# Attendance Policy

CSI schools must adopt a policy setting forth the school attendance requirements. This sample policy is intended to be used by CSI schools in drafting their own Attendance Policies. While the sample language provides a helpful starting point, each school’s policy may be tailored to its own practices and preferences within the confines of the requirements outlined in statute and State Board Rule. This document may not be inclusive of everything a school could have in its policy, and schools are encouraged to have all policies reviewed by legal counsel and by CSI prior to adoption.

# Compulsory Attendance

Compulsory school attendance laws apply to all students age 6 (on or before August 1 of each year) through 17.

# Student Absences and Excuses

The importance of regular, daily attendance as a basis for academic achievement cannot be overemphasized. Absences have a negative effect upon instructional continuity, regardless of attempts to make up the work. The school believes duplication of the classroom experience can never be accomplished with make-up assignments. The school cannot teach students who are not present. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school. The school establishes a school attendance period by adopting a school calendar and establishes requirements for student attendance through adoption of this policy. If different than the brick-and-mortar calendar, Aa separate school calendar, and attendance requirements, shall be set for students participating in online instruction.

## Excused Absences

The following shall be considered excused absences:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured or whose absence is approved by the school administration on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only, which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. A student who is absent due to physical disability, or a mental or behavioral health disorder.
3. A student who is temporarily absent due to behavioral health concerns.
4. A student who is suspended or expelled.
5. A student to whom a current age and school certificate or work permit has been issued pursuant to the Colorado Youth Employment Opportunity Act of 1971.
6. A student who is in the custody of a court or law enforcement authorities.
7. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of a public school.
8. A student who is excused from school for a therapy, medical, legal or victim services appointment related to harassment or discrimination, as described in C.R.S. 22-1-143(2)(f), or for behavioral or mental health concerns related to harassment or discrimination.
9. A student in out-of-home placement (as that term is defined by C.R.S. 22-32-138 (1)(h)), absent due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities so long as the student´s assigned social worker verifies the student´s absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.

School administration may recognize additional absences, such as a funeral, legal obligations, medical procedures, religious obligations or extenuating circumstances as excused as identified in the Student and Family Handbook. The school may require suitable proof for excused absences, including written statements from medical sources.

## Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences occur when a student is absent from school without a valid and verifiable excuse by the parent/guardian that is consistent with this policy, or when a student leaves school or class without permission of authorized school staff. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parents or guardian of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified by the school of the unexcused absence.

In accordance with law, the school may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. Additional information is provided in the school discipline policy and procedures and Parent/Student Handbook.

## Makeup Work

Makeup work will be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to pick up any makeup assignments the day they return to class. There shall be [#] days allowed for makeup work for each day of excused absence. Makeup work will be allowed following a suspension [for full or partial academic credit] or following an unexcused absence with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and as an incentive to attend school. Additional information makeup work will be provided in the Parent/Student Handbook.

## Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the nontardy student to uninterrupted learning, consequences shall be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parents or guardians will be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness. Additional information regarding tardies and consequences for excessive tardies will be provided in the Parent/Student Handbook.

# Truancy

If a student is absent without a valid and verifiable excuse from the parent/guardian or if the student leaves school or a class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, the student shall be considered truant. A "habitual truant" shall be defined as a student of compulsory attendance age who has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences during any school year. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted in the total of unexcused absences.

In order to reduce the incidents of truancy, parents of all students shall be notified in writing at the beginning of each school year of their obligation to ensure that all children of compulsory attendance age attend school. Parents shall be required to acknowledge in writing awareness of their obligations and to furnish the school with a telephone number or other means of contacting them during the school day.

The school shall establish a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences. When a student fails to report on a regularly scheduled school day and school personnel have received no indication that the parent is aware of the absence, school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent by telephone.

A remedial attendance plan shall be developed for a student who is at risk of being declared habitually truant with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school. When practicable, the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian shall participate with School personnel during the development of the plan. Appropriate school personnel shall make all reasonable efforts to meet with the parent, guardian or legal custodian to review and evaluate the reasons for the child's truancy. School personnel in encouraged to work with local community groups when developing a plan to support the student.

If a student is habitually truant, the school administration may choose to work with the student’s district of residence to initiate truancy proceedings but is not required to do so. The school administration may also ask the district of residence to delegate authority to the school’s attorney to initiate the proceedings.

