Policy Number:	**3010**
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Attendance Policy

Purpose and Philosophy

American Leadership Academy Spanish Fork (ALA SF) believes that school attendance has a direct impact on a student's level of academic achievement. Regular student attendance and participation in class leads to a successful learning experience. Research supports the fact that attendance is crucial to improving student achievement. On-time attendance is a critical starting point for high levels of student achievement. The opportunities lost through student absence and tardiness leave learning gaps that are difficult to fill. It is primarily the responsibility of the student to achieve daily, and punctual attendance.

American Leadership Academy Spanish Fork recognizes that attendance is a student-parent-school responsibility. We strive to work together with students, teachers and parents in educating and motivating our students to consistently attend the appropriate classes to meet the state requirements to graduate from ALA SF with all attendance issues resolved. If intervention is necessary it is our goal to address the issue quickly and return the student to class to complete all necessary requirements to obtain academic credit.

Definitions

1. **"Chronic Absenteeism:** means a student who has been enrolled in the school for at least 60 calendar days and has missed **10% or more** of instructional days in a school year, whether the absence was excused or not excused.
2. **"Absence"** or **"absent"** means failure of a student assigned to a class or class period to attend the entire class or class period. Does not mean multiple tardies used to calculate an absence for the sake of a truancy. For a student enrolled in a learner validated program, an absence is the failure of a school-age child to meet the LEA's continuing enrollment measurement requirements as established in the LEA's written policy.
3. **"Approved school activity"** means an activity sponsored by the school and approved by the school's administration. A student may attend an approved school activity as a member of a team, class, club, or group. "Approved school activities" are excused absences, however, students are responsible to obtain and complete any missed school work.
4. **"DCFS"** is the Division of Child and Family Services.
5. **"Educational Neglect"** is the willful failure or refusal of parents or caretakers to make a good faith effort to ensure that a child receives an appropriate education, after receiving notice that the child has been frequently absent from school without good cause or reasons identified by school law. Examples would include a parent who consistently fails to get a child up on time, dressed, etc., so the child can get to school; a parent who keeps a child home to babysit or to

work; etc. The situation is defined as educational neglect only when the child's behavior is under the parent's control. (Usually, secondary students (7-12) are referred to Juvenile Court, and elementary students (K-6) are referred to DCFS.)

6. **"Excused absence"** means a student is absent from school for any of the following reasons:
    - an illness that may be either mental or physical, regardless of whether the school-age child or parent provides documentation from a medical professional;
    - the death of a family member or close friend;
    - an approved school activity;
    - mental or behavioral health of the school-age child;
    - a medical, dental, or orthodontic appointment;
    - a family emergency;
    - a family activity where parents/guardians have provided notice to school administration and faculty that the student would be absent for a period of time; OR
    - an absence excused through a health care or other accommodation plan, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or a Section 504 accommodation plan.

    Excused absence does not mean a parent acknowledgement of an absence for a reason other than a reason described above. Although an absence may be identified as "excused", the student is responsible to make up course work for the days missed.
7. **"Extended absence"** is an absence of consecutive days. Utah Code 53A-11-101.3 states that school aged minors must have this extended absence pre-approved. This absence can only be granted if it will not adversely affect the minor's education.
8. **"Habitual Truant"** means a school-age minor who is at least 12 years old, is truant at least five times during one school year, and fails to cooperate with efforts on the part of school authorities to resolve the minor's attendance problem as required under Section 53G-6-206.
9. **"Habitual truant citation"** is a citation issued only consistent with Section 53G-6-203.
10. **"Tardiness"** is an instance of a student arriving 1-10 minutes after school or class has begun.
11. **"Truant"** or **"truancy"** or **"truancies"** or **"unexcused absence"** means being absent from school for reasons other than those specifically authorized under this policy.
12. **"Parent/Legal Guardian"** means the natural or adoptive father and/or mother of a student, the custodial parent of the student, a legally appointed guardian of a student, or any other person being able to exercise any authority over the student which could be exercised by a person described above.
13. **"Educational services"** means providing learning opportunities and services designed to support a student to be prepared to succeed and lead by having the knowledge and skills to learn, engage civically, and lead meaningful lives through providing:
    - High quality instruction for each student that includes direct interaction between a teacher and students;
    - Personalized learning supports for each student; and
    - Appropriate instructional delivery methods based on the student's enrollment type as defined in this section.

14. **"Instructional hours"** means:
    - For students enrolled in an attendance validated program, the hours in an instructional

day during which an LEA provides educational services through scheduled instructional periods; or
- For students enrolled in a learner validated program, the equivalent hours of educational services made available to students, as measured by the LEA's continuing enrollment measurement requirements established in the LEA's written policy.

