Maria Montessori Academy
Policy: Attendance Policy
Adopted: March 8, 2010
Revised: August 10, 2021
Reviewed: June 28, 2022
Reviewed: June 24, 2023

PURPOSE

Maria Montessori Academy (the "School") is committed to providing a quality education for every student. The School firmly believes that consistent attendance teaches students responsibility. Students learn the value of being punctual and prepared. Frequent absences and tardiness result in a loss of continuity of instruction. Also, frequent absences and tardiness prove disruptive for students, teachers, and staff. Excessive unexcused absences may lead to a student's permanent dismissal from the School.

Parents are expected to take a proactive role in ensuring their children attend school. We recommend families plan their vacation schedule around the existing School calendar. When possible, medical and dental appointments should take place outside of school hours and parents/guardians should notify the School in advance of any absence.

Parents/guardians and students are responsible for obtaining homework or assignments for the time period which the student is absent.

The School intends for this policy to be consistent with the provisions of Utah's compulsory education laws, Utah Code §§ 53G-6-201 through 53G-6-211, as well as Utah Administrative Code Rule R277-607.

This policy will be provided to parents/guardians annually and will be available for review by parents/guardians or interested parties.

POLICY

Definitions

"Absence" or **"absent"** means the failure of a school-age child assigned to a class or class period to attend a class or class period. "Absence" or "absent" does not mean multiple tardies used to calculate an absence for the sake of a truancy.
"Chronic absenteeism" or "chronically absent" means a student misses 10% or more of days enrolled, for any reason, and makes a school aware that a beginning of tiered supports may be needed.

"Valid excuse" or "**excused absence**" means an absence resulting from:

a) an illness, which may be either mental or physical, regardless of whether the school-age child or parent provides documentation from a medical professional;
b) mental or behavioral health of the school-age child;
c) a death of a family member or close friend;
d) a scheduled family event or a scheduled proactive visit to a health care provider in accordance with Section 53G-6-803(5);
e) a family emergency;
f) an approved school activity;
g) a preapproved extended absence for a family activity or travel, consistent with School policy; or
h) an absence permitted by an individualized education program or Section 504 accommodation plan, developed pursuant to relevant law.

The Director has the discretion to consider other absences as "valid excuses."

"Valid excuse" or "excused absence" does not mean a parent acknowledgement of an absence for a reason other than those described above.

"Habitual truant" means a school-age child who:

(1) is in grade 7 or above and at least 12 years old;
(2) is subject to the requirements of Section 53G-6-202; and
(3)(a) is truant at least ten times during one school year; or (b) fails to cooperate with efforts on the part of School authorities to resolve the school-age child's attendance problem as required under Section 53G-6-206.

"School-age child" means a minor who is at least six years old but younger than 18 years old and who is not emancipated.

"School day" means the portion of a day that school is in session in which a school-age child is required to be in school for purposes of receiving instruction.

"Truant" means a condition by which a school-age child, without a valid excuse, is absent for at least half of the school day. A school-age child may not be considered truant under this policy more than one time during one day.

Attendance Requirements: Students are expected to have no more than five (5) unexcused absences per year.

Excused Absences: An oral or written communication documenting a valid excuse must be received from the student's parents/guardian within one (1) business day of the absence in order for the absence to be excused. In the event of multiple consecutive absences, written communication must be received within one (1) business day of the student's return to school. In the event of an unforeseeable illness or emergency, the School should be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

Preapproved Extended Absence: A parent/guardian may request approval from the Director prior to a student's extended absence of up to ten (10) days per school year. The Director will approve the absence if the Director determines that the extended absence will not adversely impact the student's education.

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Medical Documentation: The School may not require documentation from a medical professional to substantiate a valid excuse that is a mental or physical illness.

Make-up Work: Make-up work is permitted for students who have excused absences. The teacher will provide the student or the parent/guardian with any make-up work upon request. Make-up work must be completed within a reasonable time-frame as determined by the teacher.

Tardiness: A student is tardy if he or she is not in the assigned classroom when the late bell rings. In general, tardiness will be handled on an individual basis with the teacher. If a student is chronically tardy, then the student may be referred to the administration.

Notification of Absences and Tardies: In the event a student is absent, parents/guardians will be notified by phone on the day of the absence. Parents/guardians and students are responsible for tracking the total number of absences and tardies. Parents/guardians may be notified when their student reaches the 4th unexcused absence of the year or if their student is excessively tardy. If a student reaches five (5) or more unexcused absences, the Director will attempt to schedule a meeting with the parents/guardians to review the situation and will outline the appropriate corrective action.

Notice of Compulsory Education Violation

The School may issue a "notice of compulsory education violation" to a parent/guardian of a school-age child who is in grades 1 through 6 if the student is truant at least five (5) times during the school year.

