



# BRIDGES

PREPARATORY ACADEMY

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## Attendance, Absence & Truancy

Bridges Preparatory Academy requires students to be continuously present so the student may receive instruction and actively participate in the educational process. In accordance with Ohio law, the School requires attendance of all students enrolled in the School during the days and hours the School is in session. To be considered in attendance, a student must be either within the School facilities or in place where School is in session by the School's authority.

In developing this policy, the School has consulted with the Judge of the Juvenile Court, parents, guardians, custodians, students, and all appropriate state and local agencies.

### Parental Responsibility & Procedure for Reporting Absences

A student's parents or guardians are primarily responsible for a student's attendance at school. Should a student be absent, the student's parent or guardian is required to notify the School on the day the student is absent unless previous notification has been given in accordance with the School procedure regarding excused absence.

In case a student is absent, the procedure for reporting absences should be as follows:

The parent must call the School within the first hour that the School is in session to report the student's absence.

If a parent fails to call the School, school personnel will make a good faith attempt to contact within 120 minutes of the start of the school day, the parent/guardian of a student who is absent from school without legitimate excuse.

A good faith attempt shall include, but not be limited to, contacting the parent by:

- (1) An actual or automated telephone call;
- (2) A notification sent through the school's automated student information system;
- (3) A text message;
- (4) An email;
- (5) An actual visit to the student's residence; or
- (6) Any other method adopted by resolution of the School's governing authority.

If the parent/guardian responds to any of those attempts but is unable to participate, the Director of Operations or Designee shall inform the parent of the parent's right to appear by the designee.

BrightArrow Notification System will verify that each call is placed, and whether the call was answered by the intended recipient or the system leaves a voicemail containing notice of the student's absence.

To facilitate policy, parents or guardians must provide the School with their current home, work, and/or cellular telephone numbers; home address; and emergency telephone numbers.

### Absences

*Excused Absences.* The Governing Authority recognizes the following absences as excused:

- the student's physical or mental illness;
- instruction at home from a person qualified to teach the student due to a child's disability;
- illness in the family necessitating the student's presence;
- serious illness or death in the family;
- observing religious holidays and consistent with the student's truly held beliefs;
- medical or dental appointment;
- college visitation;
- quarantine;
- required court appearance;
- emergency or other circumstances the School determines reasonable.

If the student is absent or will be absent for one of the above reasons, the student must provide a written note upon returning/prior to leaving the School or the absence will be considered unexcused. The statement must be from a parent or guardian and explain the cause for absence. At his or her sole discretion, the Director of Operations or his/her designee may investigate each individual absence. A student, whose extended absence is due to a medically-documented physical or mental impairment, will not be disciplined. As provided by law, such students may be entitled to receive an education tailored to their individual needs or abilities.

*Limited Excuse Absence.* Students absent solely to participate in an out-of-state School-approved activity shall constitute a limited excused absence. Limited excuse absences are to be treated as an excused absence provided: (1) the absences are limited to a maximum of twenty-four hours per school year, (2) the student must complete any missed classroom assignments, (3) and if the activity will cause the student to be absent for four or more consecutive school days, teachers must work in collaboration with the student's family for instructional assistance.

*Unexcused Absence.* A student's absence is unexcused if it is not an excused or limited excused absence. A student who is repeatedly has unexcused absences will be subject to disciplinary action.

*Tardiness.* A student is tardy when a student is more than five minutes late for school or is late for the start of class. If a student misses more than half a class, the student shall be considered absent for the class. A student who is repeatedly tardy will be subject to disciplinary action.

## Truancy

No student of compulsory school age shall be habitually truant.

*Habitual Truancy* – a student is absent without a legitimate excuse for any of the following:

- thirty (30) or more consecutive school hours, or
- forty-two (42) or more school hours in one (1) month, or
- seventy-two (72) or more school hours in one (1) year.

## Notification and Absence Intervention Team

The School's Attendance Officer will notify a child's parent, guardian or custodian if the child has "excessive absences" which shall be defined as *nonmedical* excused absences and unexcused absences with or without legitimate excuse for 38+ hours in one school month or 65+ hours in a school year. This notice shall be made in writing within 7 days after the date of the absence that triggered the notice. A "medical excused absence" shall include:

- (1) personal illness;
- (2) illness in the family necessitating the student's presence;
- (3) quarantine of the home;
- (4) death in the family;
- (5) appointment with a health care provider (doctor, dentist, orthodontist, mental health provider, etc.); or
- (6) on a case-by-case basis, any other set of circumstances the School deems to be a good and sufficient cause for medical absence from school.

