

## Truancy Prevention Policy 2021-2022

Students at Belmont Charter School (Belmont Academy Charter School, Belmont Charter Elementary Charter School, Belmont Charter Middle School and Belmont Charter High School) are expected to attend school every day. Attending school and being on time every day is crucial to our core value of responsibility. Attendance is also known to be aligned with student academic success. To ensure our students’ success, Belmont works with each family to ensure students are not chronically truant as defined by absent, tardy and/or dismissed early.

Students are not permitted to attend OST or daycare on days they do not attend school.

### **Excused Absences**

In accordance with policies from the School District of Philadelphia, we excuse absences for the below are will be considered lawful absences:

- Illness
- Required court attendance
- Death in the family
- Pre-approved high school visits, college visits and educational trips

All other absences not outlined here will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be considered unexcused.

Notes from parents/guardians must be submitted within three (3) days after returning to school and can only excuse up to 3 absences in a row. If your child is absent for more than 3 days in a row, a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation is required. A student’s absence does not excuse him/her from the work that takes place while they are not in school. All work must be made up by the student.

A student who has ten (10) consecutive unexcused absences will be dropped from Belmont Charter School’s enrollment.

Each Absence	Phone Call Home
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3 Unexcused Absences	<p>Letter Sent via Parent Square and mail by School Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Explanation of truancy, habitual truancy, excuse notes</li> <li>*Consequences for students</li> <li>*Explanation of Project Go</li> <li>*Student is considered truant.</li> </ul>
5 Unexcused Absences	<p>Family Support Specialist schedules phone or virtual conference with family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explain to the family Project go referral process.</li> <li>● Complete the Student Attendance Improvement Plan with the family. Send copy to P.G</li> <li>● FSS Complete a needs assessment to assess if FSS services are needed.</li> <li>★ A SAIP conference must still occur even if the family fails to appear.</li> </ul>
6 Unexcused Absences	<p>First Referral to Project Go</p> <p>Family Support Specialist schedules phone or virtual conference with family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explain to the family Project go referral process.</li> <li>● Complete the Student Attendance Improvement Plan with the family. Send copy to P.G</li> <li>● FSS Complete a needs assessment to assess if FSS services are needed.</li> <li>★ A SAIP conference must still occur even if the family fails to appear.</li> </ul> <p>*Student is considered habitually truant.</p>
8 Unexcused Absences	Second Referral to Project Go
10 Unexcused Absences	Student continues with District Attorney’s Office “Project Go” Program, may be considered to be dropped from the school roster.

**Tardies**

Any student who arrives one minute after the official start of the school day is considered tardy. Tardiness is tracked and negatively impacts a student’s record, it will also impact perfect attendance awards and incentives. When a student is late they are missing instructional time.

**Early dismissal**

Signing a student out of school prior to dismissal is considered early dismissal. Early dismissals are tracked and count against perfect attendance. Belmont Schools are unable to accommodate early dismissals during the last 30 minutes of the school day. Students can only be signed out of school by individuals listed on their emergency contact form. Identification is always required.

### **Quarantine/COVID-19**

In the event that a student or family member has contracted or been exposed to COVID-19, we will continue to accept a doctor's note or other official documentation. If a family is asked to quarantine, the school will provide virtual accommodation. A student's absence does not excuse him/her from the work that takes place while they are not in school. Assigned work must be completed in order to be marked present for the day during the virtual accommodation.

### **Additional information:**

\*Please note, students will NOT be suspended or expelled as a result of truant or tardy behavior as per applicable laws and the behavior policy at Belmont Charter School.

Belmont Charter School is dedicated to the academic, social and emotional success of all students. Regular school attendance is an integral part of this success. In an effort to enforce Pennsylvania's compulsory attendance laws, Belmont Charter School partners with the District Attorney's office. By signing the attached handbook acknowledgement form, you are giving your consent for Belmont Charter School to share your child's educational records with the District Attorney's office in the event your child has excessive unexcused absences. Please note that records from previous years will be included in any referral.

If you object to your child's information being shared with the District Attorney's office, please write a letter to the school stating your objection within 10 days of enrollment. Letters can either be mailed to the school's address or delivered to the Main Office. If we do not hear from you, we will assume consent has been given and will release your contact information if your child violates our school's truancy policy.

Please know that the partnership we have entered into with the District Attorney's office has been entered into with the very best of intentions for all of our students and their families.

### **"Project Go" Partnership with the District Attorney's Office**

As part of our truancy prevention program, students with 10 or more unexcused absences may be referred to "Project Go", which is an early intervention and prevention program developed by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office to hold parents and excessively truant elementary and middle school students accountable for truancy.

By law, all children are required to attend school daily until they turn 18. Participating schools notify the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office when a student has exceeded the number of unexcused absences agreed to as the limit for their school. From there, a letter is sent from the

District Attorney's Office to the student's parents/guardians advising them of their responsibilities under Pennsylvania law. Students and their parents/guardians are required to attend a group meeting with the Assistant District Attorney, school staff, city agencies and community-based organizations. Parents/guardians are advised that continued attendance problems will not be tolerated and could result in court action them and/or their child. At the same time, referrals are provided for parenting classes, counseling and other needed services. If the letter and group meeting are not successful in improving attendance, the student and their parents/guardians are invited to an individual meeting with the Assistant District Attorney and school staff to discuss the child's attendance problems. This meeting focuses on:

- Attendance problems
- Family issues/concerns
- School related issues/concerns
- Legal consequences
- Agency referrals for needed services
- Signed contract outlining responsibilities

If the individual meeting is not successful, the student and their parents/guardians are referred to a final meeting with the Assistant District Attorney, school staff and other appropriate representatives. The message is reiterated for the final time.

Failure to improve thereafter results in prosecution of the parents/guardians for Corruption of a Minor, 18 Pa.C.S. §6301(a)(2), a violation of the Public School Code, 24 P.S. §13-1333, and/or, in a particularly egregious case, Endangering the Welfare of a Child, 18 Pa.C.S. §4304. Similarly, a child 13 or older could be prosecuted for a violation of the Public School code (24 P.S. §13-1300, et seq); a child under 13 would be referred to the Department of Human Services as a dependent child.