



# THE LABORATORY CHARTER SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND TRUANCY PROCEDURES

Board Policy No. \_\_\_\_

Approved: August 21, 2025

Revised and Expanded for Act 47 of 2025 Compliance: December 2025

Effective: Fall 2025, with staged statutory requirements as noted

### I. Purpose and Legal Authority

Laboratory Charter School (“the School”) requires that all compulsory school-age students enrolled in the School attend regularly in accordance with the Pennsylvania Public School Code (24 P.S. §§ 13-1326–1354), State Board of Education regulations (22 Pa. Code Chapter 11), Act 138 of 2016, applicable Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Basic Education Circulars, and Act 47 of 2025 (Truancy Amendments).

Regular attendance is essential to student academic success, continuity of instruction, and student safety, and is a foundational requirement of the School’s statutory, accountability, and oversight obligations. Consistent attendance ensures access to instruction, participation in required assessments, and engagement in school-based supports and services. This policy establishes comprehensive, schoolwide standards governing attendance expectations, excused and unexcused absences, tardiness, early dismissals, truancy identification, graduated interventions, transfer restrictions, court involvement, reporting obligations, and enforcement measures. This policy shall be implemented in a manner that is educationally sound, legally compliant, and responsive to individual student circumstances.

This policy applies to all enrolled students, including students eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and 22 Pa. Code Chapter 14, students protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and 22 Pa. Code Chapter 15, and students suspected of having a disability who are undergoing evaluation or otherwise may be entitled to protections under IDEA, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### II. Attendance Expectations and School Day Requirements

Students are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for instruction by 8:30 a.m. each instructional day. Instructional time is protected to ensure continuity of learning, compliance

with minimum instructional hour requirements, and equitable access to the full educational program.

Arrival at 10:00 a.m. shall be recorded as a half-day present.

Arrival at 11:00 a.m. or later shall be recorded as a full-day absence.

Students may not be dismissed early after 2:00 p.m. except in verified emergencies or circumstances approved by school administration.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring timely student arrival and regular attendance. Families are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of instructional hours whenever possible and to communicate promptly with the School regarding unavoidable absences or delays.

### III. Excused and Unexcused Absences (24 P.S. § 13-1329)

#### A. Excused Absences

An excused absence includes, but is not limited to, illness; medical, dental, behavioral health, or therapeutic appointments; death in the immediate family; required court attendance; observance of a bona fide religious holiday; approved educational travel; and urgent reasons as defined under applicable law and regulation.

Written excuse documentation must be submitted within the timeframes established by School procedures. Patterns of frequent excused absences may result in administrative review and outreach to ensure continued access to instruction and supports.

For students with disabilities or suspected disabilities, the School may accept standing medical documentation or other individualized documentation pathways, provided attendance records remain accurate and the School can determine whether absences are lawful.

#### B. Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are absences not supported by lawful excuse documentation or not permitted under Section 1329 of the School Code. When absences may be disability-related, medical, or mental-health related, the School shall follow the procedures outlined in Section XIII-A in addition to standard truancy processes.

### IV. Truancy Definitions and Thresholds

A student shall be classified as truant upon incurring three (3) unexcused absences during a school year. A student shall be classified as habitually truant upon incurring six (6) or more unexcused absences during a school year. These determinations are administrative findings that trigger graduated intervention requirements.

### V. Truancy Notifications

Written notifications to parents/guardians shall be issued in accordance with Act 47 of 2025 and applicable PDE guidance. Notices shall be provided in a language accessible to the family and shall document attendance concerns, potential consequences, and available supports.

Written notice shall be issued to the parent/guardian within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence. The notice shall identify the student as truant, describe the potential consequences of continued unlawful absences, inform the parent/guardian of the availability of a School Attendance Improvement Conference, identify available school-based and community resources to support improved attendance, and, for students who may become habitually truant on or after December 12, 2025, include notice of the statutory restriction on mid-year transfer to a cyber charter school absent a judicial determination that such transfer is in the student's best interest.

#### VI. Cyber Charter Transfer Restrictions

A student classified as habitually truant may not transfer to a cyber charter school during the school year unless a court of competent jurisdiction determines that such transfer is in the best interest of the student, as required by law.

#### VII. School Attendance Improvement Conference and Plan

Upon habitual truancy, the School shall convene a School Attendance Improvement Conference with the student and parent/guardian. The School Attendance Improvement Conference shall identify barriers to attendance and develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan outlining responsibilities, interventions, and monitoring. A School Attendance Improvement Conference shall be offered and documented prior to the initiation of truancy citations or court proceedings, except as otherwise permitted by law.

For students with disabilities or suspected disabilities, School Attendance Improvement Conference and Plan development shall align with applicable IEP or Section 504 plans and may include participation by special education or 504 personnel as appropriate.

#### VIII. Court Proceedings

The School shall cooperate with courts, attendance officers, and authorized agencies in compulsory attendance proceedings and shall provide documentation as required by law.

#### IX. Attendance Recordkeeping and Integrity

Attendance shall be recorded daily by the teacher of record and maintained accurately and contemporaneously. Attendance records may only be altered to correct documented errors. Attendance records shall be maintained in a manner consistent with PDE reporting requirements, and any correction must be supported by contemporaneous documentation identifying the basis for the correction.

#### X. Cyber Charter Statutory Provisions

Act 47 of 2025 cyber charter attendance provisions are acknowledged for statutory completeness. These provisions do not apply to the School's brick-and-mortar instructional model.

#### XI. Tardiness and Early Dismissals

Repeated unexcused tardiness or early dismissals shall result in progressive intervention, parent/guardian communication, and attendance improvement planning where appropriate.

#### XII. Reporting Obligations

Attendance data, enforcement actions, and related information shall be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education as required by statute and regulation.

#### XIII. Enforcement and Student Protections

Enforcement measures shall be proportionate, educationally appropriate, and designed to improve attendance. No student shall be excluded, suspended, expelled, or transferred solely for truancy. Protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act shall be upheld.

#### XIII-A. Students with Disabilities (IDEA/IEP) and Protected Handicapped Students (Section 504/ADA)

When attendance patterns suggest disability-related barriers, the School shall consider whether an IEP Team or Section 504 team review is warranted. An IEP Team or Section 504 team review shall be considered when a student demonstrates a pattern of absences or tardiness that interferes with access to instruction, is identified as truant or habitually truant, or incurs absences that appear related to medical, behavioral, or disability-related needs.

When a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan is truant or habitually truant, the School Attendance Improvement Plan shall be reviewed for consistency with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. Any attendance intervention that implicates service delivery, accommodations, or access to instruction shall be addressed through the applicable IEP or Section 504 process.

Standard procedures for removal from the active membership roll following ten (10) consecutive absences shall not be applied to students with an IEP in the same manner as general education students. Prior to any disenrollment or withdrawal action involving a student with an IEP, the School shall comply with all applicable IDEA and 22 Pa. Code Chapter 14 requirements, including documented outreach and team-based review.

#### XIV. Responsibility, Distribution, and Review

The Principal or designee shall implement this policy, coordinate with special education and Section 504 leadership as necessary, distribute the policy annually to families and staff, and ensure training and compliance. For students with disabilities or suspected disabilities, coordination with the Special Education Coordinator or LEA representative and, where applicable, the Section 504 coordinator shall be ensured to document compliance with attendance-related procedural safeguards.

XV. Legal References

24 P.S. §§ 13-1326–1354; 22 Pa. Code Chapters 11, 14, 15; Act 138 of 2016; Act 47 of 2025; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; Americans with Disabilities Act.