A medical excuse for personal illness or health care provider appointment will be accepted in the form of doctor/provider's note within five school days of the absence, or documented parent call-in on the day of the absence due to illness. A student may have up to ten (**10**) medically excused absences without a doctor's note, but with a phone call from a parent/guardian.

If the student continues to be truant after the notification and surpasses the threshold for habitual truancy, the School will assign the student to an absence intervention team within 10 days after the absences surpass those for habitual truancy. This team will develop an intervention plan for the student to reduce or eliminate further absences within 14 school days after the student is assigned to the team. Absence intervention plans incorporate academic and non-academic supports to help the student and remove barriers to regular attendance. Intervention plans may also include counseling for those students classified as a habitual truant.

The team must make at least three (3) meaningful good faith attempts to secure participation in this process and any recommended truancy prevention mediation programs from the student's parent, guardian or custodian.

A good faith attempt shall include, but not be limited to, contacting the parent by:

- (1) An actual or automated telephone call;
- (2) A notification sent through the school's automated student information system, BrightArrow;

- (3) A text message sent through the school's automated student information system, BrightArrow;
- (4) An email;
- (5) Any other method adopted by resolution of the School's governing authority.

The parent is permitted to participate through a designee. If the parent fails to respond or participate, then the School is required to investigate as to whether the failure to respond trigger mandatory reporting to JFS and the team must develop the plan without parent participation.

The School has the discretion to extend the intervention plan or process over the summer months.

#### Disciplinary Consequences for Truancy

On the 61<sup>st</sup> day after implementing the absence intervention plan, the Attendance Officer must file a complaint in the juvenile court if all of the following apply:

1. The student is absent without excuse for 30+ consecutive hours, 42+ hours in a school month or 72+ hours in a school year;
2. The School has made meaningful attempts to reengage through the absence intervention plan and any offered alternatives to adjudication;
3. The student has refused to participate in or failed to make satisfactory progress on the plan, as determined by the absence intervention team, or any offered alternative adjudication.

A complaint regarding a habitual truant where the parent, guardian, or custodian fails to get the child to attend school must be file jointly against the student and the parent, guardian, or custodian. If the student is absent without excuse for 30+ consecutive hours or 42+ in a school month but the absence intervention team has determined that the student has made substantial progress on the absence intervention plan, the Attendance Officer is not required to file a complaint.

Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, the School shall not suspend, expel, or remove a student from school solely on the basis of the student's absences from school without legitimate excuse.

A student who is habitually truant will be excused for the absences if it is determined that: (1) the student was enrolled in another school, or (2) the student's absence was excused by law

#### Attendance Officer Responsibilities

The Attendance Officer responsibilities shall be held by the Director of Operations or his/her designee. The School's Attendance Officer shall investigate all nonattendance, shall be vested with police powers, may serve warrants, and may enter workshops; factories; stores; and all other places where children are employed and do whatever is necessary in the way of investigation or otherwise to enforce the laws relating to compulsory education and the employment of minors. The Attendance Officer may also take into custody any youth of compulsory school age not legally employed on an age and schooling certificate who is not attending school and shall conduct such youth to the school he has been attending or should rightfully attend.

### Withdrawal

By law, a student will be withdrawn automatically if the student fails to participate in seventy-two (72) consecutive hours of learning opportunities and the absence is not excused pursuant to O.R.C. 3314.03(A)(6)(b). Upon a student's withdrawal pursuant to this provision, the School shall automatically notify the student's school district of residence pursuant to any applicable Ohio laws, rules and regulations.

A student may be voluntarily withdrawn if a parent submits a written Voluntary Withdrawal notice to the Director of Operations or Director of Academics.

### Reporting Requirements

The School must report to the Ohio Department of Education any of the following occurrences:

1. When student is absent 38+ hours in a school month or 65+ hours in a school year and the School sends notice to the parent, guardian or custodian;
2. When the child has been absent without legitimate excuse the number of hours to classify as a habitual truant;
3. When the child is adjudicated an unruly child for being habitual truant violates the court order regarding that adjudication; and
4. When an absence intervention plan has been implemented for a child.

*Ohio:* R.C. 2152.02, R.C. 2152.011, R.C. 3313.668, R.C. 3313.672, R.C. 3326.22, R.C.3321, et seq., R.C. 3331.01; O.A.C. 3301-69-02.

*Cross Reference:* Policy 3820, Resolving Issues with Attendance; Policy 4203, Emergency School Closings & Calamity Days; Policy 3540, Promotion and Retention of Students