# Chronic Absenteeism

When a student has an excessive number of absences, these absences negatively impact the student's academic success. If a student misses 10 percent or more of a school year, the student shall be considered “chronically absent”. All absences are included in this designation—excused, unexcused and suspensions. Consequently, a student who averages 2 absences (excused or unexcused) a month is at-risk of being chronically absent for the year. If a student is identified as "chronically absent," the School Leader, or designee, will develop a plan to improve the student's attendance. The plan will include best practices and research-based strategies to address the reasons for the student's chronic absenteeism, including, but not limited to being contacted by a school’s Family Liaison, Social Worker, or Counselor, or interventions as described in the MTSS process. When practicable, the student's parent/guardian will participate in the development of the plan. The School Leader, or designee, will discuss truancy consequences with the student and family, and strongly consider putting the student on an attendance contract at the beginning of each semester. Chronic absenteeism may be grounds for grade retention depending on severity and impact on student learning.

# Student Withdrawal/Dropouts

When a student is truant for an extended period of time *without notice* that the student is withdrawing or transferring and the school has made several documented attempts to reach the family unsuccessfully, the school should code the student as a dropout beginning on the first date the student was absent for this extended period of time.

School staff will prioritize dropout prevention to enable those students who are considering dropping out or who have dropped out of school to return and resume their programs with a minimal degree of disruption. These dropout prevention measures represent a final attempt to re-engage a student at the end of the continuum of multiple interventions.

The following procedures apply to students who may be withdrawn from school as a dropout.

1. When a student is identified by the school as a potential or immediate dropout, the student, parent/guardian and a school counselor or other designated staff member will meet. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the student’s academic, social and emotional strengths and needs and to create a comprehensive plan with the intention of reengaging the student in school.
2. If all efforts to re-engage the student in school are unsuccessful, an additional attempt will be made to keep the student in school. The process and protocols will be published in the Parent/Student Handbook each school year. This will generally include resources for families to inform them of the educational alternatives that are available to the student, their rights and supports that may be available.
3. If the school has made several documented attempts (e.g., phone, email, home visits) to reach the student and family and the student and family are unable or unwilling to meet, the school’s designee shall send or provide a written notice that the student has dropped out of school, that shall include, but not be limited to, an encouragement that the student returns to school, and the availability of educational alternatives and services for at-risk students. The notice shall be sent within [#] calendar days of the determination.

When the student has been officially withdrawn as a dropout, the School will attempt to contact the student and/or parent/guardian with the purpose of reengaging the student in an education/career pathway and support them in developing a new plan.

# Special Education

Federal and state special education laws prevail over state laws and regulations for attendance. When applying attendance policies to students qualifying for an IEP or 504 Plan, the school must consider those special education rights first.

# In-School Suspension

When a student receives an in-school suspension, the school will document the in-school suspension as [an excused absence / present].

# Tracking Online Attendance

For remote and fully online instruction, methods of tracking attendance calculations for contact time may be based off academic content covered, student demonstrations of learning, estimated times for student to complete independent work, and/or other methods identified by the school. All student-teacher contact hours that occur remotely and/or online are equivalent to in-person student-teacher contact hours.

Attendance during remote learning, supplemental online enrichment, or through the school’s online program is tracked based on a student’s participation in some sort of learning activity for the day. Accumulated student instructional hours will be tracked through the following methods:

* Participating in a ‘live” synchronous class
* Checking in with a teacher via a chat or email communication platform
* In-person or online assessments
* Completion of offline work documented by parents or guardians;
* Students logging on to recorded assignments or online learning activities;
* Completing and posting an assignment.

Calculation methods for number of days present/absent each week will be documented in the student handbook each year, based on specific offerings that year.

# Importance of Accurate Documentation and Reporting

Complete and accurate documentation of student attendance during the October Count window is one factor in determining a student’s eligibility for funding. Reference the October Count Audit Resource Guide for additional details. Evidence of each form of attendance listed above will be submitted for the Pupil Count Audit. In addition, the State collects several measures of student attendance in the Attendance snapshot. This data is reported as part of the Student School Association file.

**Adopted: XXX, 20XX**

**LEGAL REFS.:**

C.R.S. 22-14-101 et seq. (dropout prevention and student re-engagement)

C.R.S. 22-14-108 (notice to parent of dropout status)

C.R.S. 22-32-138 (6) (excused absence requirements for students in out-of-home placements)

C.R.S. 22-33-101 et seq. (School Attendance Law of 1963)

C.R.S. 22-33-104 (compulsory school attendance ages)

C.R.S. 22-33-105 (3)(d)(III) (opportunity to make up work during suspension)

C.R.S. 22-33-107 (enforcement of school attendance laws)

1 CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 et seq. (standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy)