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## Attendance Policy

Attending school regularly is very important for student success. The State of Georgia has established the criteria concerning attendance. Georgia law requires all children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school unless they have a lawful reason to be absent.

### Attendance and COVID-19

If a student provides written documentation from the healthcare provider advising them to refrain from attending school due to the Coronavirus, he or she will be fully accommodated in accordance with the policy of Lighthouse Christian Academy. Families of these students should coordinate with their child's teacher and school administration for further guidance.

### Excuses and Checkouts

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes on time and each day. On the first day students return to school from an absence, parents should provide the school with a written note explaining the reason for the absence. The note should include the date(s) of the absence, the reason(s) for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student and turned into the office. If students are frequently absent or tardy, the administrator may ask the parent to provide more information, such as medical documentation, about the absences, tardies, and early checkouts. Only five handwritten notes will be accepted from parents per semester. No notes will be accepted after three days. After five handwritten parent notes, parents will be required to present appropriate medical, governmental, or court documentation for the purpose of validating the absence. After exhausting the five handwritten notes, subsequent absence will be categorized as unexcused unless proper documentation is received within the three-day time period.

Students arriving after 8:00 am are considered tardy. For early checkouts, parents should send a note to the office for approval. The note should state the reason for dismissal and time of dismissal. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor and dental appointments out of school hours. *Phone check out will not be accepted except in emergency situations.*

Parents should not check out students for the purpose of avoiding car rider traffic. Disciplinary action may be taken against students not in attendance for the full school day for reasons that cannot be excused. Any child who checks out before 11:30 am will be considered absent for the school day, and handwritten parent note will count against the five-note policy.

Tardies means the failure by a student to be in the assigned classroom or instructional space at the assigned time without a valid excuse or arriving at school after the morning tardy time.



Absence means the non-attendance by a student in an approved regularly scheduled class or activity, regardless of the reason for such non-attendance. An exception is when a student participates in an approved activity (such as, but not limited to: field trip, academic competition or approved athletic event), he/she may be excused from school, counted present, and shall be responsible for any work missed during the time he/she is away from school)

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES-**

Absences, tardies, and early checkouts will be excused for the following reasons:

1. Student illness that would endanger the student's health or the health of others.
2. Serious illness or death in the student's immediate family which would reasonably necessitate absence from school in the determination of the administrator or his/her designee.
3. A scheduled medical, dental or eye examination.
4. Attendance of non-school activities or function authorized by the administrator or designee.
5. An order of a governmental agency, such as a court order or a pre-induction physical exam for military service.
6. Attendance upon a trip or event having significant educational value, provided the administrator is notified of the absence in advance and he/she determines the trip or event has significant educational value.
7. To visit with a parent serving in the armed forces of the United States or National Guard. If such parent has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, a student shall be granted excused absences, up to five school days per year, for the purpose of visiting with his/her parent.
8. Extreme circumstances that cannot be resolved outside school hours; parent or guardian must request and receive approval from the administrator or designated representative.
9. Any other absence not explicitly defined herein but deemed by the Southside Christian Board of Education to have merit-based circumstances.

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Unexcused absences will be subject to attendance investigation and can result in penalty as imposed by Georgia's compulsory attendance law. Any absence not covered in the reasons above shall be declared unexcused. It is the policy of the Lighthouse Christian Academy Board that no unexcused absences are allowed.

Students are to miss no more than twenty days a year or ten days in a semester to receive credit for coursework completed. Any exemptions must be reviewed by the administrative team. Classwork missed due to an unexcused absence must be made up within three days. For any absence beyond five days, the parent shall be required to provide medical, governmental, or court documentation.

Middle and high school students with six or more unexcused absences per class period or eight or more unexcused tardies per class period or five discipline referrals per semester are subject to lose extra-curricular privileges such as homecoming, prom, etc.



Planned absences should be discussed with the administrator or guidance counselor in advance. Efforts will be made to get assignments to the students before the planned absence, if possible. The student will be responsible for make-up work.

Parents should email the student's teacher as early as possible if you would like the teacher to give missed assignments. Efforts will be made to list the assignments from that day, and the student should work on these as much as possible and submit to the teacher as early as possible.

*Students missing more than half of the school day may not participate in practices or games of extracurricular activities.*

### **TO REDUCE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Parent contact will be made as stated below and documented in the student's file at 3, 5, 7 and 10 absences.

