



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Governing Board Policy**

It is the policy of the board to comply with state compulsory attendance requirements of Utah state law that mandates regular attendance at school of any students between the ages of 6 and 18.

The board holds all students, parents, and school staff to the highest standards of attendance. The board recognizes that regular student attendance at school facilitates academic achievement by maximizing the interaction between students and teachers. Frequent absences of students from day-to-day classroom experiences disrupt the instructional process.

The board, therefore, delegates to school administration the responsibility of developing a school-wide plan that follows this policy and state requirements that promotes and monitors regular student attendance and defines interventions and consequences for students who are truant.

The school's responsibility is to encourage and help students develop positive attendance habits with a standard of 95% on-time attendance for every student, thus enhancing opportunities for present and future success of students.

#### References:

References to Utah's Compulsory Attendance Laws:

House Bill 207 "School Truancy and Compulsory Education"

Utah Code 53A-11-(101, 101.3, 101.5, 101.7, 102, 103, 104, and 105)

Utah Administrative Rule R277-438 and 607

### **Administrative Guidelines**

The process of education requires a continuity of instruction, class participation, learning experience, and study. Therefore, Navigator Pointe Academy will make every effort within the following guidelines, to encourage 95% attendance for all students and to assist parents in their responsibility to have their children attend school regularly.

#### **Goals**

- Develop student responsibility and accountability
- Achieve success in learning
- Provide continuity of instruction for all students
- Achieve 95% on-time attendance for every student

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Student**

- The student will gain the most from their educational experience by regularly attending and being on time every day
- Students will follow school procedures for arrival and departure and check-in/out procedures
- Students will obtain make-up work from teachers due to absences and will submit work in compliance with the school-wide make-up work procedure (one day to complete make-up work for each day absence)

### **The Role of the Parent/Guardian**

- *Utah Compulsory Attendance Law (53A-11-101) requires every school age child to be in school. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's regular school attendance and may be charged with a misdemeanor if they fail to ensure their student's regular attendance. Parent/guardians are responsible for notifying the school when an absence occurs.*
- Show support regarding school policy and state law by expecting regular school attendance for student success
- Phone the school office on the day of an illness or other legitimate reasons for absences and review the make-up work plan
- Avoid interruptions of the academic year and plan medical appointments and vacations at times that will not require students to be out of school
- Request and complete Request for Extended Absence when applicable (Appendix A)

### **The Role of the Teacher**

- Maintain an accurate, daily roll of all absences and tardies, following school procedures for tracking attendance and providing make-up work
- Emphasize the importance of punctuality by using strategies that encourage on-time attendance
- Conduct periodic discussions centered on the value of punctuality and 95% attendance and the relationship between good attendance habits and academic and personal achievement
- Discuss attendance issues with students as they arise and inform the school administration if attendance does not improve

### **The Role of the Attendance Assistant**

- Review and publish daily attendance record and resolve discrepancies in student attendance tracking data
- The teacher's SIS gradebook is the document that will be reviewed with regard to all attendance questions
- Keep school director informed and parents/guardians informed of attendance problems
- Notify parents/guardians of excessive absenteeism by phone message, letter, or in person
- Track Request for Extended Absence forms
- Track homework requests due to absences

## **The Role of School Director**

- Implement prevention and intervention strategies
- Identify students with attendance issues and work cooperatively with parent/guardians, students, and teachers to improve attendance
- Approve or deny Requests for Extended Absence
- Issue parents/guardians a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation, Notice of Truancy, or Habitual Truancy Citation as required by law (Appendix C)
- Enforce and uphold Utah State compulsory Education law that may include a referral to juvenile court for excessive absenteeism
- Use earnest and persistent effort to improve student attendance

