Board Policy 206a: Student Attendance

Adopted on 8/18/2025
Amended on: 8/18/2016, 9/24/2020, 6/20/2024, 2/12/2026, 6/11/2026

Student Attendance

The State of Delaware imposes mandatory school attendance requirements for public school students. Regular school attendance is a primary factor in a student's successful academic and social development and lays the groundwork for a successful and productive life beyond school. Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the learning process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained, even with extra after-school instruction. Many students who miss school frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of schooling. Families seeking support for attendance concerns related to social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs may contact the school counselor, nurse, or Head of School/designee. School staff may also refer students and families to school-based or community-based supports when attendance concerns suggest a need for additional intervention.

Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

The following policy outlines the definitions, expectations, and procedures related to student absences, including the distinction between excused and unexcused absences. This policy is established in accordance with Delaware state regulations and is intended to ensure consistent attendance while providing appropriate accommodations for legitimate absences. Students and families are expected to review and comply with these guidelines to support a positive and productive educational experience.

Excused Absence

Only the following will be accepted as valid reasons for **excused absences** or tardiness:

1. Illness of the student – verified by a physician's note.
2. Scheduled appointments to a physical or mental healthcare provider, including, but not limited to, a physician, dentist, orthodontist, or psychologist – verified by a physician's note.
3. Mental or Behavioral Health — Up to three full-day absences per school year may be excused for mental or behavioral health reasons when the student's parent/guardian provides a note. Following the student's second and any subsequent excused mental or behavioral health absence, the student shall be referred to a school-based mental or behavioral health specialist.
4. Remedial health treatment- verified by a physician's note.
5. Contagious diseases within the home- verified by official documentation on letterhead from Division of Public Health or Division of Health and Social Services.
6. Death in the family or of a close friend - verified by a funeral or death announcement.
7. Legal business requiring the student's presence - verified by note from Court on official letterhead.

8. Observance of religious holidays - requires a note from a parent/guardian documenting observance of a holiday on the approved list created by the Delaware Secretary of Education.
9. Civic Engagement — One absence per school year may be excused to attend a civic engagement event, such as visiting a government institution or site of political or cultural significance, advocating or testifying on legislation, or participating in a rally, march, or protest. The student's parent/guardian must submit written permission no later than three school days before the planned absence.
10. Absence, pre-approved by the administration, to participate in other educational experiences or authorized school activities.
11. Suspension or expulsion from school.

All documentation requesting absences be excused must be submitted within 5 school days of the absence except for civic engagement, which must be submitted prior to the absence. All verification from doctors, courts, state agencies, or other officials must be printed on official letterhead and brought to school in hard copy, not emailed. Parent notes may be sent via email or brought to school in hard copy and must include a parent/guardian phone number for school staff to call and confirm if there are questions/concerns.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any other kind of absence from school that is not excused. Examples include, but are not limited to: sickness without a doctor's note, family trips, etc. A parent/guardian note explaining an absence does not automatically make the absence excused.

Consequences

The Head of School or designee is authorized to develop and implement appropriate interventions, corrective actions, and consequences to address attendance concerns, consistent with this policy and applicable law.

In addition, the following attendance-related restrictions apply:

1. Upon reaching 18 unexcused absences, a student may be retained, regardless of the student's end-of-year grades, at the discretion of the Head of School.
2. If a student is absent for more than 50% of the student's total day's classes, the student may not participate in any school-sponsored after-school activities that day, except when approved by a building administrator or designee based upon documentation of a medical appointment or court date.

Board Policy 206B: Truancy

A student is considered truant under Delaware Code when the student has been absent from school without valid excuse for more than three school days during a school year.

The Charter School will take action regarding truancy including, but not limited to, written communications, home visits, truancy conferences, and referral of the parent for prosecution.

In order to be compliant with Delaware Code, these requirements apply at Freire Charter School Wilmington and include:

1. Following the **10th day of unexcused absence**, the school shall immediately notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) via phone call and mail.
2. Following the **15th day of unexcused absence**, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified by mail to appear at the school within 10 days of notification for a truancy conference and counseling.
3. Following the **20th day of unexcused absence**, the school shall refer the case for prosecution. Following the completion of prosecution of the case and the subsequent failure of the student to return to school within five school days thereof, Freire shall immediately notify the Department of Services for Children,

Youth, and Their Families requesting intervention services by the Department. The Department shall contact the family within 10 business days.

Missed Work & Make-Up Procedures

How do I make up work after I have been absent?

It is the responsibility of a student who has been absent to obtain missed work, homework, and assignments from the teachers.

Pre-arranged absences

If a student knows ahead of time they will be absent or miss a class, they should make every effort to collect work from their teachers the day before and/or contact teachers or classmates about missed assignments before they return to school.

Unexpected absences

- Missed homework/class work policy: Students who are absent must make up missed homework/class work assignments as soon as possible. The number of days a student is absent is equal to the number of days a student has to make up an assignment.
- Missed quizzes/tests: Students who are absent (excused or unexcused) on the day of a test or quiz will be expected to take the test or quiz on the day that they return to school, unless other arrangements have been made with their teachers. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with a teacher to make up this missed test or quiz. Students who miss this make-up appointment will not be eligible to receive credit for this test or quiz.
- Missed project/papers: At a teacher's discretion, papers and other assignments that students knew about before being absent are due upon the student's return, or by email.

Lateness

A student is considered late if they are not present in their first period classroom by the official start of the school day, which is at 8AM. Lateness can lead to serious consequences, including the following:

- Students will not be permitted into the building after 9:15 AM. Students who attempt to enter the building at 9:16 AM or later will be sent home. A school administrator will contact the parent to confirm whether the parent will pick up the student or if the student has permission to leave on their own.
- Students will only be permitted into the building after 9:15 AM with a note on letterhead from a doctor, dentist, mental health professional, court, or other legal office documenting an in-person appointment. If the school does not receive documentation of an appointment by the time the student arrives after 9:15, the student will be sent home.
- Being late to school (unexcused) may prohibit students from retaking assessments, attending field trips and events, and/or participating in student privileges.
- Repeated unnecessary lateness may result in disciplinary or other corrective action at the discretion of school administration.