

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS
HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

New Mexico School for the Arts (the “School”), a statewide public high school, exists for the purpose of providing an excellent artistic and academic education to high school students with exceptional promise in the arts. This Student Attendance Policy is adopted in accordance with the state Compulsory Attendance Law to encourage students to receive an education from the School and to not drop out or otherwise withdraw prior to completing a high school diploma or enrolling in another accredited high school.

Daily attendance is essential to students of the School in order to learn mastery in the arts and to graduate with a diploma of excellence. Students of the School will be required to enroll in classes required for graduation in accordance with the public high school curriculum offered at the School. Students are responsible for ensuring daily attendance. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for supporting the students in meeting the daily attendance requirements.

1. DEFINITIONS.

1.1 “Excused Absence” means an absence with permission of the parent or guardian or in the event the student is a residential student, with permission of the Head of School. Examples of allowable excuses include a School service program or event which has been approved by the Head of School, temporary illness or injury, physical, mental or emotional disability or condition, religious commitment, and limited family emergencies or family deaths.

1.2 “Unexcused Absence” means an absence from School or classes for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to the Compulsory School Attendance Law or the policies and procedures of the School. Unexcused Absences from two or more classes up to fifty percent of an instructional day shall be counted as one-half day of Unexcused Absence and of more than fifty percent of an instructional day shall be counted as one full day of Unexcused Absence.

1.3 “Student in Need of Early Intervention” means a student who has accumulated five Unexcused Absences within a school year.

1.4 “Truant” means a student who has accumulated five or more Unexcused Absences in a single month.

1.5 “Habitual Truant” means a student who has accumulated ten or more unexcused Absences in a school year.

2. DAILY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Class attendance records by class period for every single instructional day for each student enrolled in the School shall be kept in a manner that is verifiable by the state Public Education Department. Excused Absences and Unexcused Absences will be reported to the Public Education Department in a form and at such times as the department determines. Appropriate documentation shall be kept of the intervention efforts made to keep the students in Need of Early Intervention and Habitual Truants in educational settings.

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3. ANNUAL DISSEMINATION OF POLICY.

This Student Attendance Policy will be distributed annually to all students, parents, teachers, administrators, and all other School employees in conjunction with the distribution of the student handbook and/or code of conduct.

4. GRADE REQUIREMENTS.

Students are admitted to the School based on promise, aptitude and passion in the arts. Students enrolled in the School should continually exhibit purpose and commitment in their artistic and academic work. In order to be eligible for continued enrollment in the School, students must show a continuing strong desire to pursue study in the arts. Students who show a documented lack of purpose and commitment may be administratively withdrawn for the School and will not be allowed to continue to enroll at the School.

For all art classes provided as part of the curriculum of the School, students will receive a grade from each teacher for attendance and for effort in class, in addition to the grade for the substantive work in class. Appropriate procedures will be developed and implemented for assisting students who do not maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

5. ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

The School will develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide for the early identification of students with Unexcused Absences and intervention strategies that focus on keeping students in need of early intervention in an educational setting. Out-of-school suspension and expulsion will not be used as the punishment for Unexcused Absences and Habitual Truancy.

Written notification of absences shall be given by mail or personal service to a student's parent and the residential supervisor in the case of a residential student of the following events of absence from School: (i) a student's absence from School if the School has received no indication that the student's parent is aware of the absence, (ii) an Unexcused Absence, (iii) Truancy and (iv) Habitual Truancy.

In the event that there is a Student in Need of Early Intervention, the School will give written notice to a student's parent with information concerning the student's Unexcused Absences and to discuss possible interventions. The notice will include a date, time and place for the parent to meet with the School to develop intervention strategies that focus on keeping the student in an educational setting.

The School will document the following for each Habitual Truant: (i) attempts of the School to notify the parent that the student had Unexcused Absences, (ii) attempts of the School to meet with the parent to discuss intervention strategies; and intervention strategies implemented to support keeping the student in school.

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Consequences for Unexcused Absences, Truants and Habitual Truants may include loss of academic credit and/or inability to participate in certain activities, disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion. Consequences will include efforts to assist such student with remaining in school, providing appropriate opportunities for make-up work, providing opportunities for the parent to participate in the effort to remain in school and identifying reasons for the absences and measures to overcome them. If efforts to improve attendance of a student are not successful, then School in accordance with legal requirements will report the Habitual Truant to the appropriate juvenile probation office.

Students may be administratively withdrawn for the School's rolls if the student has an Unexcused Absence for ten or more consecutive instructional days if the School has made a substantial effort to contact the student and parent/guardian by telephone, home visits or other appropriate means for the purpose of identifying the reasons for non-attendance and developing strategies to address them with appropriate School personnel, and only after exhausting intervention efforts have been made to keep such students in an educational setting.

The school will take into consideration the sovereignty of a Native American tribe and will respect tribal laws and traditions in following applicable School attendance policies and procedures. However, the School also will comply with legal and regulatory requirements governing student attendance.

This First Amended School Attendance Policy was amended by the Governing Council of New Mexico School for the Arts, effective August 5, 2014.

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS:

ATTEST:

By: 
SHERRY THOMPSON, Chair
of the Governing Council

By: 
PAULA TACKETT, Secretary
of the Governing Council

Legal References:

Sections 22-12-1 et seq., NMSA 1978
NMAC, Sections 6.10.8.1 et seq.