

Sebastopol Independent Charter School

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

BP 5113

Adopted 2020.12.07

The Board of Directors finds that a strong correlation exists between pupil attendance in school and high academic achievement. Pupils who are habitually truant or chronically absent have an increased probability of low academic achievement or eventually dropping out of school. SICS is committed to pupil success. To support all pupils in academic achievement, SICS maintains the following attendance policy.

Regular on-time school attendance is required by law. Parents/guardians of children between the ages of 6 and 18 are responsible for sending their children to school fulltime. The amount of time a pupil attends class correlates very closely with learning consequently, the importance of regular attendance and arriving at school on time cannot be overemphasized. Please schedule doctor or dentist appointments before or after school.

A pupil may be legally excused when the absence is for one of the following reasons: personal illness or injury of the pupil; medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic services rendered; attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family; exclusion for failure to present evidence of immunization; exclusion from school because the pupil is either a carrier of a contagious disease or not immunized for a contagious disease; pupil was sent home ill by the school health office, provided that the pupil was in the class for roll call; or upon written request of the parent/guardian and prior approval of the Executive Director for reasons including, but not limited to, appearance in court, observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion, attendance at funeral services for someone who is not a member of the immediate family, or parent is returning from active duty military deployment.

Per California law, a pupil with three unexcused absences is considered truant. Parents will be notified by mail and email monthly when their child has accumulated three or more unexcused absences. An unexcused absence is defined as any unexcused absence, unexcused tardy of more than 30 minutes, or unexcused early dismissals of more than 30 minutes.

If it is necessary for your child to be absent from class, please comply with the law by notifying the school office at (707) 824-9700 (press 8 and leave a message on the Attendance Line) by 8am of the day of absence and explain the reason for your child's absence. If it's not possible to leave a message on the day of the absence, a parent/guardian can notify the office within three days of the date of absence with an explanation of an excused absence. Failure to report the reason for your child's absence will turn the absence into an unexcused absence. The school may request a doctor's note for illness-related absences/tardies.

Pupils must present a note as evidence of a medical appointment to be released or admitted to/from school for medical services. Excused tardies and/or excused early dismissals are limited to those for documented (doctor's note) medical appointments. All late arrivals or early dismissals will be deemed unexcused – truant without a doctor's note for documentation. A pupil

may be released only to a parent or guardian of record or to a properly identified person over 18 years of age, authorized in writing by the parent or guardian to act on his/her behalf. If a pupil arrives at school late but without a note, s/he will get a "late slip" for admittance to class. The pupil will have two days to bring in a note to change this to an excused tardy.

Truancy may result in the following actions, in the Executive Director's discretion:

- **Contact and Notifications:** Parent/guardian of a pupil who is not attending school in alignment with program expectations will receive a truancy notification by mail and email and may be contacted telephonically by SICS staff.
- **Parent Conference and Attendance Contract:** After multiple truancy notifications, the pupil will be placed on an attendance contract outlining SICS attendance expectations and the parent/guardian will be required to attend a parent conference with the pupil's teacher and the SICS Executive Director.
- **Loss of Privileges:** The Executive Director, in consultation with a pupil's parent/guardian, may remove privileges from a pupil who is truant. For example, a student may not participate in a field trip and school-led, after-school athletic activity if the student has excessive absences or tardies.
- **Involuntary Removal from SICS:** Parent/guardian of a pupil in violation of an attendance contract will be required to attend a meeting with the SICS Executive Direction, which may lead to an involuntary removal from SICS.

If a pupil enrolls in SICS but at any point fails to attend for ten consecutive school days, the school will make a reasonable effort to contact the family inquiring whether they intend to stay enrolled in the program. Reasonable effort may include three separate attempts to contact the family, either by phone, regular mail, or electronic mail. Contact information will be accessed from the enrollment records. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to check their contact sources provided to the school for messages from the school. If the family does not respond to the school's attempts for information, the school will proceed with removing the pupil from SICS.