

## Youth Connections Charter School Attendance Policies and Operations 2024-2026

All teachers will take attendance by the use of Power Teacher. Attendance/absences must be reported by teachers. YCCS maintains daily attendance in the method prescribed by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). CPS reporting requirements specify that campuses submit daily attendance in the ASPEN system. YCCS uses the ASPEN system as the official system to be used for recording attendance. By default, all students are marked present (P) on the ASPEN system. It is the responsibility of the attendance clerk to enter accurate attendance for all students using the following codes: (P) Present, (A) for Absence, (T) Tardy, (SUS) Out of School Suspension, (ISS) In School Suspension, (RH) Religious Holiday, (HH) Home Hospital or (SF) School Function. Absences can be distinguished by (AUFD) Absent Unexcused Full Day, (AEFD) Absent Excused Full Day, (AUHD) Absent Unexcused Half Day or (AEHD) Absent Excused Half Day.

Each campus teacher also records daily attendance by classroom periods on PowerSchool which can be accessed by the YCCS Accountability Office at any time. Any attendance corrections, entering excused absences, tardies, suspensions, early dismissals must be documented and finalized on the ASPEN system by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Tardies and Early Dismissals are kept in a campus log and time of late arrival or early dismissal is documented.

All campuses follow the attendance keeping and reporting records as required by Chicago Public Schools. Attendance is taken only if the student is officially enrolled on ASPEN and is in membership at the school. A student is considered in attendance if the student is in class in the physical building, attending a school function supervised by school staff or at a testing session at a different location.

The method for collecting attendance data is determined by the type of campus arrangement operated by the vendor. YCCS policies allow campuses to operate under a closed or open campus arrangement. The type of campus structure, closed or open, is delineated in the policy and procedure handbook of each campus and is available for review at the beginning of each school year. The following defines a closed or open campus arrangement:

- Closed-Campus

A closed campus is a self-contained classroom (student is only allowed to leave at the end of the school day). Under a closed-campus arrangement the following applies:

- Attendance/absences reported by teachers at the beginning of the instruction day
- Late arrivals recorded with time of arrival noted
- Times recorded for students leaving early and/or returning
- Attendance/absences reported by teachers each class period when students change teachers or classrooms to verify any discrepancies throughout the day

- Open Campus

Under an open-campus arrangement students change classrooms from period to period and/or are allowed to leave for lunch. Under an open campus arrangement the following applies:

- Attendance/absences reported by teachers each class period
- Late arrivals recorded with time of arrival noted
- Times recorded for students leaving early and/or returning
- Attendance is reviewed at the end of the day to verify any discrepancies throughout the day

Campuses must maintain the following documentation for review at all times:

- Current Campus year staff roster with room #
- Current Campus year class rosters with student names
- Current Campus year bell schedule
- Current Campus student schedules
- Current campus year teacher schedules
- Campus Floor Plan with Classroom # identified
- Campus Calendars for the year
- Tardy and dismissal logs for school year
- Monthly enrollment and attendance summaries for school year
- Student attendance policies and procedures for school year
- Document Response to Intervention (RTI) for attendance

### **1.1 Chronic Truant/Excessive Absences**

YCCS is committed to addressing chronic truancy and excessive absences by implementing a proactive approach to improve student attendance. As required by law, we collect and review chronic absence data regularly to assess what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families. This data is analyzed at each attendance center or campus to ensure targeted, effective interventions.

#### **Daily Interventions:**

- **Daily phone calls** are made to students who are absent, and all communication is documented in the PowerSchool log.

#### **Attendance Letters:**

- **Five, Ten, and Fifteen-Day Letters** are mailed to the student's last known home address for unexcused absences:
  - The **Five- and Ten-Day Letters** are sent through regular mail.
  - The **Fifteen-Day Letter** is sent by certified mail.

#### **Parent/Guardian Conferences:**

- Each letter includes a request for a parent/guardian conference to discuss the student's attendance issues and develop a plan for improvement. These meetings provide an opportunity to identify barriers to attendance and explore potential supportive services.

#### **Student Return:**

- If the student returns to school with appropriate documentation explaining the absences, the student may be allowed to resume attending classes.

#### **Home Visits and Further Action:**

- If no response is received from the student or parent, a **home visit** will be conducted. If this does not resolve the issue, the principal will initiate the **Lost Child/Unable to Locate Process**.

### **Systems of Support:**

- In compliance with state guidelines, YCCS continually evaluates its chronic absenteeism data to identify patterns and ensure that appropriate systems of support are in place. These systems include parent conferences, counseling, home visits, and connections to community resources that address barriers to attendance and encourage daily engagement in school.

### **Attendance Intervention Measures**

The Illinois School Code mandates that schools take proactive steps to assist students and their families in resolving attendance issues. At YCCS, we are committed to reducing chronic truancy and ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed.

As part of this commitment, the purpose of PowerSchool log entries is to document not only the reasons for a student's absences but also the steps taken by the school to address truancy. This includes a detailed record of diagnostic procedures used to identify the root causes of unexcused absences. These procedures shall include, at a minimum, interviews with the student, their parent or guardian, and any relevant school officials who may provide insight into the attendance problem.

Based on these findings, appropriate interventions will be implemented to improve the student's attendance. These interventions are designed to support students holistically, addressing underlying issues and creating a pathway for academic success.

### **Chronic Truancy Intervention System**

A **Chronic Truant** is defined as a student who falls below the set attendance rate at YCCS at any point during the school year and attends school periodically without a valid cause. To support these students, YCCS has implemented a comprehensive **Chronic Truancy Attendance Intervention System**, which is a tiered strategy designed to address the needs of chronically truant students through targeted, individualized support.

Campus attendance teams are responsible for leading the development and implementation of this tiered system, which provides multiple types and various intensities of interventions based on the student's specific attendance behaviors and their response to prior interventions. The system includes:

1. **Truancy Prevention and Attendance Intervention Strategies:** These strategies are designed to engage students and their families early on, helping to prevent further absences through proactive support and outreach.
2. **Increasing Intensity of Interventions:** Interventions will be tailored to both individual students and groups of students, with the intensity and frequency of support increasing as needed. These interventions may include parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and referrals to community services relevant to the student's needs.
3. **Supportive Services for Truant Students:** To address the underlying causes of truancy, students and their families will be provided access to supportive services. These services may include individual counseling for the student, family counseling, and information on existing community resources that can assist in addressing specific challenges contributing to absenteeism.

4. **Documentation of Attendance Interventions:** All attendance interventions, including the mandatory 5-, 10-, and 15-Day Letters, will be logged in PowerSchool. This documentation serves as evidence of the school's efforts to improve student attendance and will track each student's response to the interventions provided.

### **1.1 Unauthorized/Authorized Absences**

An UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE is defined as:

- Absence from school without the permission of the school and/or the parent;
- Leaving school without permission of an administrator or designee;
- Absence from class, study hall, or an assigned activity, without permission from school authorities
- Any absence that is not verified by a written note

A VALID CAUSE FOR ABSENCE includes illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, or a family emergency. It also encompasses other situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the campus administration or Youth Connections Charter School. Additionally, any circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, physical health, or safety of the student will be considered valid grounds for absence.

This Policy was revised 9/18/2024 incorporated into our student handbook and is posted on our website.