

305 - Attendance Policy

Approved by GWA Board of Directors on May 23, 2012,

Amended November 29, 2012, Amended August 28th, 2014, Amended 7-1-2017

Consistent attendance is the first necessary requirement for academic achievement and personal development. This is especially true in the academically rigorous environment of George Washington Academy. Frequent absences from the day-to-day classroom experience disrupt the instructional process. The benefits of instruction, once lost, cannot be entirely regained. The entire process of education requires continuity of instruction, class participation, learning experience, and study.

GWA highly encourages families to make it their goal to have 100% attendance. The intent of GWA's Attendance Policy is to insure that parents know how important it is for them to plan well in advance so that trips, vacations and other activities occur during those days when school is not in session. While we recognize and support the need for families to have time to play together and know that synchronizing parent work demands and requirements of the school schedule usually requires conscientious planning-ahead, the summer, winter and spring breaks, along with multiple long weekends should provide adequate time for coordination. George Washington Academy's expectation is that parents will plan family trips during days when school is not in session.

GWA is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the Utah Compulsory Education Requirements for the students who are enrolled in the school and GWA also has the responsibility of ensuring that the school meets the attendance component of Annual Yearly Progress, which is 93% school-wide average attendance.

As directed by Utah Administrative Rule R277-607-3:

The Attendance Procedures of GWA are developed with the intention of encouraging regular and punctual attendance and are consistent with Rule R277-607-3, and Utah Code 53A-11-101 through 53A-11-105.

The Board of Directors shall annually review attendance data and consider revisions to the Attendance Policy and Procedures to encourage student attendance.

The Attendance Policy and Procedures shall be included in the Parent/Student Handbook and the Parent/Student Handbook will be posted on the GWA website.

The Executive Director or his/her designee shall establish programs and incentives which promote regular, punctual student attendance.

The Attendance Procedures shall include provisions for:

- a) Notifying parents of the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
- b) Notifying parents as discipline or consequences progress.

- c) An opportunity to appeals disciplinary measures.
- d) school-age minors age 12 years or older or their parents to contest Notices of Truancy.

Utah Administrative Rule *R277-607-5* directs parents and guardians of school-age minors to cooperate with their Charter School Board to secure regular attendance at school

The definitions of terms used in GWA's Attendance Policy and Procedures are consistent with the definitions found in the Utah Administrative Rule *R277-607-1* and Utah Code *53A-II-101*.

Attendance Procedure

The Executive Director or his or her designee will establish programs and incentives which promote regular, punctual student attendance.

When a student is absent, the parent or guardian needs to notify the school office before 8: 15 AM on any day the child is absent. The parent is expected to inform the Attendance Secretary of the reason for the student's absence. If a parent does not call, GWA should attempt to contact the parent to notify the parent that the child is absent. If a parent does not communicate with the Attendance Secretary, the absence will be unexcused.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

In accordance with Utah Code *53A-II-101*, GWA has approved the following reasons for EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Illness (For illnesses lasting more than four days, a physician's note is required.)

Family Death or Emergency (parents need to notify both the teacher and the office as soon as the parents know an absence will be necessary.)

Medical and Dental Appointments (It is highly encouraged to schedule appointments outside of school hours.)

School Sponsored Activity

Absences Permitted by a Student's IEP

A scheduled family event or a scheduled proactive visit to a health care provider if:

- (a) the parent or guardian submits a written statement at least one school day before the scheduled absence; and
- (b) the student agrees to make up course work for school days missed for the scheduled absence in accordance with LEA policy.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: Any absence that cannot be defined as an excused absence.

In accordance with Utah Administrative Code R277-419, GWA students who are absent for more than 10 consecutive days will be removed from the school rolls as per Utah State Law. They may reapply for enrollment upon return, but must go to the end of the waitlist for their grade level. The only exception to this policy is if the absence was the result of a medically verifiable reason and the school was notified prior to the end of the 10 day period. In case of a medically verifiable incident, continuing contact with the school must be maintained.

EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

Utah Code 53A-II-1013 dictates that Educational Leave or other preapproved extended absence shall be granted IF it is determined that the absence will not adversely impact tile school-age minor's education. Examples of Educational Leave are: trips to museums, international travel, service missions, and visits to historical sites. George Washington Academy will allow Educational Leave for a maximum of 5 days per school year. Educational Leave will not be granted during the state required testing window.

The following procedures must be followed in order to take Educational Leave:

1. Parents must fill out a Request for Educational Leave form (305A) and submit it to the child's teacher regarding their planned trip a minimum of two weeks before the proposed trip. The form may be found on the school website in the Parent/Student Handbook section or in the front office.
2. A recommendation from the student's teacher will then be made to the Executive Director within three days on whether the proposed trip fits within the school's guidelines for Educational Leave. (The child's ability to maintain academic and social progress while missing the proposed school time and the unique nature of the situation will be considered.)
3. Parent(s) must then meet with the Executive Director, who will make the final determination of whether the absence can be excused through Educational Leave. A copy of the determination will be given to tile teacher and the parent.
4. When an absence is excused through the process outlined above, an arrangement will be made for the child's teacher to collect make-up work for the child and/or an alternative assignment(s) will be arranged. Upon the child's return the child will be given the make-up work and reasonable date will be set for completion and evaluation of the work.

