

Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that students attend school and learn. All full-time students at the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School ("VLACS") are required to meet the requirements compulsory attendance under RSA 193:1, unless their attendance is exempt by New Hampshire law. School attendance is critical to successful school performance. While school attendance is on-line, VLACS defines attendance as the completion of a minimum of five credits per school year, which is from July 1 through June 30 and continuous participation in all courses, including Advisory. Students who are over the age of 18 and elect to enroll as a full-time VLACS student must meet the attendance guidelines outlined below in order to maintain their full-time status.

Parent/Guardian, Student, and School Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians, students, school administrators, and teachers all have important responsibilities to ensure that students perform the work necessary to obtain the minimum five credits per school year and participate in the required classes and collaborative work.

Under New Hampshire law, specifically RSA 193:1, parents/guardians have a legal obligation to make sure that their children who are at least 6 years of age and under 18 years of age attend school for the entire school year and during all the time that public schools are in session. Parents/Guardians should, therefore, plan activities and appointments for their children at times when school is not in session. Parents/Guardians must contact VLACS to inform it of any issue that prevents their child from participating in any of VLACS' on-line classes.

The school must also maintain accurate records for each student in the student information system.

The Director of Full-Time Programs & Students is designated as the person responsible for truancy issues. The Director of Full-Time Programs & Students will communicate with parents when a student's lack of participation in his/her coursework becomes a concern or as required by this Policy. School officials and parents/guardians must then work together to come up with a plan to address the child's participation in required coursework at VLACS.

It is the intent of VLACS to involve parents/guardians in the development of its Attendance and Truancy Policy or any amendments to the Policy. Parents of full-time students will be notified about proposed Policy amendments through appropriate communication channels. Parents may also attend the Trustee meeting at which the proposed Policy amendments will be discussed.

Attendance:

The definition of attendance applies to students who must comply with compulsory attendance under RSA 193:1, as well as those students who are over the age of 18 and elect to continue their education at VLACS.

Attendance is defined by the following:

- a. The completion of a minimum of five credits per school year. The school year is defined as July 1- June 30: and
- b. Continuous participation in all courses including Advisory.

Under certain circumstances and with the approval of the Director of Full-Time Programs & Students a student may take fewer than five credits per year due to excused absences or if remaining graduation requirements are less than five credits.

Truancy:

1. Truancy is defined by failing to continuously participate and not making progress equivalent to five credits per school year. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed below or approved by VLACS administration will be considered an unexcused absence.

Examples of excused absences include but are not limited to:

- Extended pace due to Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan;
- Extreme weather conditions eliminating or reducing Internet connection as determined by the Administration;
- Illness of student verified by a physician's note or illness of an immediate family member;
- Death in the family;
- Chronic illness which is verified by a physician's note;
- The Director of Guidance Services or a designee of the CEO shall determine if an absence is excused for any other reason not listed above

2. An "unexcused absence" is an absence which has not been excused in accordance with RSA 189:34, II(a).

Intervention Process:

When a student is not in compliance with the Attendance Policy they are at risk for withdrawal from the full-time program. The following steps will be taken when a student is not in compliance with the VLACS attendance policy:

1. The Director of Full-Time Programs & Students or an administrator appointed by the Chief Executive Officer will contact the student and parents/guardians to inform them of attendance concerns and review the student's Course Completion Plan (CCP).
2. The student's Advisor will schedule a time to review the CCP and discuss the student's goals with the family. The CCP will outline target dates, which will allow the student to stay on course to meet the yearly attendance requirements. The CCP will also include appropriate interventions for students and ensure continued communication between students, parents/guardians, school counselor(s) and instructors.
3. The CCP will be reviewed as necessary to ensure that the student is meeting attendance requirements. The CCP will clearly indicate that non-compliance with the attendance policy will result in withdrawal from the full-time program and referral to the student's local SAU.

Law Reference:

RSA 189:34, Appointment

RSA 189:35-a, Truancy Defined

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil

RSA 193:7 Penalty

RSA 193:8, Notice Requirements

RSA 193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance

Appendix Reference:

Date Adopted: September 8, 2011

Revision Dates: May 23, 2013, January 23, 2020, March 23, 2023