



# EAGLE ANNOUNCEMENT

## Ankeny Christian Academy's Attendance Policy

### ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY

The attendance policies of Ankeny Christian Academy have been adopted to encourage regular school attendance. When a student is absent, the benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained, even by extra out-of-school instruction. Consequently, many students who miss school frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of education. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and personal study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual student.

Frequent absences have an impact beyond the individual student who is missing school. It also creates a significant amount of additional work for teachers in managing learning for those students who are not in the classroom consistently. Furthermore, it impacts the other students in the classroom as well as oftentimes learning activities (ex: reviewing a test) must be delayed until the absent student has returned to school and completed it. In summary, consistent student attendance is extremely important for the student, but also for the classroom community as a whole.

In addition to the above philosophy, the state of Iowa has also established attendance guidelines and requirements for schools. One such area of Iowa Code is SF 2435 (2024), which states that students who are absent more from school more than 10% of the days or hours in a semester are considered “chronically absent.” Once this threshold has been exceeded, schools are expected to take steps with students and parents in order to achieve greater consistency in attendance.

### COMMUNICATION REGARDING ABSENCES

Due to state requirements, the school will take specific steps in working with families on attendance related issues when their child(ren) reach 6, 9, and 12 absences.

### STUDENT ABSENCES AND TARDINESS

ACA students should be responsible for handling each absence or tardy. Below are the procedures the student should follow:

- Secondary students missing up to 15 minutes of class will be considered tardy. After 15 minutes, the student is considered absent.
- When coming tardy to school the student must go to the office for an admit slip that will permit their admittance to class.
- In secondary, when the student is tardy to a class, they must have a teacher pass or it is considered unexcused.
- Secondary students with scheduled daily release and late arrival need to sign in and/or out through the office daily.
- Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds without documented permission from their parent/guardian. Students must report to the office when leaving to sign out.
- Upon returning, the student needs to sign in and report to the office to obtain a pass to return to class.
- For grades 6th-12th, after the third tardy during a quarter, a detention will result. This can be the result of an accumulation of tardies at any point during the school day.

Elementary (K-5th) students arriving late to school, but before 9:30 a.m., are counted as tardy. Elementary students have their absences recorded according to the following standards:

- Arriving after 9:30 a.m. is counted as a 1/2 day absence
- Leaving before 1:50 p.m. is counted as a 1/2 day absence, except for Fridays

Middle school and high school students (6th-12th) have their absences recorded according to the following standards:

- Arriving late to homeroom or late to any class is counted as a tardy for each instance.
- Missing more than 15 minutes per class is considered an absence. Attendance is taken at each class period in 6th-12th grade.

## PLANNED ABSENCES

Elementary: Family vacations and other non-essential travel at times other than scheduled breaks in the school calendar are strongly discouraged. These absences will count as part of a student's attendance record. When a family vacation is taken on school days, the family must know that this decision to take a vacation will affect a student's education.

It is the responsibility of the family to notify the school and the teacher of any planned absences. It is requested that a student arrange for make-up work with individual teachers prior to an approved absence. In the case of "approved" absences related to family vacations, the work may not be given to the student prior to leaving. Any work that the teacher does not provide will not count against a student's grade. When the student returns, the teacher will direct any work for the student to complete.

Secondary: A planned absence form must be completed if a student will be absent for more than one day. These forms are available in the office. In these situations, please note that the responsibility for make-up work rests primarily with the students and parents. The teacher is not obligated to provide any missed class work ahead of time nor does the teacher need to remind students to complete make-up work by the given deadlines. As noted above, this is the responsibility of the student and parents. Class work given to students upon their return to class must be completed by the number of days missed plus one. For example, if a student misses three school days, they will have four days to complete their missed class work. Any class work not assigned by the teacher will not count against a student's grade.

Family vacations and other non-essential travel at times other than scheduled breaks in the school calendar are strongly discouraged. These absences will count as part of a student's attendance record. When a family vacation is taken during school days, the family must understand that this decision will have a significant impact on their child's education. During end of semester examinations, student attendance is mandatory for the entire testing schedule. A family vacation is not considered an acceptable reason for a student to miss their examinations or to request an alternative testing schedule. In extenuating circumstances (ex: sickness or family emergency), alternative testing arrangements will be made, but students will not be permitted to test early. If family situations arise that require adjustments to a student's testing schedule, parents must contact the Secondary Principal as promptly as possible to make this request. Requests may be denied by administration, so students and parents should be prepared to either modify plans or have the semester exam grade scored as a zero.