Parents should be aware that the pace of a classroom day is somewhat unpredictable, due to individual needs, enrichment that may grow out of planned lessons, etc. If presentation of new concepts has been missed, parents may need to seek tutorial support and/or make adjustments to the family schedule to allow for catch-up time. Educational Leave may not exceed 5 school days per year.

*Form 305A to Request Educational Leave may be found and downloaded on the GWA website directly below the link for this policy.

MAKE-UP WORK DUE TO ABSENCES: In general, school work resulting from absences may be collected from the teacher AFTER the child returns to school (the teacher will gather the school work as assignments are given). At their discretion, teachers may provide routine assignments for students before they leave if convenient, however assignments requiring a lot of prep or explanation must wait until the student returns. Students are responsible for requesting and collecting missed work from their teacher. See GWA's Late Work Policy for deadlines.

MONITORING ABSENCES

- When a student has accumulated 5 absences (either excused or unexcused) the parents will be notified to make sure they understand the policy.
- Students who accumulate more than 10e absences absences (either excused or unexcused) will be monitored by the GWA Attendance Secretary and reported to the Executive Director or his or her designee to determine if intervention is appropriate.
- When a student has accumulated 15 or more absences absences (either excused or unexcused)the parent may receive:

1) A request to report to the Executive Director in person or to the Attendance Secretary by email to provide an explanation for the unexcused absences

Or

2) A Notice of Compulsory Education Violation

and/or

3) A student who is 12 years old or older may be given a Notice of Truancy indicating that they have accumulated 5 or more truancies (unexcused absences). The Notice of Truancy will be mailed to the Student's parent. It will direct the student and his parent to meet with the Executive Director or his or her designee and to cooperate with the school board to secure regular attendance by the student. Notices of Truancy may be contested by the student or by his or her parents by contacting the Executive Director or his or her designee.

- The Notice of Compulsory Education Violation will include the required language outlined in Utah Code 53A-II-101.5. A Notice of Compulsory Education Violation will be mailed to the parent by certified mail. A parent who receives a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation will be directed to meet with the Executive Director or his or her designee to discuss the student's attendance problems.
- Students who continue to accumulate unexcused absences will be monitored to determine if the parent is intentionally and recklessly failing to cooperate with the Executive Director or his or her designee to secure regular attendance by the student The School Board and the Executive Director or his or her designee shall initiate efforts, as reasonably as possible, to resolve attendance problems in accordance with Utah Code S3A-II 103.

- After a parent has been served with a Notice of Compulsory Education Violation, if the student accumulates 5 or more additional unexcused absences during the remainder of the school year and it is determined that the parent is intentionally or recklessly failing to comply with the Compulsory Education Law, then the parent's violation will be reported to the County Attorney for referral to Juvenile Court.
- If a student accumulates 20 absences (unexcused or excused) in one school year, they will need to reapply for admission for the following year with preference given to applicants who are already on the wait-list.

LATE ARRIVALS- It is important that students arrive on-time for school. Having a few extra minutes prior to the late bell helps them unwind, relax, and prepare for the day. Late arrival, on the other hand, is disruptive to the class and the teacher, and puts the late arriving student at a disadvantage.

The morning Drop-Off Period for students is 7:50 AM to 8:10 AM.

The Late Bell rings at 8:15 AM. Anyone arriving at their classroom after 8:15 AM may be marked tardy. A tardy is excused only for the following reasons: medical or dental appointments, traffic delays that affect several school families traveling the same route, or family emergencies. Office staff will make the final determination as to whether a tardy is excused or unexcused. Tardy students must check-in at the office for a tardy slip before reporting to class. If the student is more than five (5) minutes late, the parent needs to accompany the student to the office.

To encourage punctuality, the Attendance Secretary will use the following procedure: (unless the secretary is aware of extraordinary circumstances contributing to tardiness).

1. 6 Tardies - Parents will be notified by email.
2. 12 Tardies - Parents must submit a letter or email to the Attendance Secretary specifying a reason for the tardies, including a plan for the student to arrive at school on time.
3. 18 Tardies - Parents will meet with the Executive Director, or his or her designee, to explain reasons for tardies and discuss a solution. If parents do not respond to school attempts to meet, disciplinary action may be taken (student may be suspended until such time as parents come in to discuss the situation).
4. 20 Tardies- Student will be forfeit priority enrollment at GWA as a returning student and be waitlisted. Parents will need to reapply for admission for the following year with preference given to applicants who are already on the wait-list.

The Executive Director may also authorize the GWA teachers to establish consequences for being tardy to their classrooms and to implement incentives for being on-time.

EARLY PICK-UPS- While it is understood that there may be rare occasions when a student must be excused early for a doctor appointment or another important reason, picking up students early to avoid the carpool line is unacceptable. A pattern of early checkouts will be reported to administration with the understanding that interrupting the classroom to pull out students at the end of the day is disruptive to student learning and distracting to the teachers.

LATE PICK-UPS – Students must be picked up from GWA no later than 3:15PM. GWA does not have the ability to supervise and care for students left here beyond that time. At 3:15PM, all students will be brought inside the building and parents who arrive after that time must come inside and check out their children through the front office. A pattern of repeated late pick-ups (more than three times in a school year) will not be tolerated and may result in students losing their priority enrollment.