## **CUMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW DEFINITIONS**

1. **Absence** means a student's non-attendance at school for one school day or part of one school day.
2. **"Excused Absence" or "Valid Excuse"** means an absence resulting from:
  - an illness
  - a death of a family member or close friend
  - a documented medical appointment
  - a family emergency
  - observance of religious holidays
  - a pre-approved family activity or travel, consistent with NPA policy; in determining whether to pre-approve a family request as a valid excuse, the NPA school director will approve the absence if it is determined that the absence will not adversely impact the student's education
  - absences resulting from disciplinary actions or short-term suspension
  - other absences may be considered as "valid excuses" as determined by the school director
3. **"Truant" or "Unexcused Absence"** is an absence without a valid excuse. Therefore, a student is considered "truant" when he or she is absent from school without a valid excuse. An unexcused absence results when a student is absent and
  - Either parents/guardians or the school are not aware of the student's absence or the student did not follow proper check-in/check-out procedure
  - the school receives no information explaining the absence
  - the reason given for the absence is one that is not accepted by the school, truancy court, or state law as a valid excuse for missing school, i.e. going out to lunch/shopping, skiing, sleeping in, babysitting, etc.
4. **"Habitual Truant"** is a student, 12 years of age or older, who fails to cooperate with efforts on the part of designated school authorities to resolve the student's attendance problem(s) and/or has been absent without a valid excuse for ten (10) or more times during the school year
5. **Notice of Compulsory Education Violation** (UTAH CODE 53-A-11-101.5)  
A designated school administrator may issue a "Notice of Compulsory Education Violation" to a parent/guardian of a student, who is between six (6) and (13) years of age,

if the student is truant (absent without a valid excuse) at least five (5) times during the school year. This “Compulsory Education Notice” shall include the following:

- Direct the parent/guardian to meet with the school director to discuss the student’s attendance problem and cooperate with the director to secure regular attendance by the student
- State that it is a Class B misdemeanor for the student’s parent to intentionally or recklessly fail to meet with the school director to discuss the student’s attendance problems (or) to fail to prevent the student from being truant an additional five (5) more times during the remainder of the school year

**6. Notice of Truancy** (Utah Code 53-A-11-101.7)

A designated school administrator may issue a “Notice of Truancy” to a student, twelve (12) years of age or older, who has been truant (absent without a valid excuse) five (5) times during the school year. This “Notice of Truancy” shall include the following:

- Direct the student and his/her parents/guardian to meet with a designated school administrator and cooperate with the school in securing regular attendance.
- Establish a procedure for the student and/or parent to appeal the absence which have resulted in the “Notice of Truancy.”

**7. Habitual Truant Citation** (Utah Code 53-A-11-101.7)

A designated school administrator may issue a “Habitual Truant Citation” to a student, twelve (12) years of age or older, who has been absent without a valid excuse for ten (10) or more times during one school year. This Citation will be issued only after reasonable efforts have been made by the school to resolve the school attendance problems.

After issuing a “Habitual Truant Citation,” the school shall then refer the habitual truant to juvenile court. The habitual truant is then subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

**8. Tardy** – A student is tardy when he comes to class late (after the bell rings).

## **NPA ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

### **Tardiness**

- A student is tardy when he comes to class up to fourteen (14) minutes after the bell rings.
- A student is tardy when he/she is not sitting at the desk ready to work when the bell rings.
- A Junior High student who comes to class after the 15-minute tardy period is marked absent for the period.
- When any student arrives late in the morning, a parent must come in the school and sign in the student. A “Tardy” pass will be given to the student to get into class late.
- When a student’s tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive and parent/student conferencing is ineffective in changing the attendance behavior, additional disciplinary action may follow.
- After three (3) tardies, a Junior High student will participate in NPA’s after-school restitution program.

### **Notification of Absence (Parent/Guardian to School)**

- When a student will be absent, a parent/guardian should telephone the school office by 8:30 a.m.

- Parent/guardian should request make-up work and make arrangements to pick up student's work.
- If a student's unexcused absence exceeds 10 days and the student continues to be absent without parent notification, the student will be withdrawn from NPA.

