



# Evergreen Community Charter School

Section: 200 Pupils

Title: Attendance

Revised: November, 2018

## Purpose

The Board of Education requires that school-aged students enrolled at Evergreen Community Charter School attend school regularly, in accordance with the laws of the state. The educational program offered by Evergreen is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

## Philosophy

To be successful in today's society, a person needs to be educated. Attendance at school is a prerequisite to a successful education. Class attendance has a stronger impact on the student's academic progress than any other factor. Therefore, Evergreen encourages all students to remain in school until graduation and urges students and parents/guardians to dedicate themselves to ensuring that students attend school.

## Authority

The School Code requires student attendance from the time the child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school, which shall not be later than eight (8) years of age, until age seventeen (17). Evergreen accepts the responsibility for enforcing the School Code and encouraging student attendance.

## Definitions

**Absence** - Nonattendance of a pupil on days and half days when school is in session. Students attending less than one-half (1/2) of the school day will be considered absent for the full day.

**Compulsory School Age** - The period of a child's life from the time the child enters school, which may be no later than at the age of eight (8) years, until the age of seventeen (17) years or graduation from a high school, whichever occurs first.

**Tuancy** - The failure of a child of compulsory school age to attend school as required by law, excluding excused absences.

**Chronic Absenteeism** – Absence of a pupil for more than ten (10) percent of school days across the academic year (18 days). Chronically absent students include students who are absent regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused.

## Guidelines

### Excused Absences

The following are considered reasonable cause for excusal from school attendance:

1. Religious holidays observed by bona fide religious groups when requested in writing by the parents/guardians stating the name and date of the holiday; request made at least 2 weeks in advance. No more than five (5) such absences will be granted per year.
2. Religious instruction for a maximum of thirty-six (36) hours per year when requested in writing by the parents/guardians.
3. Medical, dental, or other health care appointments when requested in writing by the parents/guardians and/or verified by the practitioner. For this section such excuse shall be granted when:
  - a. The health or therapeutic services are to be rendered by licensed practitioners.
  - b. It is not practical or possible for the student to receive the services outside of school hours.
  - c. The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with the student's regular program of studies.
4. Illness or recovery from an accident.
5. Quarantine of the student.
6. Death in the family, limited to five (5) days per occurrence. Exceptions may be granted by the Director.
7. Required court appearance.
8. Unavoidable family emergencies including such conditions as hazardous roads. Excuses for unavoidable family emergencies will be reviewed by the Director or designee who will make the decision whether the emergency is unavoidable.
9. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the student.
10. Excused pursuant to a farm or domestic service emergency permit issued by PA.
11. Out-of-school suspension.

### EXCUSES –

Students are to turn in written excuses for all absences within three (3) days of their return to school. The Director and attendance personnel will review the excuse to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. All unexcused absences will be recorded as unlawful for students under seventeen (17) years of age. If an excuse is not turned in within three (3) days return to school or after ten (10) consecutive days of absence, the absence will be declared unexcused and, when appropriate, unlawful.

When a student has accrued eighteen (18) or more days of absences the student shall be required to submit a physician's note for each subsequent medical/health-related absence.

Make-Up Work – Students who are absent are responsible, upon returning to school, to see each of their teachers and make arrangements to make up missed work. Students are to complete all makeup work within the number of days commensurate with the number of days absent. Teachers may extend the limit to makeup work for extenuating circumstances.

Students who are temporarily unable to attend any part of the school day due to a medical or psychiatric condition may qualify for a temporary medical excusal.

Evergreen may excuse the following students from the requirements of attendance for other than temporary reasons:

1. Students enrolled in nonpublic or private schools in which the subjects and activities prescribed by law are taught, except that such students and students attending college who are also enrolled part-time in the school shall be counted as being in attendance.
2. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age whose enrollment in private trade or business school has been approved.
3. Students fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) years of age who have completed sixth grade, who are engaged in farm work or private domestic service under duly issued permits.
4. Students sixteen (16) years of age regularly employed during the school session and holding a lawfully-issued employment certificate.
5. Students receiving private instruction from a properly qualified tutor and who meet the requirements for such under the Pennsylvania School Code.
6. Children who have been deemed by the Secretary of Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to be unable to attend school, based upon the recommendation of a psychologist or a psychiatrist.
7. Students enrolled in special schools conducted by an Intermediate Unit or the Department of Education.

Student absences due to employment are subject to the rules governing such absence as prescribed by the Child Labor Laws and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In order for an eligible student to be released from attending school for reasons of full-time employments, he or she must show proof of having acquired a job and has continuous employment of not less than thirty-five (35) hours per week.

