

Sebastopol Independent Charter School

Tardy Policy and Protocol

At the Sebastopol Independent Charter School, the rhythm of the day necessitates that all students are in attendance from the very first minute of class. Therefore, the School defines tardiness as arriving after the official start time (K-4 is 8:30am and grades 5-8 is 8:15am). Parents should realize that this means that being even one minute late is considered a tardy. The school gates are open and schoolyard supervision begins 15 minutes before the official beginning of the school day. We strongly encourage all families to arrive early and build in a grace time in their morning routine. All children need at least a few moments to arrive, settle in, and get to the door, and most benefit from 10-15 minutes of time at school before the school day begins. In short, we urge you to arrive well before the bell to allow plenty of time!

It is our goal at the Sebastopol Independent Charter School to communicate clearly with parents regarding our policy and the importance of being to school on time. We do this in a number of ways:

- Verbal or written communications with families, and possible parent meetings.
- Administration educates new families at intake meetings when they first join the school.
- Personal administrative meetings with families to discuss the importance of being on time, when needed.
- Information and clearly stated policy in the *Parent Handbook* as to how tardy and attendance problems affect the child, the class, and the school as a whole.
- Periodic articles in the *Charter Notes*, which explain the importance of being on time and attending regularly.

In order to show understanding of and commitment to being a member of the school community, the school and the families each sign a *School-Family Partnership Agreement* year stating, in part, that families will ensure regular attendance by their children and that they will bring their children to school on time each and every day.

Remember, tardiness is defined as arriving at the classroom door after the school start time, even if only one minute late. Copies of attendance records and all correspondence and written communication about attendance-related problems will be placed in a student's academic records.

If tardiness occurs, the following set of progressive steps may be taken by the school:

- Verbal reminders to the family from teacher or other school staff, as appropriate.
- First letter home from Director as a warning after the 5th overall tardy for the year.
- Second letter home after 10th total tardy, requiring parent(s) and older students to communicate with the Director.
- The Director may request parents to make an appointment and meet with the Director about attendance problems.
- Other steps may be recommended at the time of the meeting with the Director such as an agreement will be signed by the family that acknowledges their commitment to solving the tardiness problem.
- Third letter home after 15th tardy; at this time the process becomes more formal and the case is referred to the Board of Directors of the School. The School Board may meet to determine appropriate next steps, which could include, but is not limited to, referral to the local Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) which could ultimately jeopardize enrollment at the Charter School and involve law enforcement.