

Board Policy: 111116.2
Approved: 01/18/2012

Discovery Charter School Attendance Policy

Your child's attendance patterns often have a direct link with their achievement. Frequent absences hurt academic performance. California State Law mandates that unless children are ill, they must be in school on time every day school is in session.

Excused Absences:

1. Student illness
2. Student medical appointment
3. Bereavement (for member of immediate family)
4. Observance of religious holiday
5. Special circumstances approved at the discretion of the Superintendent/Executive Director

For any of the above reasons, parents must notify the Discovery Charter School office within 24 hours. This can be done by phone by calling the attendance line.

All other absences shall be considered unexcused including absences for family vacations and/or trips.

POLICY OVERVIEW

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Four (4) or more unexcused absences may result in referral to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). Excessive excused absences and excessive tardies may also be cause for referral to SARB.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL POLICY

Students who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the end of the fifth day of school will be dis-enrolled from the school roster. If the student is ill, parents must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation.

EXTENDED ABSENCE POLICY

Students who have more than five (5) consecutive unexcused absences surrounding a school break during the academic year, or ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences during the school year will be at risk of being dis-enrolled from the roster after a hearing with the SARB.

CUMULATIVE ABSENCE POLICY

Students who have more than eighteen (18) combined excused and unexcused absences during the year (10% of the school year) may be referred to the SARB.

Process for upholding the Attendance Policy:

First Day of School Policy:

- Students who are not in attendance on the first day of school will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll.
- Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the third day will receive a communication (phone call, letter, and email) indicating the student will be dis-enrolled after the end of the fifth day.
- Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the end of the fifth day will receive a phone call and letter indicating they have been dis-enrolled. Students who have not attended by the end of the fifth day, and do not have a valid reason for not being in attendance will be dis-enrolled from the roster.

Extended Unexcused Absence Policy:

- Parents/Guardians of students who have more than five (5) consecutive unexcused absences surrounding a school break during the academic year, or ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences during the academic year will be contacted by phone to review the policy and its consequences.
- If required a follow up letter will be sent after the phone conversation stating possible consequences and a referral to the SARB.

Cumulative Unexcused Absence Policy:

- Students who have unexcused absences totaling 2% of the school year (4 days) will receive a communication notice (written – email/letter)
- Students who have unexcused absences totaling 3% of the school year (6 days) will receive a second communication notice (written – email/letter) and a follow up phone call.
- Students who have unexcused absences totaling 6% (11 days) of the school year will be referred to the SARB.

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to race, creed, color, sex or physical or mental handicaps.

Student Attendance Review Board (“SARB”)

Discovery Charter School has implemented a Student Attendance Review Board (“SARB”) process to address attendance and tardy issues. The SARB is designed to meet with parent/guardians of children who have exceeded the allowable amount of unexcused absences. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the child’s attendance record and develop a plan for the child’s regular participation in school drawing from community resources where possible. The team shall include representatives of the school, including teachers and the Executive Director, as well as community members.

Procedures for Excessive Absences /Tardies

STEP 1: FORMAL WRITTEN NOTICE

Formal Written Notice sent home to parents/guardians alerting them to their child's absence or tardiness pursuant to the above referenced attendance issues.

STEP 2: FORMAL MEETING NOTICE – SARB MEETING

(Parent/guardian and student are required to be in attendance)

When a student is referred to the SARB, the parent/guardian will be sent a formal meeting notice inviting them to a mandatory SARB meeting.

The parent/guardian and the Student will be required to attend the SARB meeting, during which time the SARB will consider whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain enrolled in Discovery Charter School. This meeting shall be held as soon as possible. The parent/guardian may request one postponement, not to exceed five (5) school days, of the SARB meeting for good cause.

At the SARB meeting, the parent/guardian and student shall be informed of the reason for the Attendance review and the evidence of the student's violations of this policy. If the parent and/or representative do not attend the SARB meeting, the SARB will review the relevant information and make a determination in the student's absence.

The parent and/or his/her representative shall be given the opportunity to present information and/or witnesses to the SARB either orally or in writing or both during the meeting. The SARB shall take any information presented by the parent/guardian and student into consideration when determining whether to recommend that the student be placed on an attendance contract and subject to dis-enrollment upon further violation of this policy. Additional factors to be considered include but are not limited to the following:

Students' grades at the time of the evaluation

Teacher observation/feedback

Student's progress in the curriculum

Disruption to other students when student arrives late

The SARB's decision shall be provided in writing to the parent/guardian within two (2) days of the meeting.

The SARB may:

- Place the student on probation and require an attendance contract be signed by both the Parent and the Student acknowledging that any further unexcused absences or tardies shall be cause for another hearing in front of the SARB which may result in dismissal from Discovery Charter School,
- Place the student on attendance probation to be evaluated again at a later time if the student continues to fail to attend school on time,
- Use other alternatives to improve attendance,
- Dis-enroll the student from Discovery Charter School; and/Refer parent and student to the district attorney.

APPEAL OF DIS-ENROLLMENT

If a student is dis-enrolled from Discovery Charter School by the SARB, the parent/guardian may appeal the SARB decision to the governing Board of Discovery Charter School.

The appeal must be in writing and delivered to the Executive Director within five (5) business days after the postmarked date of the notice of disenrollment. During the appeals process the student must continue to attend Discovery Charter School until the Board makes the final decision regarding the appeal.

The Board shall schedule the appeal to be heard within thirty (30) days. The Board shall send out written notice of the date, time and location of the meeting to the parent/guardian.

The appeal shall proceed as follows:

The Board shall review the attendance records and any documents submitted by the Parent. The Board shall also review all records considered by the SARB.

The Student/Parent or his/her representative may address the Board regarding the matter.

The Executive Director or SARB representative may address the Board regarding the Student's attendance.

The final decision with regard to continued enrollment at Discovery Charter School shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The parent shall be informed in writing of the Board's decision. **The decision of the Board is final.**

Referral to County District Attorney

If a child's attendance does not improve after a SARB meeting, or if the parents fail to attend a required SARB meeting, the parents and the child may be referred by Discovery Charter School to the District Attorney's office for prosecution through the court system. Students 12 years of age and older may be referred by the district attorney to the juvenile court for adjudication.