

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 compulsory attendance requirements under RSA 193:1, unless their attendance is exempt by New Hampshire law. School attendance is crucial to achieving successful academic performance. Students who are over the age of 18 and elect to enroll as full-time VLACS students must meet the attendance guidelines outlined below 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 complete the necessary work to obtain a minimum of five credits per school year and participate in the required classes and collaborative activities.

Under New Hampshire law, specifically RSA 193:1, parents/guardians have a legal obligation to ensure 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 times 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 Academic & Student Affairs is designated as the person responsible for truancy issues. The Director of Academic & Student 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 develop 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, as well as any amendments to the Policy. Parents may also attend the Trustee meeting, where the proposed Policy amendments will be discussed.

The Director of Academic & Student Affairs will also serve as the school's Truant Officer. A truant officer or school official shall not file a petition alleging that the child is in need of services pursuant to RSA 169-D:2, II until all steps in the school district's intervention process under RSA 189:34, II have been followed.

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.

VLACS defines "attendance" as active academic engagement. Attendance is verified through the following:

1. The completion of a minimum of five credits per school year (defined as July 1 – June 30).
2. Continuous participation in all courses, including Advisory.

Under certain circumstances and with the approval of the Director of Academic & Student Affairs, a student may take fewer than five credits per year due to excused absences or if remaining graduation requirements totals fewer than five credits.

To assist the school in planning for the upcoming academic year a, the school requires an annual 'Intent to Return' notice from parents/guardians. If a response is not received within ten business days, the school will make three documented attempts to contact the family via phone, email, and certified mail. Failure to respond to these good-faith efforts may be interpreted as a voluntary withdrawal of the student for the following school year.

Truancy

1. Truancy is defined as failing to continuously participate and not making progress equivalent to five credits per school year.
2. Unexcused Absences: In accordance with RSA 189:34, II(a), an "unexcused absence" is a period of scheduled school days during which a student fails to demonstrate active academic engagement by submitting the required assignments.
 - o Submission Proxy: Since VLACS does not track time or daily schedules, assignment submissions and/or meetings with instructors or advisors serve as indicators of attendance.
 - o Attendance is monitored through a combination of academic progress and Advisor-led outreach. If a student demonstrates a lack of engagement across all courses, the Advisor will initiate a formal check-in. If the student or parent fails to respond to this outreach within two (2) business days, one half-day of unexcused absence is recorded. This process ensures that students remain empowered to learn offline or on custom schedules while maintaining the communication necessary to satisfy state attendance requirements.
3. Habitual Truancy: Ten (10) half-days of unexcused absences during the school year shall constitute habitual truancy.

Excused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Extended pace due to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
- Extreme weather conditions that cause Internet connection issues, as determined by the Administration.
- Illness of a 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.

- Periods of time when the student will not be engaged in school activities, such as vacations, training for athletes, musicians, or actors, or time spent working or volunteering, etc.
- Any other reason approved by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs or a designee of the CEO.

Intervention Process

The following steps will be taken when a student is not in compliance with the VLACS attendance policy:

1. The Director of Academic & Student Affairs, or an administrator appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, will contact the student and their parent (s)/guardian(s) to inform them of attendance concerns and request that they 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 include appropriate interventions for students and ensure continued communication between students, parents/guardians, guidance counselor(s) and instructors.
3. The CCP will be reviewed as necessary to ensure the student is meeting attendance requirements. The CCP will clearly indicate that non-compliance with the attendance policy violates RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil.
4. Violations of RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil requires schools to report educational neglect to the NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and, in some cases, to file a juvenile petition (also known as a Child In Need of Services or CHINS petition) with a family court in accordance with RSA 169-D-5.

Students 18 Years of Age or Older

While students 18 years of age or older are no longer subject to the compulsory attendance requirements of RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil, they must remain in compliance with VLACS attendance and engagement policies to maintain their enrollment status.

If a student age 18 or older reaches the threshold of habitual truancy as defined in this policy, the student may be administratively withdrawn from their courses and the full-time program for failure to maintain active academic engagement. Students withdrawn for habitual truancy may be required to meet with the Director of Academic & Student Affairs Guidance Services or a designee of the CEO to demonstrate a plan for consistent engagement before being allowed to re-enroll.

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

Date Adopted: September 8, 2011

Revision Dates: May 23, 2013, January 23, 2020, March 23, 2023, January 22, 2026