

School Environment – Attendance / Truancy Policy

Overview

Our mission at Independence Classical Academy is to provide an exceptional classical liberal arts education and to encourage the virtues of character necessary for human flourishing. This requires a commitment, over the course of many years, to a specific course of study. A chief element of that commitment is regular and punctual attendance.

School starts promptly according to our school hours and calendar. If your child is absent because of illness or an appointment for which we have not been notified previously, please call the front office to make us aware of the situation. It is critical to student safety that we know where all students are on school days. Please notify the school every day your child is to be away from school.

Teachers will allow students to make up work for **excused absences only**, though these days will still count against the total number of days in class. Absences will be excused for religious observances, court appearances, illness, and other reasons required by law.

Absences

The school is responsible for the welfare of a student from the start to the end of the school day while that student is registered as ‘present.’ Regular attendance is required. Teachers will maintain a register of student attendance and lateness in their classes.

Planned absence during the school term is discouraged, but any such absence must be requested by parents in advance and in writing. The principal may require that the student obtain comments from teachers about the impact of the absence before the request for an excuse can be granted, and may require evidence or a commitment that the time will be made up. The school may impose a maximum leave of absence granted in any one year, which may vary across the school divisions.

Regular attendance is important to ensure achievement in school. We discourage vacations and trips taken during the school year. We also discourage doctors’ and other appointments during school hours when avoidable. When those appointments are unavoidable, students are responsible for any make-up work during their absence. Assignments that are not made up according to the time restrictions set by the school will be reflected in their grades. It is helpful to both student and teacher to make prior arrangements to meet that requirement.

The attendance goal of ICA is 95%. To receive credit, a student cannot miss more than 4 days in a calendar month, 10 days each semester, or 20 days in a school year, including **both excused and unexcused absences**. Our truancy policy is strict due to the correlation between regular attendance and academic success. Our charter requires academic success and therefore ICA has a minimum standard set by our board that will lead to achieving this goal.

Upper level students (6-12), missing two classes equals a half-day absence. Missing four classes equals a full-day absence.

Unexcused Absence

If a student has more than four unexcused absences in one month or twenty days in any year, the student may be classified as habitually truant according to ICA policy and need to be referred to outside agencies to help families understand Florida’s compulsory attendance laws. When the parent does not explain sufficiently the reason for unexcused absences, a parent conference will be required, and credit will be withheld. An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student’s record. The parents or guardian of

the student receiving an unexcused absence will be required to keep up with attendance matters via family access (Skyward) account.

Excused Absences

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Absences for medical reasons
- Absences for mental or emotional disabilities
- Pre-arranged absences of an educational nature must be approved by the Principal (e.g., visits to colleges for high school students; scheduled, performance-related activities)
- Attendance at any school-sponsored activity
- Bereavement (notify school if absence will extend beyond three days)

The School will require suitable proof of excused absences, including written statements from medical sources, appointment notes, etc.