

POLICY: ATTENDANCE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

J PAUL TAYLOR ACADEMY

www.jpaultayloracademy.org

Adoption date: July 15, 2020

I. PURPOSE

This policy is established to ensure that J. Paul Taylor Academy (JPTA) students attend school in order to maximize their educational success. Students are required to attend, and parents and guardians must ensure regular school attendance according to the Attendance for Student Success Act (NM HB 236). JPTA shall adhere to all laws and regulations regarding attendance.

Because JPTA is a project-based learning school, on time, daily attendance is crucial to student understanding and continuity in the learning process.

II. SCHOOL CALENDAR

Each year, JPTA prepares a school calendar identifying each required day of student attendance. The total number of days on our calendar meets or exceeds the school day requirements of state law (22-2-8.1 NMSA 1978). Parents and guardians are expected to schedule student appointments, family events, and vacations for dates and times that school is not in session.

III. DEFINITIONS

1. **"Absent"** means not in attendance for a class or school day for any reason, whether excused or not, provided that "absent" does not apply to participation in interscholastic extracurricular activities.
2. **"Excused absence"** means absence from a class or school day for a death in the family, medical absence, religious instruction or tribal obligations or any other allowable excuse pursuant to this policy (Section IV).
3. **"Unexcused absence"** means an absence from a class or school day for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to this policy (Section IV).
4. **"Chronic absenteeism"** means that a student has been absent for 10% or more of classes or school days for any reason, whether excused or not, when enrolled for more than 10 days.
5. **"Excessive absenteeism"** means a student who is identified as needing intensive support and has not responded to intervention efforts implemented by JPTA.

IV. EXCUSED ABSENCES

A student may be excused for authorized reasons, and time shall be provided for the student to make up missed work. Excused absences include the following:

1. **Mental or physical illness:** for absences in this category to be excused, parent notes are required for any absence of three days or less; notes from a health care professional are required for absences of more than three days or for recurring illnesses. Notes must be provided on the first day the student returns to school.
2. **Religious holidays:** for absences in this category to be excused, the parent or guardian must provide notification prior to the absence.
3. **Bereavement:** for absences in this category to be excused, the parent or guardian must call the JPTA Office or send a note prior to or on the first day after the student returns from the absence. In recognition of the complexity of family and social relationships the duration of the approved excused absence will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Additional documentation may be requested.
4. **School-sponsored extracurricular activities:** absences for school-sponsored extracurricular activities shall not exceed 5 days per semester.

5. **Extenuating circumstances:** absences for other extenuating circumstances may be excused by the Executive Director if the request is made prior to the absence. Factors that will influence his/her decision include: number of prior absences and tardies, number of days to be missed, nature of academic and intellectual program to be missed, and make-up work opportunities.

V. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Absences are recorded as any minutes outside of the classroom setting during the instructional day in which the student is off campus for reasons not related to a school function. Attendance (including absences and tardies to school and/or class) will be taken for every class period for every instructional day and will be reported to the parent or guardian daily, as needed, and/or at the end of each school quarter.

VI. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. Daily emails, generated by the school's Student Information System (SIS), will be sent notifying parents and guardians of any full day absences, pick-ups prior to the end of school day, lates to class, and/or tardies to school.
2. After the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 10th excused and/or unexcused absences during the current school year, parents and guardians will be notified with a form letter stating the number of absences.
3. Parents and guardians will receive phone calls and emails from school administrators for chronic absences and/or tardies.
4. Quarterly attendance will be included on report cards.
5. Parents and guardians have access to SIS, which shows the daily percentage attendance for students enrolled.

VII. INTERVENTION STEPS

The school shall provide interventions for students who miss school, according to the percentage of absences. Intervention will be implemented when a student misses 5% or more of classes or days of school. At each of the levels described below, parents and guardians may be required to attend a meeting with school administrators and the school's attendance team (which will include the student at the secondary level) to formulate interventions and services needed to improve student attendance. Students and families who do not respond to intervention face consequences which may include referral to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for excessive absenteeism and/or possible referral to the Juvenile Probation Office.

1. LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

- a. **Individual Prevention:** a student misses 5% (but less than 10%) or more of classes or days of school - ON WATCH - **Level 1**
- b. **Early Intervention:** a student misses 10% (but less than 20%) or more of classes or days of school - CHRONICALLY ABSENT - **Level 2**
- c. **Intensive Support:** a student misses more than 20% of classes or days of school - EXCESSIVELY ABSENT - **Level 3**

2. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- a. JPTA will implement support systems that are leveled, according to the levels of intervention above, to help track and identify students having difficulty maintaining consistent attendance.
- b. Attendance Improvement Plans developed by the school and the Attendance Team shall focus on:
 - i. Keeping students in an educational setting;
 - ii. Prohibiting out-of-school suspension or expulsion as the punishment for absences;

- iii. Assisting a student's family to remove barriers to the student's regular school attendance or attendance in another educational setting; and
 - iv. Providing additional educational opportunities to students who are struggling with attendance;
 - v. Limiting the ability of a student to withdraw to only after all intervention efforts by the School or the CYFD to keep the student in an educational setting have been exhausted;
 - vi. Requiring that accurate class attendance be taken for every instructional class and school day in the school;
 - vii. Providing that the school shall differentiate between different types of absences;
 - viii. Requiring the school to document the following for each chronically or excessively absent student:
 - Attempts by the school to notify a parent that the student was absent from class or the school day;
 - Attempts to improve attendance by talking to a student or parent to identify barriers to school attendance, identify solutions to improve the student's attendance behavior and discuss necessary interventions for the student or the student's family;
 - Intervention strategies implemented to support keeping the student in an educational setting, including additional educational opportunities offered to the student; and
 - Encouraging and supporting compliant data sharing, pursuant to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, between a public school and community-based organizations that provide services to students for the purpose of providing more personalized interventions and specialized supports.
3. Interventions for students who are chronically or excessively absent may include:
- a. Assessing student and family needs and matching those needs with appropriate public or private providers, including civic and corporate sponsors;
 - b. Making referrals to health care and social service providers;
 - c. Collaborating and coordinating with health and social services agencies and organizations through school-based and off-site delivery systems;
 - d. Recruiting service providers and business, community and civic organizations to provide needed services and goods that are not otherwise available to a student or the student's family;
 - e. Establishing partnerships between the public school and community organizations, such as civic, business and professional groups and organizations and recreational, social and out-of-school programs
 - f. Identifying and coordinating with age-appropriate resources for students in need of family crisis counseling; and mental health counseling
 - g. Promoting family support and parent education programs; and
 - h. Seeking out other services or goods that a student or the student's family needs to assist the student to stay in school and succeed.

VIII. PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Parents and guardians should make every effort to have their child(ren) present and on time each school day. Students who are late must check in to the JPTA Office to obtain a late slip.
- 2. Parents and guardians are required to keep their child(ren) home from school in the event that the child is ill. The child(ren) are expected back at school once the child:
 - a. Has been fever-free, without medication, for a minimum of 24 hours;
 - b. Has not had an episode of vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours; and

- c. Is free from any contagious rash.
3. Parents and guardians must call the JPTA Office to inform the school of an absence by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. A call must be made whether the absence is excused or not excused. Some types of excused absences require notification prior to the absence (see Section IV).
4. Students who are absent more than three days require a doctor's note upon their return to school. A copy will be made for the parent and the original will be placed in the student file.
5. For students in grades kindergarten through third, it is the joint responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to discuss missing work and make-up assignments with the teacher(s). Students in fourth grade and above should be responsible for their own make-up assignments.
6. Family vacations, although valuable, may put the child(ren) behind academically if taken during instructional time. Vacations should be scheduled during regular school breaks. Teachers are not expected or required to prepare assignments ahead of time for days missed due to vacations taken during regularly scheduled school days.

IX. REPORTING

JPTA shall report absences, chronic absences and excessive absences data to the Public Education Department at each reporting date and the end of the school year. JPTA shall also document intervention efforts made to keep students in an educational setting.

At the end of each school year, JPTA will report to its Governance Council and to the public on the school's website, the progress made on student attendance targets. This report will include: (1) a description of the supports and resources provided to students at each intervention level; (2) the extent to which JPTA achieved its attendance improvement targets for students with chronic absence rates greater than ten percent; (3) the extent to which JPTA achieved its attendance improvement targets; (4) barriers and challenges to reducing chronic absence rates, as reported by the school and its personnel; (5) effective school-based practices, as evidenced by decreased chronic absence rates; and (6) recommendations for improvement during the next school year.

Legal References: NM HB 236; 22-2-8.1 NMSA 1978; NMSA 22-12A-1