#### Unexcused Absences

Absences for temporary periods which may be declared unexcused and potentially unlawful include but are not limited to the following:

1. Oversleeping.
2. Missing the bus.
3. Routine babysitting and personal child care.
4. Failing to turn in an excuse within three (3) days or ten (10) consecutive days of absence.
5. Skipping a class or classes.
6. Leaving the school grounds after arriving.
7. Refusing to come to school.
8. Working at a part-time job.
9. Missing school in excess of eighteen (18) days without a doctor's excuse for each subsequent absence.
10. Taking an educational trip without following the educational trip guidelines.
11. Being absent for reasons other than those listed above under Excused Absences.

### Educational Trips

Evergreen recognizes that students may have the opportunity to participate in a trip or educational experience outside of school during the regular day. Students may be excused from school attendance to participate in non-school sponsored educational trips.

To be eligible under this section, the student's parent/guardian must obtain Evergreen's trip form provided by the office at least ten (10) days prior to the trip. Failure to initiate the trip form ten (10) days in advance may result in denial of the trip by the administration.

The trip form must be completed by each teacher and signed by teachers, parent(s), and student. The completed form must be returned to the office two (2) days prior to the trip for copies to be made.

The student is expected to follow the assignments outlined by his/her teachers to obtain and complete work missed. Work is to be presented to the appropriate teacher within five (5) days of the student's return.

### College Visitations

Students will be allowed to complete college visitation while in the 11th and 12th grades, with the following expectations:

1. To be eligible under this section, the student's parent/guardian must make a written application at least ten (10) days prior to the visitation. It is recommended that approval for college visitation during the school year be obtained prior to finalizing travel plans (i.e. plane tickets, hotel reservations, etc.). Failure to submit the request prior to ten (10) days in advance may result in denial of the trip by administration.
2. The Director will review college visitation requests pertinent to the approval of subsequent student absences. Failure to get prior approval for college visitation will result in unexcused absences.
3. 11<sup>th</sup> grade students will be permitted a total of two (2) absences during the school year for college visitations. 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will be permitted a total of four (4) absences during the school year for college visitations. Parents/Guardians must provide verification by the college of such visitations to the Director. Students are responsible to make up all school work missed during such absences.

### Attendance at Postsecondary Schools

Students may attend postsecondary schools full time prior to graduation. Such attendance will be in lieu of regular school attendance as described in the Evergreen's early admissions policy. Such students will be dropped from the membership rolls.

### Part-Time Attendance For Potential Graduates

A senior who can complete graduation requirements by attending school part-time may be excused part-time from school attendance for the purpose of attending a postsecondary school or for being lawfully employed. The student's membership will be calculated by dividing the student's daily number of instructional minutes by the 330 minutes of required daily instruction. The purpose of this policy is to excuse students only when the times for postsecondary school attendance or lawful employment directly conflict with school attendance. The Director may approve or disapprove such requests.

### Excusal From Instruction For Religious Objections

Parents/Guardians may request that their child be excused from specific lessons or units of instruction such as sex education, AIDS education, evolution, or other topics for religious reasons. Students will be excused upon completion of the following:

1. A parental letter requesting student dismissal from instruction which explains the reason for the request.
2. A parental meeting with the teacher to review the unit to which s/he objected and to determine appropriate alternative assignments.
3. Completion of an agreement between the parent/guardian and teacher which specifies the requirements of the alternative unit.
4. The Director will be responsible for approving the excusal.

### Release of Students During School Hours

Teachers are not to release students from school without the prior approval of the Director. No student will be released from school to go with any adult other than the mother or father of the child without the Director first obtaining the following information:

1. Proper identification may be required.
2. The reason for requesting the release. (The Director may ascertain the validity of the excuse.)

### Student Excusal and Early Dismissals

Students may not leave the school before dismissal time unless the Business Manager has received a written parental/guardian request that they be allowed to do so or a parent/guardian and/or parent's/guardian's designee comes to the school to pick up the child at the requested time of release.

The request must include the student's name, date, time, reason for request, parental/guardian signature, and a telephone number at which the parent/guardian can be reached.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to return the student to school after a regular appointment and prior to regularly scheduled student dismissal. Established sign in/out procedures should be followed at this time.

NOTE: When parents are separated and a court order regarding custody exists, considerable caution should be taken in excusing students. Custody orders of the court must be on file in the school office. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to have the most current court order on file.

In order to participate in an after-school sponsored event, students must be in attendance at least one-half (1/2) of the school day unless approved by the Director.

### Chronic Absenteeism

The Director or designee shall report chronic absenteeism data to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), in accordance with procedures provided by PDE. Enrollment of fewer than sixty (60) days of school will exclude a student from the calculation.