15. **"Attendance validated program"** means an educational program where:
    - Student participation is measured by physical or virtual attendance at scheduled instructional periods; and
    - A student receives direct teacher interaction and instruction for the course or program the student is enrolled in.

16. **"Instructional day"** means:
    - For students enrolled in an attendance validated program, a school day on which an LEA provides educational services through scheduled periods with direct teacher interaction; or
    - For students enrolled in a learner validated program specifically designed for competency-based or self-paced learning, any day during which educational services are actively provided through the LEA's structured learning delivery system.

    "Instructional day" does not include:
    - Days where educational services are not actively provided to students; or
    - Any day in a program that an LEA designated as learner validated solely to avoid providing direct educational services that would otherwise be required for an attendance validated program.
17. **"Learner validated program"** means an educational program specifically designed for competency-based or self-paced learning where:
    - Student participation is measured by demonstrated academic progress and completion of learning objectives rather than by attendance at scheduled instructional periods; and
    - The LEA has established a written policy that defines:
    - Continuing enrollment measurement requirements;
    - Standards for demonstrating academic progress;
    - Methods for calculating equivalent instructional hours; and
    - Procedures for ensuring equivalent educational rigor and support as provided in attendance validated programs; and
    - Meets any additional criteria the state board requires.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Board further recognizes that:

1. All students are expected to be in class and on-time every school day, in every class. American Leadership Academy Spanish Fork will follow state law and federal guidelines as they pertain to attendance.
2. Excused or unexcused absences, frequent absences, and/or tardiness of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process.
    a. **Excused absences** – The school will allow students with excused absences to remain current in their classwork by allowing them to make-up assignments, tests, and other work in a timely manner; all work should be completed and turned into teachers no later than two weeks prior to the end of the term. This time frame is put in place to ensure teachers have ample time to grade evidence and provide feedback to students if remediation is required. Additional time can be approved by administration.
    b. **Unexcused absences** – The school may or may not allow students with unexcused absences to make-up missed assignments.
3. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to meet student achievement goals.
4. Holding students and their parents/guardians responsible for attendance is part of ALA SF's larger mission to train students to be productive citizens who are college and career ready.
5. According to ALA SF's charter students are expected to have 90% attendance. Failure to meet this expectation could result in the student losing their enrollment placement.
6. Students must complete and participate in a minimum of 80% of the content taught and scored throughout each term in order to be eligible to earn credit for the course.

TRUANCY CITATIONS AND NOTICE OF TRUANCY (Utah Code, Section 53G-6-203)

Earnest and persistent efforts to resolve student attendance problems may include the issuance of a Truancy Citation and/or Notice of Truancy, as follows:

1. Truancy Citations: A school administrator may issue a Truancy Citation to a school-age child who is in grade 7 or above, unless the school-age child is less than 12 years old, and is truant. A copy of the Truancy Citation shall be personally delivered or mailed by regular mail to the parent or legal guardian of the school-age child.
2. Notice of Truancy: A school administrator may issue a Notice of Truancy to a school-age child who is in grade 7 or above, unless the school-age child is less than 12 years of age, and has been truant at least five (5) times during the current school year. The Notice of Truancy shall:
    a. direct the school-age child who receives the notice of truancy and the parent or legal guardian of the school-age child to meet with school authorities to discuss the child's truancies;
    b. identify the classes and/or dates for which the student has been considered truant; and
    c. inform the student and parent that Utah State Law requires their cooperation in securing regular attendance of the school-age child.
3. Copies of truancy citations and notices shall be retained in the student's permanent record.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION REQUIREMENT (Utah Code Section 53G-6-202)

A school administrator may only issue a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation to the parent or legal guardian of a school-age child in grade 1 through 6 if the school-age child is truant at least five (5) times during the school year.

The Notice of Compulsory Education Violation shall:

1. mandate formal parent-school meetings to create an attendance intervention plan after a student accumulates **five unexcused absences/truancies**.
2. Direct the parent or legal guardian to meet with school authorities to discuss the student's attendance problems;
3. Direct the parent or legal guardian to cooperate with the school in securing regular attendance by the student;
4. State that it is a class B misdemeanor for the parent or legal guardian to intentionally or without good cause fail to meet with the school authority or fail to prevent the student from being truant five (5) or more times during the remainder of the school year.
5. Must be served on the school-aged child's parent or legal guardian by personal service or certified mail.

If a parent or legal guardian intentionally or without cause fails to meet with the school authority, fails to make a good faith effort to ensure that the student receives an appropriate education or the school-age child is absent without a valid excuse an additional five (5) or more times during the remainder of the school year, the issuer of the compulsory education violation shall report to DCFS identifying:

1. Information of the school-age child and the school-age child's parent or legal guardian;
2. Information regarding the longest number of consecutive school days the school-age child has been absent or truant from school;
3. Whether the school-age child has made adequate educational progress;
4. Whether the school-age child is receiving special education services or systematic remediation efforts; and
5. Efforts made by the school to resolve the school-age child's attendance problems.

The LEA shall maintain records of each notice of compulsory education violation issued and any resulting referrals and general outcomes.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING DAILY ATTENDANCE

1. It is the responsibility of parents to make sure their student attends school and arrives promptly every school day. It is preferable that parents contact the school prior to the absence. If illness or other approved emergencies prevents attendance or causes tardiness, it is the parent's/ guardian's responsibility to notify the school's attendance secretary. Parents must contact the school and provide the appropriate reason for the absence. **Notification to the attendance secretary by email is preferred but parents may contact by telephone or a signed note as well**. All valid excused absences should be excused within three (3) school days following the absence.
2. Ensure notification procedures are updated to alert parents of unexcused absences within **two instructional days**, detailing the cumulative total of absences for the school year.
3. When a parent knows that their student is going to be absent for two (2) or more consecutive days, the parent should contact teachers regarding the student's assignments before the absence occurs.

4. Students having excessive absences exceeding all or part of five (5) days due to a stated illness may be required to provide a doctor's note specifically addressing the dates the student was absent from school.
5. Parents need to excuse absences by the end of each term and are only permitted to excuse up to three (3) school days per term if excusing after the five day guideline.
6. School administrators may evaluate requests to approve extended or excessive absences. Such absences may be excused so long as the absences do not negatively impact the academic progress of the student. The decision to mark an absence "excused" is within the discretion of the school administration.
7. Students who arrive late need to sign in on the tardy check-list, which will be provided and monitored by each classroom teacher. Secondary students who are not in the classroom at the time of the bell tone will be counted tardy. Elementary students who are tardy or late for more than 15 minutes shall have three tardies equal to an absence. Students, who develop a pattern of habitual tardiness, (4+ tardies per class per term) will be dealt with administratively by each school and will be part of any court referrals. Tardies not only hinder a student's ability to profit from instruction at the beginning of class, but they interrupt the teacher's instruction and the work of other students who made the effort to be on time. In addition, tardy students are usually in the hallways interrupting other classes and the efforts of other students/friends to get to class on time. Punctual students perform better in school and at work and is a citizenship skill required by the state.
8. Any student who leaves school during the school day is required to check out through the school's front office. If a student who has checked out returns later in the day, he/she needs to check in through the school's front office. In order to ensure the safety of children enrolled in ALA, students will not be released to any person without verified authorization (verbal or written) from the custodial parent. ALA will maintain a check-out log indicating the date, time, reason, and the name of the person to whom the student is released. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the school with copies of any legal documents restricting access to their student(s).
9. School administrators have authority to grant exceptions to the above procedures in situations involving unforeseen circumstances.

10. The school will implement regular tracking of student participation and tiered intervention programs for students showing early warning signs of chronic absenteeism. Regular reviews of attendance data will be completed by LEA governing boards and the Student Information System (SIS) data to ensure precise and up-to-date attendance records.

ONLINE STUDENTS

Students will be considered "virtually present" if they have met the minimum criteria for participation. A variety of measures may be used to determine if a student participated in the program in an online, virtual at-home, blended or competency-based learning environment including but not limited to:

1. Evidence that validates student learning (e.g., online or offline assignment submission, rubric scored written work, presentations, artistic performances, research projects, formative assessment results, progress toward academic goals, student portfolios, demonstrated

competency assessments, student ratings of their knowledge and skills on what they have learned over a course of a specified period of time).
2. Evidence that validates student participation (e.g., login data, discussion boards, completion of math and literacy supplemental software, virtual conferencing participation, or number of student hours spent on activities related to a course).
3. Evidence that validates student communication.
4. Course completion.

Any student that has no contact, participation, or has not met the minimum criteria to be marked present, whether in-person or live streaming online or virtual at-home, for 10 consecutive school days and the teacher and administration are unable to contact them, will be removed from the school's SIS system.