This notice shall:

1. Direct the parent/guardian to meet with School authorities to discuss the student's attendance problem and cooperate with the Director and Board to secure regular attendance by the student;
2. Designate the School authorities with whom the parent/guardian is required to meet;
3. State that it is a class B misdemeanor for the student's parent/guardian to intentionally or without good cause fail to meet with the designated school authorities to discuss the student's attendance problems, or fail to prevent the student from being truant an additional five (5) or more times during the remainder of the school year; and
4. Be served on the parent/guardian by personal service or certified mail.

If School personnel have reason to believe that, after a notice of compulsory education violation is issued, the parent or guardian has failed to make a good faith effort to ensure that the school-age child receives an appropriate education, the issuer of the

compulsory education violation shall report to the Division of Child and Family Services the information required by Utah Code Subsection 53G-6-202(8) (also in accordance with the School's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy).

Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Program

The School's Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Program is established to encourage good attendance, improve academic outcomes, and reduce negative behaviors. Through this program, the School hopes to create a trusting relationship between teachers, students, and parents/guardians.

The School's efforts to prevent chronic absenteeism include, but are not limited to:

- Providing classroom and/or schoolwide rewards and/or incentives to students for good attendance.
- Notifying parents/guardians by phone each time a student is absent, and making such notification on the day of the absence.
- Contacting parents/guardians of students who reach four (4) and/or five (5) unexcused absences to try to resolve the students' attendance problems.
- Providing parents/guardians with notices of compulsory education violations or notices of truancy, as appropriate and as outlined herein.
- Providing parents/guardians with this policy each year at the time of registration.

The School will seek to help students struggling with absenteeism (including chronically absent students) through implementing research or evidence-based absenteeism and dropout prevention interventions. Those efforts will include documented earnest and persistent efforts to resolve a student's attendance problems through the following interventions:

- When a student's attendance is negatively affecting the student's learning, the classroom teacher will notify the student and/or the student's parent/guardian of the concern. The teacher will set up a conference with the student and/or the student's parent/guardian to identify and resolve any problems that prevent the student from attending school. The student's progress will be monitored.
- If meeting with the student and parent/guardian does not adequately address the problems and the student's learning continues to suffer, then the School counselor or Director will work with the teacher and parent/guardian in finding a solution to the problems that are preventing the student from attending to his/her learning. Efforts to resolve the problems may include, but are not limited to, the following: making adjustments to the curriculum or the schedule; counseling of the student by School authorities; mentoring the student; providing the student with increased academic support; teaching the student executive function skills such as planning, goal setting, understanding and following multi-step directions, and self-regulation; considering alternatives proposed by the parent/guardian; or providing the parent/guardian with a list of community resources to help the family.

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- The Director may consult with a parent/guardian to determine if mitigating circumstances such as medical or psychological problems indicate the use of intervention methods for resolving the attendance problems.
- In the event that the preceding interventions fail, the Director will contact the parent/guardian and request a formal meeting to discuss and resolve the attendance problems. A copy of of the communication (letter, email, etc.) will be kept by the School.
- The Director will notify the student and a parent/guardian of the actions the School may take should the student be truant in the future.

Notice of Truancy

Consistent with Section 53G-6-203, the School may issue a notice of truancy to a school-age child who is in grade 7 or above, at least 12 years old, and is truant at least five (5) times during the school year.

A notice of truancy will only be issued after the School has made earnest and persistent efforts to resolve student attendance problems, which efforts may include those set forth above.

A notice of truancy will:

1. Direct the school-age child who receives the notice of truancy, and the parent/guardian of the school-age child, to meet with School authorities to discuss the student's attendance problem and cooperate with the Director and Board to secure regular attendance by the student; and
2. Designate the School authorities with whom the school -age child and parent/guardian is required to meet.

A notice of truancy will be served on the parent/guardian by personal service or regular mail. The parent/guardian will have the right to appeal a notice of truancy in writing to the Director within ten (10) days of being issued.

Appeals Process

Parents/guardians who believe that all or part of their student's absences and/or tardies should be considered excused, or if they want to contest a notice of truancy, notice of compulsory education, or any disciplinary action taken against their student pursuant to this policy, shall follow the School's Parent Grievance Policy.

Students with Qualified Disabilities

If students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or students protected under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act, have excessive absences, including but not limited to absences for mental or behavioral health reasons, and fall within the criteria of this policy, the School will ensure that this policy applied in a manner consistent with all applicable state and

federal laws and regulations. Excused absences for known mental or behavioral health reasons do not absolve the School of FAPE responsibilities.

Annual Report

The School shall annually report the following data separately to the State Board of Education:

1. absences with a valid excuse; and
2. absences without a valid excuse.

Review

The School's Board of Directors shall review this policy regularly.

Adopted:
Reviewed: