



SPA

**Contra Costa School of
Performing Arts**

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Policy Number: 10.090319

Policy Type: Governing Board Policy

Policy Name: Classroom-Based Attendance Policy

It is the intent of the Governing Board (“Board”) of the Contra Costa School of Performing Arts (“SPA” or the “Charter School”) to ensure that students attend school every day on time. Regular attendance at school is necessary for academic achievement. All absences negatively impact the educational progress of students. Classroom instruction, discussion, interaction, and activities are critical components of learning and are difficult to adequately replace or duplicate when a student is absent from school. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, disengagement from school and behavior problems. Therefore, parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule discretionary absences and appointments during non-school hours.

Additionally, the Charter School is fiscally dependent on student attendance and is negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences. As such, we greatly appreciate our families bearing this in mind when making plans.

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law or this Attendance Policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness.
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments:
 - a. Students in grades 7-12, inclusive, may be excused from school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the student’s parent or guardian.
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family:
 - a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state.

- b. "Immediate family" shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister or any relative living in the student's household.
5. Participation in religious instruction or exercises in accordance with Charter School policy:
 - a. The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four school days per month.
6. For the purposes of jury duty in the manner provide for by law.
7. 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 the doctor.
8. To permit the pupil to spend time with an immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code 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 Charter School.
9. For purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Election Code Section 12302.
10. Attendance at the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
11. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.

In addition, a student's absence shall be excused for justifiable personal reasons such as:

1. Appearance in court.
2. Attendance at a funeral.
3. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion.
4. Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four hours during a semester.
5. Attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization upon written request by parent and approval by the Principal or designee pursuant to uniform standards established by the Board.

Family trips, vacations, etc. will be considered unexcused and can lead to your student being identified as truant.

Method of Verification

When students who have been absent return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Signed, written note from parent/guardian, parent representative.
2. Conversation, in person or via email (at attendance@cocospa.org) or by phone call (at 925-235-1130), between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative indicating the reason for the absence within three (3) school days of the student's return to school. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. If the parent/guardian or parent representative is clearing an absence or tardy.
 - b. Student's name (please spell the last name).
 - c. Student's grade.
 - d. Name and relationship to student.
 - e. The date(s) or time(s) of absence.
 - f. A specific reason for the absence.
 - g. Name of the employee who noted and verified the absence.
 - h. Name of the person picking up the student if it's a request for early release.
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method, which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including information outlined above.
4. Healthcare provider verification:
 - a. Any Student who is absent on ten percent (10%) or more of the schooldays in the school year is considered chronically absent by the State of California.
 - b. A healthcare provider's note of illness will be accepted for any reported absence. Upon reaching ten (10) excused absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-#3 above without a healthcare provider's note, the parent/guardian and student will be required to meet with the Dean of Students to review the student's records and any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider.
 - c. For on-going or long-term medical issues, the parent/guardian and student must submit documentation annually.
 - d. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, Charter School staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.

All absences must be cleared within three (3) school days or they will be marked as unexcused absences. As discussed in more detail below, once the student has three (3) unexcused absences, your student will be identified as a truant and processes for upholding the Attendance Policy will be implemented.

Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

Students shall be classified as truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse three (3) full days in one (1) 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 (1) school year, or any combination thereof. Such students shall be reported to the Principal or designee and will be required with their parents/guardians to comply with the process below for upholding the attendance policy.

In addition, students 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, from the date of enrollment to the current date.

The Principal, or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, including working with the family in an attempt to resolve the attendance problem. A student's progress and learning may be affected by excessive unexcused absences. If all attempts to resolve the student's attendance problem are unsuccessful, the Charter School will implement the processes described below.

Missed Assignments and Inaccurate Absences

It is the responsibility of the family to contact the student's teachers directly or utilize the Personal Learning Plan ("PLP"), PowerSchool and/or the Charter School website to obtain missed work. All absences will be recorded, and can be checked, in PowerSchool. In the event of an unplanned absence, upon a student's return, he/she should meet with his/her Spotlight Mentor to create goals around missed work and to remain on pace with the course.

