

Appendix H
University Preparatory School
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

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U-Prep's Board adopts this policy because consistent school attendance is critical to school success. Being present for classroom instructional time is essential for students to reach their goals and achieve their dreams. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to an increased likelihood of poor academic performance, disengagement from school and behavior problems. It is the intent of the Board to ensure that students attend school every day on time.

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law or Board policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness.
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
3. Medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic appointments.
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family:
 - a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state.
 - b. "Immediate family" shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister or any relative living in the student's immediate household.
5. Participation in religious instruction or exercises in accordance with School policy.
 - a. The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four school days per month.

In addition, a student's absence shall be excused for justifiable personal reasons such as:

1. Appearance in court.
2. Attendance at a funeral.
3. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion.
4. Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four hours during a semester.

Note: A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence. (Ed. Code, Section 48205)

Method of Verification

When students who have been absent return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note from parent/guardian, parent representative;
2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student;
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative;
 - c. Name of verifying employee;
 - d. Date or dates of absence; and
 - e. Reason for absence.
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method, which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including information outlined above.

4. Healthcare provider verification

- a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, school staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
- b. A healthcare provider's note of illness will be accepted for any reported absence. When a student has had 10 absences in U-Prep year for illness verified by methods listed in #1- #3 above without a healthcare provider's note, any further absences for illness must be verified by a healthcare provider.

Insofar as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

Students in grades K-8 should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency. Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be considered excused subject to administrative regulations and law.

Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

Students shall be classified as truant if absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during U-Prep day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof.

Such students shall be reported to the Superintendent/Principal or designee.

The Superintendent/Principal or designee shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, including working with the family in an attempt to resolve the attendance problem. A student's progress and learning may be affected by excessive unexcused absences. In addition, U-Prep is fiscally dependent on student attendance and is negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences. If all attempts to resolve the student's attendance problem are unsuccessful, U-Prep will implement the processes described below.

Process for Upholding the Attendance Policy

Students who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the fifth consecutive day of school will be disenrolled from the U-Prep roster, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option. U-Prep will attempt to reach the parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first five days to determine whether the student has an excused absence. If the student has a basis for an excused absence, parents must notify U-Prep of the absence and provide documentation.

First Day of School Procedures:

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first day of school will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll.
2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the third day will receive a letter indicating the student will be disenrolled after the fifth day of school if the student has not attended school without valid excuse.
3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the fifth day will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.
4. Students who have not attended by the sixth day, and do not have an excused absence as defined above, for not being in attendance will be disenrolled from the roster.
5. U-Prep will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.
6. The district of residence will be notified of the student's failure to attend school and the disenrollment.

Truancy:

1. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Attendance Clerk.
2. Upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences or tardies in a school year, parent/guardian will receive a "Truancy Notification" letter from U-Prep. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to U-Prep.

3. Upon reaching four (4) unexcused absences or tardies, a call will be made to the parent/guardian by the Superintendent/Principal or designee to discuss truancy and improving student attendance.
4. Upon reaching five (5) or more unexcused absences, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with U-Prep Attendance Review Team (“SART”), composed of the Superintendent/Principal, Assistant Principal, and Counselor.
5. The SART panel will discuss the absence problem with the parent/guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and his/her family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.
 - a. The SART panel shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.
 - b. The SART panel will identify the corrective actions required in the future and shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences:
 - i. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day.
 - ii. Student retention
 - iii. After school detention program
 - iv. Required school counseling
 - v. Loss of field trip privileges
 - vi. Loss of school store privileges
 - vii. Loss of school event privileges
 - viii. Required remediation plan as set by the SART
 - ix. Notification to the District Attorney
 - c. The SART panel may discuss other school placement options.
 - d. Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.

Excessive Excused Absences and Chronic Absenteeism:

A student is chronically absent from school when they have missed 10 percent or more of the days they have been enrolled in school. In many cases, absences from school are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. However, chronic absenteeism can have a drastic impact on a child’s education. Chronic absenteeism in K-8 is a proven early warning sign of a school drop-out. By ninth grade, good attendance can predict graduation even better than eighth-grade test scores. Attending school regularly matters.

Referral to County District Attorney:

It is U-Prep’s intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student’s success and will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. If a child’s attendance does not improve after a SART meeting, or if the parents fail to attend a required SART meeting, the parents and the child may be referred to the District Attorney’s office for prosecution through the court system. Students 12 years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

Short Term Independent Study Program (STIS):

The parent/guardian may enroll the student into the short-term independent study program for an expected absence longer than two (2) school days. Participation in this program requires the following:

- Parent/guardian must obtain the approval of the Superintendent/Principal or designee.
- Students will be allowed a maximum of fifteen (15) school days (or 3 weeks), unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent/Principal as a result of extenuating circumstances.
- Student and parent/guardian must complete and sign an Independent Study Contract.
- Student must meet with the teacher to review work.
- Student must complete and return all assignments on the first day back at school to receive credit for short-term independent study.

Reports

The Superintendent/Principal or designee shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as students who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.

Pupils with Temporary Disabilities – Program Option

If a student requires home hospital instruction (“HHI”), this is provided through the District of residence.

Permits to Leave

All students must have a Permit to Leave before leaving campus (with the exception of lunch- preapproved juniors and seniors only). All Permits to Leave must be obtained from the Attendance Office. Failure to obtain a Permit to Leave will result in the absence being considered as a truancy.

Leaving Campus During Lunch Period

It is a privilege for juniors and seniors to leave campus. Students who meet the requirements of this privilege will be permitted to leave campus during the high school lunch period. Lunch passes may be revoked at any time the requirements listed below are not met. The Open/Closed Campus policy applies.

Homework Support During Absences

If a student is going to be absent for three days or more due to illness, the parent should contact the attendance office at (530) 245-2792 and make arrangements for make-up work. Students are also encouraged to contact their teachers via email for homework.

Absences Excused for Justifiable Reasons

A student shall be excused from school for justifiable reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, observance of a holiday or ceremony of their religion, attendance at religious retreats, or an employment conference, when the pupil's absence has been requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or designated representative. Students absent under this provision must get pre-approval for short term independent study (STIS). (Ed. Code, Sections 48205 & 46014)

Leaving Campus During Unscheduled Class Periods

In order to experience a college style schedule, juniors and seniors will be given the privilege of leaving campus during open periods (timeframes when they don't have classes scheduled). The following rules apply to students leaving campus:

- Students must have a valid Off-Campus Privileges form on file in the office. This form must be signed by a student's legal parent or guardian and approved by school administration
- A student may not be off campus during the lunch period unless he/she meets the requirements.
- Students who remain on campus during unscheduled class periods, or arrive on campus during unscheduled class periods must be in an assigned Study Hall, Room 299, or comply with other arrangements made with administration.
- Students leaving campus during the U-Prep day are required to sign in and out at the office. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in loss of privileges.
- Students who are tardy to class upon returning to campus may lose the privilege to leave campus during unscheduled class periods. Parents will be notified if privileges are revoked and study hall will be assigned.
- Students may not drive other students until they have met the California DMV one-year agreement and have written permission from their parent or legal guardian (Off-Campus Privileges form).
- Students may not ride with another student unless that student has a valid Off-Campus Privileges form on file in the office which specifically allows him or her to ride with another student.
- U-Prep will not monitor, nor take responsibility for transportation methods used by students leaving campus during unscheduled class period and/or returning to campus to attend scheduled classes.

Remaining on campus, except in a classroom under the supervision of teacher, or in a car is not an option. Students who violate these rules or drive unsafely on campus will lose their off-campus privileges for the remainder of the year.