



ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

It is important to maintain consistent attendance by our students, as it is crucial to your child's success in the classroom. The importance of knowing that you entrust AACMS with your child's care while they are with us is paramount to our procedures concerning attendance. In our effort to keep track of all students, we ask for your cooperation with the following procedures.

Arts Academy Charter Middle School requires that school-age pupils who are enrolled at our school attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. AACMS community is a collaborative learning community. Learning and the arts thrive when all are present to participate. In short, we must gather to work together. We expect our students to be present in school and on time to school every day. AACMS recognizes the assurance of our students' compulsory attendance as both a legal and a moral obligation. Every parent/guardian of a school-age child (6 to 18) is responsible for the child's school attendance. All persons residing in this Commonwealth between the ages of 6 and 21 years of age are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. Failure of a student to attend school has specified legal consequences for parent/guardian(s) and potentially for the student as well.

DEFINITIONS OF ABSENCES

(AACS 2.4.2)

Excused Absences (Cumulative)

- Any absence as defined by the [PA School Code](#) in which a written excuse is submitted within three school days of a student's return. For more information, see the Required Excused Absence Documentation chart on page 4.
- Examples: healthcare or therapy services by PA licensed practitioners, approved educational trips

Unexcused Absences (Cumulative)

- Any day for which a written excuse is not submitted within three days of a student's return from an absence including notes from physicians.
- Any absence not excused by a physician's note after 10 absences verified by parental excuses.
- Students who are absent due to a pre-planned trip who have not submitted the appropriate documentation 10 days in advance will not be excused with a note if more than 3 school days have been missed.

Noncumulative Absences

- Absences that are specific types of absences that are not counted toward a student's attendance limit and are exempt from the usual rules that track and penalize missed days.
- Examples:
 - a. Illness verified by a physician's note submitted within three days of a student's return. Any absence in which a physician's note is submitted is not included in the seven days permitted for parental excuses in middle and high school.
 - b. Death in the family from date of death until two days after the funeral unless otherwise authorized by the building principal, supported by a parent note.
 - c. Proof of required court appearance.
 - d. Religious holidays.
 - e. School-sponsored activities.

Tardy to School

- Students must report to school by **7:45 AM** or will be considered tardy. They must come to the Main Office to sign in.
 - *Students arriving late by bus are not penalized. Late bus passes are considered excused tardies.*

Tardy to Class

- A student must arrive to class on time. Teachers will mark classroom attendance at the start of the period. If a student arrives late to class without a pass, they will be marked as tardy or unexcused.

Truant

- According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, a student is considered “truant” if they have incurred three (3) or more school days of **unexcused absences** during the current school year.

Habitually Truant

- A student is considered “habitually truant” if they have incurred six (6) or more school days of **unexcused absences** during the current school year.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Absences from School

- All attendance documentation will be required within three (3) days of return from absence.
- A list of lawful (acceptable) or excused absence reasons appears in the chart on page 4 of this document.
- All notes must be handwritten and legible and include a parent/guardian’s name and signature, which is turned into the Main Office or emailed to attendance@aacms.org.
- Any excuse documentation turned in during the 3-day window from the day of the absence that states a lawful (acceptable) reason will be modified to an excused absence in PowerSchool.
- Any absence where an excuse documentation is not turned in within 3 days will be deemed unlawful/unexcused for students and will accumulate. These absences may be subject to truancy procedures as stated below.
- [Pennsylvania law](#) requires that students who are absent from a school for 10 consecutive school days shall be dropped from the active membership roll unless the school is provided with evidence that the absence is legal or compulsory attendance prosecution is being pursued.

Note: Students absent from school are not permitted to attend any extracurricular activities or school functions on that day or the following weekend if absent on a Friday.

Resource: [PA Truancy Fact Sheet](#)

Absences

1. On days when your child will be absent, please call the school before 8:30 am at 610-351-0234 ext. 1 to inform us. Include your child’s first and last name, their grade, and the reason for their absence. Your child will be marked as Absent Unexcused until the school receives an absentee note.

- Parents/Guardians who have not called their students out of school, will receive an automated phone call informing them that their student is not in school.
2. **Within 3 days** of your child's return to school, a written note which includes your child's name, date(s) of absence, and reason for that absence must be submitted. Without this note, your child's absence will remain "unexcused". If your child was seen by a doctor, submit the doctor's note within 3 days of their return.
 3. **Planned Vacations, Trips, Auditions, etc.** Applications for educational trips, vacations, and auditions must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the time requested off. The application can be found at the Main Office or the school's website and will be reviewed and approved by the principal or designee. It is your child's responsibility to get the work that they will miss during their absence.

Required Excused Absence Documentation

Absence Reason	Required Documentation	Number Permitted
Parent/Guardian Excused Absences	Parent/Guardian notes are required to be submitted to the Main Office PRIOR to vacations or immediately following absence for any other reason, for Extended Absences call the Main office.	10 permitted per school year with a Parent/Guardian note
Medical Appointments	Physician Note	With proper documentation
Court Hearing	Documentation from Court	With proper documentation
Field Trips	Teacher Documentation	With proper documentation
Bereavement	Parent/Guardian note	With proper documentation (limited to 5 days. Exceptions may be granted by the Principal)

Religious Observances	Parent/Guardian note	With proper documentation
Family Vacation	Pre-approved family vacation while school is in session per school board policy with appropriate documentation and application.	With appropriate documentation and application.