If a student has three absences, a parent/guardian will be contacted via phone or note home by the classroom teacher. Documentation will be made in the student's file.

At five and seven absences, the parent/guardian will be contacted by school administration. A letter will be mailed home notifying the parent of the student's days missed and the compulsory attendance law.

At 10 absences, parent/guardian will be contacted and required along with the student to meet with administration. The student will be placed on probation for the following semester.

The following provision applies to absences during a school year. The days that students are absent due to out-of-school suspension shall not count as unexcused absences for the purpose of determining truancy.

If the student is between 14 and 18 years of age and the ten unexcused absences are within one semester or two quarters, his/her eligibility to obtain or retain an instruction permit or driver's license may be impacted.

### **ABSENCES AND PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

If a student is marked with an unexcused absence for the school day, the student will not be allowed to participate or attend extracurricular activities scheduled for the same day that the student is absent.

### **ABSENCES DURING TESTING**

Achievement testing (IOWA) make-up days are allotted for students that have excused absences. Re-testing must take place within the testing window.



## SCHOOL ACTIVITY ABSENCES (Sports, etc)

If a student is out of class to participate in a school function, he/she is not counted absent. The student should check with the teacher ahead of time for the assignment and have the assignments ready upon returning to school unless directed otherwise by the teacher.

Tardies - It is important that students always be on time to school and to classes. The student demonstrates self-discipline and responsibility by being prompt. Self-discipline in this area is not only important for proper academic achievement, but it is essential for the development of personal habits which are characteristics of success and good citizenship in every walk of life. Excused tardiness will be considered by the administration, if there is a legitimate reason, and will not penalize the student. Unexcused tardiness will result in disciplinary action taken against the student. We need parents of students who are not driving to make every effort to have students on campus by 7:55. Students should check-in at the school office before reporting promptly to the correct teacher. Tardiness by students who drive may result in a loss of driving privileges.

Each student is to be seated at the time for the class period. A student is considered tardy if he is late to class or not seated.

### Tardy Policy-

For 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade-The tardy policy for our middle and high school students is found below. There is no additional academic penalty. An excused tardy requires a note from a teacher, parent, doctor, etc. Three unexcused tardies per class equals an unexcused absence. The penalties will reset each 9 weeks.

Per Semester:

Unexcused Tardies	Penalty
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tardy	Warning (Student reminded of attendance policy and final exam policy)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tardy	1 days of detention, parent contact
4 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	2 days of detention, parent contact
5 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	Required parent meeting, loss of driving privileges for the semester and loss of privilege to exempt final exams, 3 days of detention
6 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	Required parent meeting, 1 Day of ISS
7 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	Required parent meeting, 1 Days of ISS, Loss of privilege to school sponsored activities
8 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	Required parent meeting, 2 Days of ISS
9 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	Required parent meeting, 3 Days of ISS
10 or more Tardies	Required parent meeting, 3 Days of OSS, Student placed on academic probation for the next semester

Traffic and trains are NOT excused reasons unless the administration decides to make an exception. Students who accumulate demerits will be addressed by the administration according to the usual discipline system including letters home, detention, behavior contracts, suspension, etc. Students who miss more than one third of a class period will be counted as absent for that class period.



Excused Absences-Late arrival to school or class because of reasons defined herein as excused absences or as a result of events physically out of one's control such as inclement weather, documented transportation delays, health related emergencies, power outage, compliance with the court order, etc

Skipping Class - Skipping class is defined as an absence without the knowledge and consent of parents and/or the school staff. This includes leaving without permission before the end of the school day or staying out of any scheduled class without permission. Such action will be seriously dealt with by the school administration; and may include, but not be limited to, suspension or dismissal. Any class absences due to skipping will be considered unexcused.

Checking Out Early - *Checking out of school early is strongly discouraged.* Appointments should be after school hours if possible. However, if necessary for a child to be taken from school, one of the following procedures should be followed:

- If it is known ahead of time, make the request in writing and send it with your child.
- Call the school receptionist to inform her of your plans.
- Come to the school office and directly request permission to check out your child.

Any student leaving without signing out will be considered skipping school. *This includes students who leave for an extracurricular activity before the time established by the coach and approved by the administrator.*

Students who check out from school (other than for medical/dental appointments) may not return to campus. This prohibition means that they may not return for after-school functions, including sports, fine arts, and/or academic practice, competitions, or performances.