

# 406: Attendance and Truancy

## 1. Purpose & Philosophy:

St. George Academy believes that student learning and achievement is directly related to attendance. St. George Academy strives to make every effort to be in compliance with state law as well as work proactively together with parents, community resources; including the Fifth District Court to encourage the regular attendance of SGA students. SGA believes this to be in the best interest of the students and the community. St. George Academy is committed to work in harmony with parents/guardian and to assist them with their responsibility to have their children in attendance at school.

## 2. Policy:

2.1. The "State Compulsory Education Requirements" ([Utah Code, Section 53A-11-101](#)) directs parents and schools as follows:

2.1.1. A person having control of a minor who has reached the age of six years, but has not reached the age of eighteen years, shall send the minor to a public or regularly established private school during the school year of the district in which the minor resides.

2.1.2. It is a class B misdemeanor for a person having control of a minor under subsection (1) to intentionally or recklessly fail to comply with the requirements of chapters 53A-11.

2.1.3. A local education agency shall report cases of willful noncompliance to the appropriate city, county, or district attorney.

## 2.2. [Utah Code 53A-15-1501](#)

Parental Rights in Education grants that the parent or guardian has the right to reasonable academic accommodations. recognizes that the parent or guardian is the primary person responsible for the education of their student, and the school is in a secondary and supportive role to the parent or guardian. This includes the parent's right to excuse the parent's child from school.

2.2.1. Students are responsible for the completion of any work missed due to absence, regardless of the reason for the absence (excused, unexcused, truant).

## 2.3. As per [Utah Code Section 53A-11-103](#):

It is the duty of a school to attempt to resolve attendance problems by:

2.3.1 Expecting teachers to acknowledge and reward appropriate behavior in the area of attendance, and

2.3.2 Working closely with parents in providing meaningful and consistent academic programming for their child.

2.3.3 Documenting an earnest and persistent effort on the part of the school to provide a meaningful education program, including the following steps, as reasonably feasible.

- 1) Counseling of the minor by school authorities.
- 2) Making any necessary adjustment(s) to the curriculum and schedule to meet special needs of the minor.
- 3) Implementing other appropriate interventions and considering alternatives proposed by the parent.
- 4) Upon parent request, providing the parent with a list of resources to assist the parent in resolving the minor's attendance issues.
- 5) Monitoring the school attendance.
- 6) Enlisting the assistance of community and law enforcement agencies as appropriate and reasonable feasible (e.g.: Voluntary participation in Attendance Mediation, St. George Police Department Student Resource Officers, Division of Child and Family Services, Child Protective Services).
- 7) Issuing a notice of compulsory education violation, by personal service or certified mail, to a parent of a school-age child if the school-age child is absent without a valid excuse, consistent with state law and school policy.
- 8) The notice of compulsory education violation shall contain requirements of Section 53A-11-101.5 including:
  - a. Stating that refusal to respond to the notice and subsequent follow-up is a class B misdemeanor; requesting parental involvement and support; and directing the parent of the school-age child to:
    - b. Meet with school administration to discuss the school-age student's school attendance issues; and secure regular attendance by preventing the child from being absent without valid excuse during the remainder of the year.
- 9) SGA Administration shall review the school's documentation and if it is determined that reasonable efforts have been tried and failed, the school may proceed in referring/reporting the student/parent to the Office of the Washington County Attorney and/or Juvenile Court.

### **3. Definitions and Explanations:**

#### **3.1. Tardy:**

A tardy is defined as reporting to class after the scheduled start time.

3.1.1. Tardy rationale. Tardiness not only hinders a student's ability to profit from instruction at the beginning of class, but it interrupts the work of the other students who made the effort to be

on time. Research is abundantly clear that punctual students perform better in school and at work.

3.1.2. All tardies will be recorded in the utilized Student Information System (e.g. ASPIRE).

3.1.3. Tardies will be monitored by SGA faculty. If a student reaches 5 tardies in one class SGA administration will begin a Level 1 intervention process as defined by SGA policy 402: Academic Performance, Attendance, and Behavioral Intervention Policy.

### 3.2. Absences:

An absence is defined as any time a student is not in attendance in the classroom to which he or she has been assigned. In order for an absence to be considered an excused absence, the school must be notified by the parent in a timely manner, consistent with state law and this policy.

3.2.1 A parent will be notified by phone every time the parent's student is absent without excuse. A parent is responsible to provide the school with a current phone number. Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's attendance from this notification on and are invited to call Administration at the school as often as necessary to improve the student's attendance.

3.2.2. Excused absence. A parent has the right to excuse a student from attendance for a scheduled family event or scheduled proactive visit to a health care provider without requiring a note from the provider. In addition, a valid excuse means illness (including chronic or medical need), family emergency, and other events a parent deems essential for the student's care and well-being.

3.2.2.1. Excused absence status will not be considered when calculating excessive absenteeism unless it affects the student's academic performance. If absenteeism becomes so excessive that it impacts the student's ability to progress educationally and/or is affecting the student's academic performance, the absences may be considered, and the school may provide opportunities for students to make up lost time and assignments, such as: lunchtime or after school make-up.

3.2.2.2. Illness or accident: A student who is absent for health-related reasons for a period of five (5) or more consecutive days, who is undergoing surgery, or who has been injured in an accident, qualifies for immediate homebound services. School work will be collected for the parent to pick up or an alternative educational program may be developed.

3.2.2.3. Chronic illness. Chronic health problems may or may not interfere with attendance at school and learning in the classroom. It is extremely important that parents notify the school concerning health-related problems that their students may have. If the chronic illness hinders a student's attendance, the parent is invited to meet with a school administrator to formulate an individual attendance plan that will meet the student's needs.

3.2.3. An unexcused absence is any absence that is not excused consistent with the definitions and provisions of this policy. A parent, teacher, or a school administrator may request a confer-

ence to discuss the attendance of a student whom they deem to have an excessive number of absences as per SGA policy 402: Academic Performance, Attendance, and Behavioral Intervention Policy.

3.2.4. Chronic absenteeism is defined in SGA policy 402: Academic Performance, Attendance, and Behavioral Intervention Policy and will initiate Level 3 intervention protocols.

#### **4. Definitions & Procedures**

4.1. Truancy. A school-age minor who is enrolled in a public school shall attend the public school in which the school-age minor is enrolled. When a student is absent from the assigned class, without parental or school knowledge and this absence does not meet the standard of an excused or exempt absence, that student is considered truant. Administration must meet with parents and the student to make reasonable efforts to resolve the attendance problems as outlined in SGA policy 402: Academic Performance, Attendance, and Behavioral Intervention Policy.

4.2. The parent or guardian of a truant student has the right to appeal a notice of truancy but must do so within ten (10) days of notice being issued.

4.3. A student who is issued a truancy notice maybe referred to juvenile court and is subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.