TRUANCY PROCEDURES

A student shall be considered truant after they have accrued three unexcused absences. Once a student is considered truant, the school may schedule a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to identify the cause(s) of the unexcused absences and create a plan to improve attendance. Students who are habitually truant will be referral to Child & Youth Services and/or Truancy Elimination Services. Students who are habitually truant may not transfer to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines it is in the best interest of the child (24 P.S. § 13-1333). Students who are absent from a charter school for more than 10 consecutive days at any time will be removed from membership roll unless evidence of a legal excuse is provided or if compulsory attendance prosecution has been/is being initiated. For more information on the Arts Academy Charter School's Truancy Policy, refer to [Policy 2.4.2](#) on the school's website.

Unexcused Absence Notifications

Parents/Guardians will receive communications at the following intervals when a student accumulates **3, 6 and 7+ total unexcused absences**.

Interval	Communication
3rd Unexcused Absence (Truant)	• A warning letter (email) will be sent home requesting proper excuse documentation. • Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) meeting requested if proper documentation is not provided. SAIP Template_AACMS.docx
6th Unexcused Absence (Habitually Truant)	• Warning letter (email) sent home • Phone call from a school official. • Revisit SAIP
7th + Unexcused Absence	• Letter sent home (via email and USPS). • Possible referral to the SAP team, lunch and/or after-school detention, and/or loss of

	extracurricular privileges at the discretion of administration. • Referral to Child & Youth Services and/or Truancy Elimination Services. • Physician's notes required for all illness-related absences. • Possible after-school and/or weekend detentions. • Loss of extracurricular privileges and potential loss of performance opportunities, at administrative discretion. • Meeting with administrators and/or Executive Director.
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TARDY TO SCHOOL

One of the defining characteristics of AACMS is that our students come from over 15 school districts. ***Due to the distances traveled to school, we understand there will be occasions when students will be late.*** Students should make every effort to arrive on time, accounting for weather and other circumstances that may develop during travel to school.

- Students must report to school by **7:45 AM** or will be considered tardy. They must come to the Main Office to sign in.
 - ***Late bus passes are considered excused tardies.***
 - ***Students arriving late by bus are not penalized.***
- Students will be given **7 parent/guardian excused tardy notes per year** (with parent/guardian documentation).
- Parents/Guardians will be required to submit signed notes for excused tardies on the same or the next day. The notes need to include the student's first and last name, date, the reason for being late, and be signed by a parent/guardian.
- If a student is tardy due to a doctor's appointment, please provide the school with a doctor's note upon their return.

Interventions for Excessive Tardiness to School

Unexcused School Tardies	Consequence
3	• Attendance Coordinator will send warning letter and possibly assign 1 lunch detention (will be removed if notes are submitted before detention)
6	• The Dean of Students or designee will meet with the student to develop a tardiness elimination plan (SAIP), which will be communicated to the Parent/Guardian and Principal.

7+	● The Attendance Coordinator will assign 1 after-school detention and alert Assistant Principal. ● SAP / SAIP referral ● Possible loss of privileges and/or extra curricular activities.
15 (and each subsequent tardy at admin discretion)	● Attendance Coordinator will assign 3-hour Saturday detention and alert administration. ● SAP referral ● Loss of privileges. ● Loss of performance opportunities at the Administrator's discretion ● Other consequences at the Administrator's discretion. ● Letter sent home to parent/guardian.

Late to Class/Unexcused Tardy

A student must arrive to class on time. Teachers will mark classroom attendance at the start of the period. If a student arrives late to class without a pass, they will be marked as tardy or unexcused. Each teacher will maintain daily attendance records on student tardiness and attendance to class. Repeated tardy to class will result in teacher assigned consequences. Continued late to class will result in further disciplinary actions.

EARLY DISMISSALS

To accommodate early dismissal requests, students must be picked up **NO LATER THAN 1:30 p.m.** If a student or students are not picked up by 1:30 p.m., students will be released with Parent Pickup at the normal dismissal time. We cannot guarantee a speedy departure from school grounds if a student is picked up after 1:00 p.m.

Parent notes must be provided for any change in transportation due to early dismissals. The Main Office will issue an early dismissal pass in the morning to be given to the appropriate teacher.

- If a student leaves school early more than 3 times without a parent note, administrative action may take place and discipline may be issued.
- Students will be given 10 parent notes for early dismissal. After all 10 have been used, proper documentation will be needed. If not, administrative action may take place.
- If a student is dismissed early due to a doctor's appointment, please provide the school with a doctor's note upon their return.

Parent/Guardian Pick-Up Procedure

When a student is going to be picked up early, please send a note with the student to be handed into the Main Office in the morning or email attendance at attendance@aacms.org.

- If a student needs to leave school early, please send in a note stating their first and last name, the date, the time they will be leaving, and the reason. The note must be signed by a parent/guardian and include a phone number. Your student will be called out of class upon your arrival.
- Upon arrival do not park in the bus pickup area directly in front of the school. Please use the designated parent pickup parking lot to the side of the school building. Parents are not permitted to pick up students in the rear (teacher) parking lot.
- If someone other than a Parent/Guardian is picking the student up, please include the person's name in the note.
- Anyone picking up a student must present an ID and sign the student out in our Main Office. This is required for safety purposes and is non-negotiable.
- Documentation is required for official appointments and can be presented the following day.

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