

Truancy Policy

Independence Charter School recognizes that good attendance is an essential factor in academic and personal success, and supports a comprehensive approach to identify and address attendance concerns. Families are vital in ensuring their child(ren) maintains good attendance.

Attendance is required of all students during the days and hours that school is in session. Authorized ICS staff may excuse a student for temporary absences upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of reasons that may judiciously cause the student's absence. ICS will honor any exceptions to school attendance permitted by law under the Pennsylvania School Code.

Overview

A student is “**truant**” if he/she has three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year. An unexcused absence is any absence from school without an acceptable excuse (as articulated in the ICS Family Handbook), or without any reason at all.

For the third unexcused absence, ICS will send the parent/guardian notice by mail within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence that the child has been truant. This notice:

- Shall include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future;
- Be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation; and
- Requires families to attend a School Attendance Improvement Conference with the school guidance counselor.

When a student demonstrates truant behavior, ICS will schedule a school/family Attendance Improvement Conference to discuss the cause of the student's truancy and develop a mutually agreed upon Attendance Improvement Plan to resolve truant behavior. The plan can include a myriad of options for the elimination of truancy that are mutually agreed upon by the participants. **ICS is permitted to proceed with the Attendance Improvement Conference and Attendance Improvement Plan without the student's parent/guardian present at the Conference.**

A student is “**habitually truant**” if he/she has six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. For the sixth (6th) unexcused absence, ICS will refer the student to either:

- The District Attorney's *Project Go* program to enforce truancy, or
- The county children and youth agency (DHS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act.
 - Students who are habitually truant from school will not be referred to the county children and youth agency for assessment as possibly needing services until after ICS has made a formal effort to involve the family and child in resolving the cause of the truant behavior.

In all cases, where ICS refers a habitually truant child to The District Attorney's *Project Go* program to enforce truancy or DHS, ICS will provide verification that it convened and held an Attendance Improvement Conference. ICS **will not** impose discipline for truant behavior that excludes the child from the classroom, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, transfer or expulsion.

If the aforementioned steps are not successful in improving attendance, ICS may file a citation against the parent/guardian of a **habitually truant** child in court.

For students that have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504/Chapter 15 Plan—and are truant or habitually truant, ICS will bring together the IEP Team to discuss the truancy and how it impacts the student's educational program. The team will modify the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan to offer appropriate services and supports.

Students that are absent from school for ten (10) or more consecutive days without appropriate documentation will be removed from ICS's active membership rolls.

To the extent that anything in this policy could be construed to conflict with ICS's charter or applicable state and/or federal laws, the applicable state and/or federal law and/or charter control.