



Classroom-Based Attendance Policy

Board Approved: June 25, 2025

Believing that children benefit from regular attendance in school, iLEAD Lancaster expects each child to attend school every day. If a child cannot attend school, the office staff should be notified of all absences by a telephone call, email or other digital notification, visit to the office, or written note from the parent/guardian, parent representative, or learner (if 18 or older) on the day that the learner is absent for the required attendance tracking by the State of California.

Definitions

- *“Tardy”*: Learners shall be classified as tardy if the learner arrives after the school’s daily start time.
- *“Unexcused Absence”*: A learner shall have an unexcused absence if the learner is absent or is tardy for more than thirty (30) minutes without a valid excuse.
- *“Truant”*: A learner shall be classified as a truant if the learner is absent from school without a valid excuse three (3) full days in one school year, or if the learner is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three (3) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Any learner who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be deemed a truant. Such learners shall be reported to the SchoolDirector or designee.
- *“Habitual Truant”*: A learner shall be classified as a habitual truant if the learner is reported for truancy three (3) or more times within the same school year. This generally occurs when the learner is absent from school without a valid excuse for five (5) full days in one school year or if the learner is tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on five (5) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof.

- “*Chronic Truant*”: A learner shall be classified as a chronic truant if the learner is absent from school without a valid excuse for ten (10) percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date.

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused as permitted by law or this Board policy. A learner's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including an absence for the benefit of the learner's mental or behavioral health;
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer;
3. Medical, dental, ophthalmologic, or chiropractic appointments;
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the learner's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the learner's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the learner to be considered the learner's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five (5) days per incident. “Immediate family” means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the learner.
5. For any of the following reasons, if an immediate family member of the learner, or a person that is determined by the learner's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the learner to be considered the learner's immediate family, has died:
 - a. To access services from a victim services organization or agency.
 - b. To access grief support services.
 - c. To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the learner or an immediate family member of the learner, or a person that is determined by the learner's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the learner to be considered the learner's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation.

Absences under this section shall not be excused for more than three (3) days per incident, unless extended on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the School Director. “Immediate family” means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the learner.

6. Jury duty in the manner provided by law;
7. Participation in religious instruction or exercises. The learner shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four (4) school days per month.
8. Authorized parental leave for a pregnant or parenting learner for up to eight (8) weeks, which may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the learner's physician.
9. Due to the learner's participation in military entrance processing.
10. Authorized at the discretion of the School Director or designee, based on the facts of the learner's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.

11. A learner who holds a work permit to work for a period of not more than five (5) consecutive days in the entertainment or allied industries shall be excused from school during the period that the learner is working in the entertainment or allied industry for a maximum of up to five (5) absences per school year subject to the requirements of Education Code section 48225.5.
12. In order to participate with a not-for-profit performing arts organization in a performance for a public-school student audience for a maximum of up to five (5) days per school year provided the learner's parent or guardian provides a written note to the school authorities explaining the reason for the learner's absence.
13. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event. "Cultural" for these purposes means relating to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.
14. For the purpose of a middle or high school learner engaging in a civic or political event as indicated below, provided that the learner notifies the school ahead of the absence. A "civic or political event" includes, but is not limited to, voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls.
 - a. A middle school or high school learner who is absent pursuant to this provision is required to be excused for only one school day-long absence per school year.
 - b. A middle school or high school learner who is absent pursuant to this provision may be permitted additional excused absences in the discretion of the School Director or designee.
15. For the following justifiable personal reasons, for a maximum of five (5) school days per school year (unless otherwise indicated), upon advance written request by the learner's parent or guardian and approval by the School Director or designee pursuant to uniform standards:
 - a. Appearance in court.
 - b. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of their religion.
 - c. Attendance at religious retreats - Attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed one school day per semester.
 - d. Attendance at an employment conference.
 - e. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization.
16. Serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code §12302.
17. Spending time with a member of the learner's immediate family, who is in active duty of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this section shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the School Director or designee.
18. If a learner is the custodial parent of a child, their absence shall be excused when the child is ill or has a medical appointment during school hours.
19. For the purpose of attending the learner's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

Learners absent for the reasons deemed “excused” shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefore. The facilitator of the class from which a learner is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the learner missed during the absence.

Method of Verification

When learners who have been absent return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify learner absences:

1. Written note or email from parent/guardian, parent representative, or learner if 18 or older;
2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the learner's parent/guardian, parent representative or learner if 18 or older. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of learner;
 - b. Name of parent/guardian, parent representative, or learner if 18 or older;
 - c. Name of verifying employee;
 - d. Date or dates of absence; and
 - e. Reason for absence.
3. Visit to the learner's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method, which establishes the fact that the learner was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including information outlined above.
4. Physician's verification
 - a. When excusing learners for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, school staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
 - b. When a learner has had 14 absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-#3 above, any further absences for illness must be verified by a physician.

Insofar as class participation is an integral part of the learner’s educational experiences, parents/guardians and learners shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

In grades 7 through 12, school authorities may excuse any learner from school to obtain confidential medical services without the consent of the learner's parent/guardian.

Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

The School Director or designee shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy and unexcused absences, as a learner's grades may be affected by excessive unexcused absences.

