

**Odyssey Charter School**  
**Attendance Policy: Promoting Positive Engagement**  
**Board Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ 01/11/2024 \_\_\_\_\_**

At Odyssey Charter School, we believe that regular and on-time attendance is crucial for a student's academic success and overall development. Our attendance policy is designed to create a positive and engaging environment that encourages students to be present and actively participate in their education. We strive to make our policy easy to understand, endorse, and implement, fostering a collaborative partnership between the school, parents, and students.

1. Attendance Expectations:
  - a. Students are expected to attend school every day unless they are genuinely ill or have an excused absence approved by the school administration.
  - b. Students are expected to be at their desks ready to learn at 8:30 am. Meaningful instruction begins at 8:30 am. It is unfair to distract a teacher's attention away from most students who are at school, on time, and ready to learn by requiring the teacher to re-teach or re-administer activities for students who arrive late.
  - c. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments and family trips outside of regular school hours whenever possible.
2. Positive Reinforcement:
  - a. We acknowledge and celebrate excellent attendance through various incentives, such as certificates, awards, and recognition in school assemblies or newsletters.
  - b. Students with exemplary attendance will be eligible for special privileges, events, certificates, and/or participation in exclusive school programs.
3. Creating a Welcoming Environment:
  - a. We strive to create a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where students feel excited to come to school each day.
  - b. Our dedicated teachers provide stimulating lessons, hands-on activities, and meaningful interactions to enhance student engagement and motivation.
4. Communication and Collaboration:
  - a. Stakeholders will be made aware of the attendance policy during registration. (The policy is located in the Student-Parent Handbook.)
  - b. We maintain open lines of communication between teachers, parents, and students to address any attendance concerns promptly.
  - c. Parents are encouraged to inform the school about their child's absence or late arrival through a convenient and easily accessible reporting system.
5. Early Intervention and Support:
  - a. We identify students who may be at risk of chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of school) and provide additional support and evidence-informed interventions as we are able to address any underlying issues.

- b. Our school counselors and support staff work closely with students and their families to overcome barriers to regular attendance and ensure their well-being.
- 6. Education and Awareness:
  - a. We educate parents and students about the importance of regular attendance through newsletters and parent-teacher meetings.
  - b. An attendance review and implementation team will be created to quarterly review attendance data and adjust practices as needed.
- 7. Individualized Approach:
  - a. We recognize that each student's circumstances are unique, and we take a compassionate and individualized approach when addressing attendance issues.
  - b. We work with families to develop personalized attendance plans that consider the specific needs and challenges of the student, aiming for continuous improvement.

By implementing this positive and student-centered attendance policy, we aim to foster a supportive school community where students are motivated to attend regularly, actively participate, and achieve their full potential. Together, we can create a strong foundation for their future success.

Per the Utah State Board of Education rule, Odyssey's attendance policy must include the following regarding Compulsory Education Procedures at Odyssey Charter School.

1. Should a student approach the designation of being chronically absent the parents will be notified and asked to meet with a member of the administration. A plan with evidence-informed and developmentally appropriate interventions may be created to increase student attendance and/or on-time arrival.
2. Attendance Policy Definitions
  - a. "valid excuse"
    - i. an illness, which may be either mental or physical, regardless of documentation
    - ii. mental or behavioral health of the school-age child
    - iii. a family death
    - iv. an approved school activity
    - v. an absence permitted by a school-age child's IEP or 504 Plan
    - vi. does not mean a parent's acknowledgement of an absence for a reason other than a reason described in subsections (i) through (v)
    - vii. Please note, a vacation is not a valid excuse.
  - b. "any other excuse"
    - i. valid excuse established by our local governing board not already included in rule (The OCS Governing Board agrees with the valid excuse list in 2a and does not feel an additional valid excuse is warranted.)
  - c. "chronic absenteeism"
    - i. means a student misses 10% or more of days enrolled, for any reason, and makes a school aware that a beginning of tired supports may be needed