SCHOOL AND TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

School administration and personnel shall make earnest and persistent efforts to resolve attendance problems. Those efforts include, as reasonably feasible, the following:

1. The school shall notify students and parents of this policy during registration and it will be included in the school's student handbook.
2. Learner validated attendance, in accordance with Utah Board Rule R277-419 Pupil Accounting, should be entered into the school's student information system (SIS) daily and reviewed weekly.
3. School personnel and teachers will monitor and record the daily attendance of students and notify parents quickly (within **two instructional days**) of a student's unexcused absence, including providing the running total of unexcused absences for the current school year.
4. Teachers will, where appropriate, develop grading and credit procedures that promote academic achievement.
5. Teachers will encourage student attendance through teaching methods which motivate student involvement and participation in the learning process.
6. A representative of the school will make daily phone notices of absences via a computerized calling system. Parents are expected to keep a current phone number on file at the school.
7. Every effort will be made to inform the parent/guardian of absences of their student and to work with them in resolving attendance problems.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Utah Law places the burden of responsibility for school attendance on the parent. Parents shall cooperate with school authorities and make earnest and persistent efforts to resolve attendance problems. Those efforts include the following:

1. Parents must ensure that their student attends school as required by Utah law.
2. Parents are required, in a timely manner, to notify the school when the student is absent for an excusable reason as set forth in this policy. It is recommended that a student, who knows that he/she is going to be absent for two (2) or more days, contact teachers before leaving regarding academic assignments that need to be completed.
3. Parents are encouraged to communicate and/or meet with teachers and other school authorities in order to find solutions to attendance problems.

4. Parents are encouraged to monitor their own student's attendance by accessing Power School through the school's website or Parent Link app. Each school will provide Power School access information and instructions to the parents.
5. "Blanket" Excuses covering unspecified dates of absences, tardies, etc. are not acceptable. For example: "Please excuse my child from all absences this past week."
6. Due to the broad geographic area that we serve, a tardy for the first class/period of your student's day is excusable within five (5) school days of the tardy. This may be done by contacting the attendance office.
7. An appeals form to waive attendance penalties is available. A parent/principal meeting will be held to review concerns and determine waiver outcomes. If the parent or guardian is not satisfied, they may contact the Executive Director for further review and a final decision.

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS

Interventions are provided to address excessive and/or unexcused absences/tardies. These interventions may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Counseling of the student by school authorities.
2. Adjusting the curriculum and schedule if determined necessary to meet special needs of the student.
3. Consider alternatives proposed by the parent or legal guardian.
4. Monitoring and tracking school attendance of the student.
5. Student-teacher conference.
6. Notification of Attendance letter to alert families of attendance concerns and provide an opportunity to resolve issues with school administration.
7. Issuing a Notice of Truancy.
8. Suspension
9. All interventions are based on one (1) school year.

TARDY FINES

1. Students will be given 10 tardies per quarter before fines begin to accrue.
2. Each tardy over 10 will cost $1.00.

STUDENTS WITH A CONFIRMED TRUANCY OR A "SLUFF"

1. 1ST Offense
2. Student/Parent meeting with administration.
3. Students will serve 1 day in-School Suspension.
4. Students will write a 1 page, single spaced, essay addressing concerns associated with truancy. This will be completed during the in-School Suspension.
5. 2nd Offense
6. Students will sign attendance contracts (along with parent/guardian and school administration). The contract must state the direction the school will take if a 3rd offense occurs.
7. Students will serve 2-4 days in-School Suspension.
8. 3rd Offense
9. Students will be given 1-5 days Out-of-School suspension (determined by administration).

10. Administration will meet to discuss possible removal of students from ALA SF.
11. Notice of Truancy (unexcused absences only)
12. 1st citation is issued when a student has 10 days with 1 or more unexcused absences.
13. 2nd citation is issued when a student has 15 days with 1 or more unexcused absences.
14. 3rd citation is issued when a student has 20 days with 1 or more unexcused absences.

DUE PROCESS

1. A parent may, within ten (10) calendar days of the date of notice of such action, appeal a contested unexcused absence or a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation. If the tenth calendar day falls on a day other than a school day of ALA SF, the appeal deadline is extended to the next school day. All appeals shall be in writing and shall be made to the person from whom the notice came. If not, appeal is made within the timeline set forth above, the action described in the notice is final. In the event of an appeal, the parent is entitled to the following:
2. Within ten (10) school days from the date of the appeal, the parent, student (when appropriate), teacher (if necessary), and a school administrator shall meet in an effort to resolve the matter.
3. In the event the matter is not resolved at the meeting with the school administrator, the parent may request the matter to be reviewed by the Executive Director who will render a decision on the matter.

Legal References
Utah Code 53G-6-201
Utah Code 53G-6-202
Utah Code 53G-6-205
Utah Administrative Rule R277-607
Senate Bill 58 (Public School Attendance Amendments)