### **Extended Illness or Health Condition Related Absences**

- Notification - The parent or guardian is expected to notify the school office of the absence and send a signed note of explanation with student within one (1) day after his or her return to school. When a student is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days, school staff will contact the home to verify the nature and anticipated duration of the illness or family emergency. At the discretion of the school director, a physician's verification of illness may be required to excuse excessive absences
- Home and Hospital – If a student is to be confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will arrange for the availability of assignments through a Home and Hospital Agreement
- Section 504 – Some students with chronic or long-term illnesses may be eligible for services under Section 504. Parents or teachers may refer students to NPA's Section 504 Coordinator to determine eligibility for services.

### **Pre-approval of Extended Absence**

- Prearranged absences of up to five (5) days may be requested. These absences are included in the total accumulation of absences.
- If the custodial parent/guardian of a student reasonably foresees his/her student will be absent from school for an extended period of time, the parent/guardian and student shall submit to the school director an Extended Absence Request form for pre-approval of the extended absence.
- The student should first present the form to teacher(s) to complete their sections of the form.
- Have parent/guardian sign the request.
- Return it to the office one week prior to the absence.
- The school director will review the request along with the student's current attendance percentage, grades, and schedule.
- If the school director finds that the extended absences will adversely impact the student's education, that request shall be denied and the parent will be informed that the absences may be considered "verified absences" but the school will not deem "excused" and may be considered to be trancies or violations of compulsory education law.
- It must be understood that participation in classes is a vital aspect of learning and assessment. Reduction of class requirements cannot be expected for extended absences and prolonged absences may result in a lower grade in many classes as there is no way to duplicate the activities of some classes while the student is absent.
- Requests for a longer period of absence under this category will be approved at the discretion of the school director.

**Arrival and Departure** – Once a student arrives on campus, he may not leave the school campus during school hours without a parent/guardian coming to the office and signing him out. Students leaving the school without following the proper procedure will be considered truant.

**Early Dismissal** – Students who have early dismissal permission, i.e. sports participation at another school, must have prior written approval from the school director. A parent/guardian must park, come to the office, and sign out the student.

### **Truancy Citations and Court Referral Process**

1. School will issue a “First Truancy Citation/Notification” to students who have five (5) or more days (or equivalent class periods) of unexcused absence, within a school year.
2. School will issue a “Second Truancy Citation/Notification” to students who have ten (10) or more days (or equivalent class periods) of unexcused absence, within a school year.
3. A student is considered to be “habitually truant” after receiving two or more truancy citations within a school year.
4. School will issue a “Third Truancy Citation and “Notice of Pre-Court Hearing” by certified mail or personal delivery after the student has fifteen (15) or more days (or equivalent class periods) of unexcused absence, within the school year.
5. After fifteen (15) or more days of unexcused absences (or equivalent class periods) within a school year

To appeal a Truancy Citation, submit the appeal in writing to the NPA Student Absence Review Committee (ARC) via the school office. Appeals must be submitted to the SCC within 15 days of the date the citation was issued.

### **Absence Review Process**

Jr. High students and their parents/guardians may appeal to the Absence Review Committee to waive or reduce the make-up requirements for absences in excess of the three allowed per class per quarter. The committee is made of the school director, a teacher, and a member of the Family and School Support Team.

Reviews are reserved for uncontrollable attendance issues, i.e., physician-verifiable illness, bereavement, court appearances, verified emergencies, etc. The waiving of a student’s attendance obligations through the absence review process is infrequent. In the case of chronic, pre-existing, or extended unforeseen health conditions, the school director can waive the review process and excuse absences. This requires that the student or parent/guardian be in regular contact with the director.

To be considered, reviewed absences must meet the following criteria:

- Absences must have been parent/guardian-excused (indicating parent/guardian knowledge of the absences and appropriate school notification was made)
- Verification by a physician may be required for absences due to illness, where absences are excessive. The excuse must be date specific.
- A typed letter explaining conditions in which the student was unable to meet the attendance requirements along with a printout of the student’s attendance record for the quarter must be submitted to the school office.

### **Exemption from School Attendance**

Home School

When a parent/guardian of a student enrolled in a charter school decides to home school their child, the parent/guardian must contact the school district of residency to initiate the process for enrolling their child in home school.