If you receive a communication stating your student was absent in one (1) or more classes on a particular day and you believe there was an error, please contact the Office via phone (at 925-235-1130) or email (at attendance@cocospa.org).

Leaving School Early/Removing Students from Class

Families are strongly discouraged from taking students out of school early. However, families who need their student to leave school early should contact the office via phone (at 925-235-1130) or email (at attendance@cocospa.org) at least 24 hours in advance. The pre-approved designee will then be allowed to pick the student up from SPA.

Extended Absences

Extended absences during the school year are highly discouraged. If these are unavoidable, parents must contact the school as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements. The Charter School

reserves the right to require enrollment in summer school and/or online courses to complete missed coursework if the absence is longer than fifteen (15) school days. If a student is unable to complete necessary makeup work, he/she may not be promoted to the next course level.

PROCESS FOR UPHOLDING THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Truancy Process

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 Principal 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 Principal 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" from the Charter School. 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.
3. Upon reaching six (6) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #2 – Conference Request," and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled with the Dean of Students 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 nine (9) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the student will be referred to a Student Success Team ("SST") and the Student Attendance Review Board ("SARB"). In addition, the parent/guardian will receive a "Habitual Truancy Re-classification Letter #3," and will be asked/invited to attend an evening assembly for parents/guardians of chronically absent students.
5. The SARB panel will be composed of designated school staff. The SARB panel will discuss the absence problem with the Parent/Guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and his/her family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.
 - a. The SARB panel shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.
 - b. 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 SARB panel shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the contract:

- i. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day
 - ii. Student retention
 - iii. After school detention program
 - iv. Required school counseling
 - v. Loss of field trip privileges
 - vi. Loss of school store privileges
 - vii. Loss of school event privileges
 - viii. Required remediation plan as set by the SARB
 - ix. Notification to the District Attorney
 - c. The SARB panel may discuss other school placement options.
 - d. Notice of action recommended by the SARB will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.
6. If the conditions of the SARB contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from the Charter 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. 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.
8. 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 SARB contract, and the SARB panel will recommend that the student be disenrolled in compliance with the Involuntary Removal Process described below.

Medical Verification Process

1. When a student has six (6) excused absences due to illness, the parent/guardian will receive "Medical Verification Letter #1" from the Charter School. The letter will state that the student has missed six (6) days of school. The letter will also notify parent/guardian that once the student reaches ten (10) excused absences due to illness, parent/guardian and student will be required to meet with the Dean of Students to review the student's records and any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider. 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.

2. When a student reaches ten (10) excused absences due to illness, the parent/guardian will receive “Medical Verification Letter #2” from the Charter School. The Letter will state that the student has missed ten (10) days of school due to illness, and thus parent/guardian and student are required to meet with the Dean of Students to review the student’s records and any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider. If the parent/guardian does not provide the required verification, each absence will be considered unexcused and the student will be subject to the Charter School’s truancy process.

Process for Students Who Are Not in Attendance at the Beginning of the School Year

When students are not in attendance on the first five (5) days of school, the Charter School will attempt to reach the 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, parents must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this Policy. However, consistent with process below, students who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the fifth day of school will be disenrolled from the Charter School roster, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first day of school will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll.
2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the third day will receive a letter indicating the student will be disenrolled after the fifth day of school if the student has not attended school without valid excuse.
3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the fifth day will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.
4. Students who have not attended by the sixth day, and do not have an excused absence as defined above for not being in attendance will be disenrolled from the roster.
5. The Charter School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.
6. The Charter School will send the Involuntary Removal Notice to the Parent/Guardian and follow the Involuntary Removal process described below.
7. Upon removal, the last known school district of residence will be notified of the student’s failure to attend the Charter School and the disenrollment within thirty (30) days of the disenrollment.

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 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.

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 disenrolled 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.

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 child's attendance does not improve after a SARB contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents fail to attend a required SARB meeting, the Charter School shall notify the District's Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Students 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 Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

Reports

The Principal, 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.