA 1978 22-12A- 1 et seq.
Amended Oct 16th