Process for Addressing Truancy

1. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian or learner if 18 or older by the School Director or designee. The learner's classroom teacher may also call home.
2. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the School Director or designee. In addition, the learner's facilitator may also call home and/or iLEAD Lancaster may send the parent/guardian an e-mail notification. In addition, upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes in a school year, the parent/guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #1" from iLEAD Lancaster notifying the parent/guardian of the learner's "Truant" status. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to iLEAD Lancaster. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy. This letter, and all subsequent letter(s) sent home, shall be sent by email and certified mail, return receipt requested, or some other form of mail that can be tracked. This letter shall be re-sent after a fourth (4th) unexcused absence.
3. Upon reaching five (5) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #2," notifying the parent/guardian of the learner's "Habitual Truant" status and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to review the learner's records and develop an intervention plan/contract. In addition, iLEAD Lancaster will consult with a school counselor regarding the appropriateness of a home visitation and/or case management for ongoing support.
4. Upon reaching six (6) unexcused absences or unexcused tardies over 30 minutes, the parent/guardian will receive a "Truancy Letter #3" and the learner will be referred to the School Attendance Review Team (SART) and may be referred to a Student Success Team (SST), as described below.
5. If the conditions of the SART plan are not met, the learner may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from iLEAD Lancaster, consistent with the Involuntary Removal Process described below.
6. If a learner is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and the learner's parent/guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to iLEAD Lancaster's communication attempts as set forth above, the learner will be in violation of this Policy and the SART plan (if any) and may be subject to disenrollment in compliance with the Involuntary Removal Process described below. If the learner is disenrolled after the Involuntary Removal Process has been followed, notification will be sent within thirty (30) days to the learner's last known school district of residence.

7. Any documentation received by iLEAD Lancaster regarding a learner's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., CALPADS report) shall be deemed evidence of a **voluntary** disenrollment and shall not trigger the Involuntary Removal Process below.
8. For all communications set forth in this process, iLEAD Lancaster will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to update iLEAD Lancaster with any new contact information.

School Attendance Review Team Process

The School Attendance Review Team ("SART") panel will, at a minimum, be composed of a school administrator or designee, teacher of record, and a counselor. The SART panel will discuss the absence problem with the learner's parent/guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the learner and learner's family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.

1. The SART panel shall inform the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated.
2. The parent/guardian shall be required to sign the plan formalizing the agreement by the parent/guardian to improve the child's attendance or face additional administrative action. The plan will identify the corrective actions required in the future, and indicate that the SART panel shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the plan:
 - a. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day
 - b. Learner retention
 - c. Required school counseling
 - d. Loss of field trip privileges
 - e. Loss of school event privileges
 - f. Required remediation plan as set by the SART
 - g. Notification to the County District Attorney
3. Notice of action recommended by the SART will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.

Process for Learners Who Are Not in Attendance at the Beginning of the School Year

When a learner is not in attendance on the first five (5) days of the school year, iLEAD Lancaster will attempt to reach the learner's parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first five (5) days to determine whether the learner has an excused absence, consistent with the process outlined in this policy. If the learner has a basis for an excused absence, the learner's parent/guardian must notify iLEAD Lancaster of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, consistent with process below, learners who are not in attendance by the sixth (6th) day of the school year due to an unexcused absence will be disenrolled from iLEAD Lancaster after following the Involuntary Removal Process described below, as it will be assumed that the learner has chosen another school option.

1. Learners who are not in attendance on the first (1st) day of the school year will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll in iLEAD Lancaster.
2. Learners who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the third (3rd) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive an email and/or letter indicating the learner's risk of disenrollment.
3. Learners who have indicated their intent to enroll but have not attended by the fifth (5th) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.
4. Learners who are not in attendance by the sixth (6th) day of the school year and do not have an excused absence will receive an Involuntary Removal Notice and the CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form. iLEAD Lancaster will follow the Involuntary Removal Process described below, which includes an additional five (5) school days for the parent/guardian to respond to iLEAD Lancaster and request a hearing before disenrollment.
5. iLEAD Lancaster will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian in the registration packet.
6. Within thirty (30) calendar days of disenrollment, iLEAD Lancaster will send the learner's last known school district of residence a letter notifying it of the learner's failure to attend iLEAD Lancaster.
7. Any documentation received by iLEAD Lancaster regarding a learner's enrollment and attendance at another public or private school (i.e., CALPADS report) shall be deemed evidence of a voluntary disenrollment and shall not trigger the Involuntary Removal Process below.

Involuntary Removal Process

No learner shall be involuntarily removed by iLEAD Lancaster for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the learner has been provided written notice of iLEAD Lancaster's intent to remove the learner ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The Involuntary Removal Notice must be provided to the parent or guardian no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the proposed disenrollment date.

The written notice shall be in the native language of the learner or the learner's parent or guardian or, if the learner is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the learner's educational rights holder or parent representative. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include:

1. The charges against the learner.
2. An explanation of the learner's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action.
3. The CDE Enrollment Complaint Notice and Form.

The hearing shall be consistent with iLEAD Lancaster's expulsion procedures. If the learner's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the learner shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until iLEAD Lancaster issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to iLEAD Lancaster's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon a parent's or guardian's request for a hearing, iLEAD Lancaster will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the learner has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the learner has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the learner or the learner's parent or guardian or, if the learner is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the learner's educational rights holder or parent representative and shall include a copy of iLEAD Lancaster's expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the learner will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If the parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing, the learner will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If, as a result of the hearing the learner is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the learner's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) calendar days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the learner does not prevent iLEAD Lancaster from making a similar recommendation in the future should learner truancy continue or reoccur.

Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney

It is iLEAD Lancaster's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the learner's success, and iLEAD Lancaster will explore every possible option to address learner attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, iLEAD Lancaster may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a learner's attendance does not improve after a SART plan has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents/guardians fail to attend a required SART meeting, iLEAD Lancaster shall notify the County District Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Learners twelve (12) years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

Non-Discrimination

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Penal Code section 422.55, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

Reports

The School Director or designee shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as learners who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.