- Elementary Pre-planned Absences: Parents need to communicate with ACA office, administration, and classroom teachers.
- **6th-12th Pre-planned Absence Form**

### Secondary Absence Thresholds and Steps Taken:

To support student accountability and family partnership, the school will communicate with parents when students reach various absence thresholds:

- When a student has been absent in a class period 6 times in a semester, the school will verbally advise the student that he or she is nearing having been absent 10% of the days or hours in the grading period established by ACA's attendance policy. The school will also email the parents to make them aware of their child's attendance record as well as share the school's attendance policy.
- When a student has been absent in a class period 9 times in a semester, the school will verbally advise the student that he or she has reached the 10% absence threshold for days/hours in the grading period established by ACA's attendance policy. The school will also call the parents to discuss their child's attendance record as well as share the school's attendance policy.
- When a student has been absent in a class period 12 times (approximately 15% of the days/hours in the grading period established by ACA's attendance policy) in a semester, the school will arrange for an in-person meeting with the student, the student's parents, and secondary administration. This meeting will aim to identify attendance barriers and discuss specific steps to improve the student's attendance. The meeting will also involve the creation of an Attendance Cooperation Agreement, which will detail the causes of prior absences and the responsibilities moving forward of each participant in the meeting. School administration will monitor compliance with the plan, contacting participants weekly for the remainder of the semester, if deemed necessary. If participants fail to comply with the plan or participate in the meeting, school administration will consider denying the student credit for any class period where he or she has been absent 12 or more periods.
- Extenuating Circumstances
  - Please note that situations such as catastrophic injury, prolonged hospitalization, serious illness, and verified medical or mental health needs will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The final decision regarding students' eligibility to earn course credit will reside with the Secondary Principal.
  - If the extenuating circumstance leads to a level of absence that is not conducive with staying enrolled at ACA, the school will work with parents to identify different educational options to help the student continue to make academic progress. These options will not be supplied through ACA and the family will be responsible for any costs to access these resources.

## EXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDIES

The following reasons may be identified as possible excused absences. The principal or designee may request documentation or verification for any of the following absences and may consider an excess of absences (beyond a reasonable amount) as unexcused truant days:

- Personal illness
- Medical appointments
- Emergencies (flat tire, weather-related problems, and all others as determined by the principal)

- Other pre-approved activities by administrators (family outing, college visits, and other educational opportunities).

PLEASE NOTE: In the case of “approved” absences related to family vacations, the work may not be provided to the student. Any work that the teacher does not provide will not count against a student’s grade. When a family vacation is taken on school days, the family must know that this decision to take a vacation will affect the student’s education.

## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TARDIES

An unexcused absence occurs when a student is missing from school without parental/guardian approval or for reasons the school deems as inappropriate.

Secondary (6th-12th) students missing more than 15 minutes of any class period will be considered absent from that class. The first day that a student receives one or more unexcused absences will result in a detention for each class missed. The second day that a student receives one or more unexcused absences will result in an in-school suspension.

## EXCESSIVE TARDINESS

K-3rd Grades:

After three (3) or more unexcused tardies per quarter, or excessive tardiness (even excused) will result in an email/phone call from administration.

4th-5th Grades:

After three (3) or more unexcused tardies per quarter will result in a penalty. If students in 4th-5th grades exceed three unexcused tardies, the student will be required on the same day as the excessive tardy to go to an opportunity room for 20 minutes during their lunch recess. Students in the opportunity room will work on assignments missed due to the tardy or other incomplete work. Excessive tardiness (excused or unexcused) will result in an email/phone call from administration.

6th–12th Grades:

Three (3) unexcused tardies will be allowed per quarter without penalty. If a student exceeds three, the following consequences will be assigned:

- 4-7 tardies – one half-hour detention for each tardy
- 8+ tardies – one hour detention for each tardy

## MAKE-UP WORK

The amount of time that a student will be given to make up work is equivalent to the number of days missed plus one day. For example: if a student misses three days, they will be allowed four days to complete and turn in any make-up work.

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

When students are withdrawing from school, they must complete the online withdrawal form that is available on the school website. A withdrawal notice will be sent to each of the student’s teachers. Students must turn in all books and take care of any obligations. In-progress grades must be computed for each student by the second Tuesday after withdrawal. Tuition is prorated on a daily basis, and accounts are charged or refunded accordingly.

Withdrawal After Enrollment: In an effort to solidify an accurate count for the student body, we need to ensure we have adequate time and preparation for the upcoming academic year. Any student that enrolls for the upcoming school year and subsequently withdraws from that school year from May 1st until the first day of classes will incur a \$1,000 penalty (per student) made payable to ACA. Exceptions will need the approval of the Head of School. Withdrawal needs to be submitted by completing the Withdrawal Form found on the school’s website.





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