

POLICY AND PROCEDURE: COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

La Academia Dolores Huerta Charter Middle School

LADH recognizes that on time, daily student attendance is not only the law (*New Mexico Compulsory School Attendance Law (NMSA 1978, §§22-12-1, et seq.)*), but also a key component for the success of every student. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are more likely to succeed both academically and socially. They achieve higher grades; score better on standardized tests; are more likely to go to college; and maintain longer lasting friendships.

LADH administration and teachers recognize the importance of working with parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school daily.

Parents’/guardians’ Responsibilities to Ensure Daily School Attendance:

- Schedule non-emergency medical and dental appointments before or after school hours.
- Schedule family events and vacations when school is not in session.
- Make sure we have your accurate daytime contact information, including cell phone number and/or e-mail address.
- Communicate often with your child’s teachers.
- Use PowerSchool to monitor your child(ren)’s up-to-the-minute progress online. Ask our secretary about setting up a user account.
- Make sure we are aware of any problems your child may be going through.
- Do not allow your child to have “parent permitted trancies” (i.e. absences for reasons other than what is allowed by law).

Reporting Absences and Tardiness:

Students are required to be at school by 8:30 am. If a student is going to be absent or tardy the parent/guardian must call the school at (575) 526-2984 as early as possible on the day of the student’s absence/tardiness to notify the school (i.e. before 8:30 a.m.). If the parent/guardian was unable to provide notice by phone, they will need to provide a written explanation of the absence upon the student’s return to school.

If the student arrives after 8:30 am, the parent/guardian must walk the student into the office and sign the student in. For every three tardies the student will receive one absence.

LADH’s Plan for Promoting Regular/Timely Attendance:

(1.) Academic Calendar:

LADH administration and Governing Council will create and approve an academic school calendar that identifies each required day of school attendance. The total number of instruction days will meet or exceed the number of instructional days required by state law (22-2-8.1 NMSA 1978). The academic calendar for the following school year will be posted on the LADH website during the last month of the current school year. The academic calendar will be included in the Student Handbook.

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(2.) Attendance Record:

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class period and reported at the end of every 9-weeks.

LADH will keep record of all excused and unexcused absences.

Excused Absences:

Absences may be excused for the following reasons with proper notification:

- Illness (including physical and/or mental): A parent/guardian note is required for all absences resulting from illness lasting 1-3 days. An excusal note from a health care professional is required for absences lasting more than 3-days.
- Quarantine under the direction of county, city, or State officials.
- Limited family emergencies.
- Family deaths: Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to call the LADH office to inform them of a student's absence as soon as possible. A parent/guardian note is required upon the student's return to school.
- Medical, health, or legal appointments that could not be scheduled before or after school: An excusal note must be turned in upon the student's return to school.
- Religious commitments/holidays: A parent/guardian must call LADH or send a note prior to the absence.
- Deployment of military parent: A parent/guardian must call LADH or send a note prior to the absence.
- Extenuating circumstances: The Head Administrator may excuse these absence(s); however, the request must be made prior to the absence(s).
- School sponsored activities/events: Absences related to school activities/events shall not exceed 10 days per semester.

Unexcused Absences:

Any absence for reasons other than those listed as excused absences are deemed unexcused. The law requires our school to seek an explanation (a written note or verbal justification) regarding all absences. Upon the third unexcused or unjustified absence, the student may be classified as a truant. This could be grounds for referral to the proper authorities and on to the City or District Attorney's Office for possible prosecution.

In compliance with State regulation, all unexcused absences of two (2) or more classes up to 50% of an instructional day shall be reported as 1/2 day absence and an unexcused absence of more than 50% of an instructional day shall be reported as one full-day absence.

LADH Intervention Plan:

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- (1.) After receiving the first period attendance record, LADH front office will call the parent/guardian of any students that were marked absent.
- (2.) Upon returning to school students must turn in their excusal note.
- (3.) LADH will attempt to investigate all unexcused absences through telephone contact, letter contact, or home visits with parent/guardian.
 - a.) After three unexcused absences: LADH administration office will send a letter notifying the parent/guardian of the unexcused absences.
 - b.) After five unexcused absences: LADH administration office will send a second letter notifying the parent/guardian of unexcused absences and will attempt to make contact via telephone call or home visit.
 - c.) After seven unexcused absences: LADH administration office will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for unexcused absences; develop a truancy reduction intervention plan; remind the parent/guardian of the importance of regular school attendance; and discuss legal consequences. If family problems appear to be a factor, family will be provided with community resources and guidance to access services.
 - d.) After ten unexcused absences: LADH administration office will notify the parent/guardian that as they now meet the definition of “habitual truant” and thus LADH is required to refer the student and family to the probation services office of the judicial district of residence.

