

Attendance, Absence & Truancy

The School's educational program requires students to be continuously present so the student may receive instruction and actively participate in the educational process. In accordance with Ohio law, the School requires attendance of all students enrolled in the School during the days and hours the School is in session. To be considered in attendance, a student must be either within the School facilities or in place where School is in session by the School's authority.

In developing this policy, the School has consulted with the Judge of the Juvenile Court, parents, guardians, custodians, students, and all appropriate state and local agencies.

Parental Responsibility & Procedure for Reporting Absences

A student's parents or guardians are primarily responsible for a student's attendance at school. Should a student be absent, the student's parent or guardian is required to notify the School on the day the student is absent unless previous notification has been given in accordance with the School procedure regarding excused absence.

In case a student is absent, the procedure for reporting absences should be as follows:

The parent must call the School within the first hour that the School is in session to report the student's absence.

If a parent fails to call the School, school personnel must make a good faith attempt to contact within 120 minutes of the start of the school day, the parent/guardian of a student who is absent from school without legitimate excuse.

The School must make at least one good faith attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or caretaker.

A good faith attempt shall include, but not be limited to, contacting the parent by:

- (1) An actual or automated telephone call;
- (2) A notification sent through the school's automated student information system;
- (3) A text message;
- (4) An email;
- (5) An actual visit to the student's residence; or
- (6) Any other method adopted by resolution of the School's governing authority.

If the parent/guardian responds to any of those attempts but is unable to participate, the Head Administrator or Designee shall inform the parent of the parent's right to appear by the designee.

If an automated calling system is used, it must include verification that each call is placed, and whether the call was answered by the intended recipient or the system leaves a voicemail containing notice of the student's absence.

The notification requirement does not apply to students participating in College Credit Plus, or other "off-campus activities" as well as students receiving home-based, online, or Internet- or computer-based instruction.

To facilitate policy, parents or guardians must provide the School with their current home, work, and/or cellular telephone numbers; home address; and emergency telephone numbers.

### Absences

*Excused Absences.* The Governing Authority recognizes the following absences as excused:

- the student's physical or mental illness;
- instruction at home from a person qualified to teach the student due to a child's disability;
- illness in the family necessitating the student's presence;
- serious illness or death in the family;
- observing religious holidays and consistent with the student's truly held beliefs;
- medical or dental appointment;
- college visitation;
- quarantine;
- required court appearance;
- inability of the parent to employ help in the parent's family business;
- farm work of the parent or guardian at necessary times; or
- emergency or other circumstances the School determines reasonable.

If the student is absent or will be absent for one of the above reasons, the student must provide a written note upon returning/prior to leaving the School or the absence will be considered unexcused. The statement must be from a parent and explain the cause for absence. At his or her sole discretion, the Head Administrator or his/her designee may investigate each individual absence. A student, whose extended absence is due to a medically-documented physical or mental impairment, will not be disciplined. As provided by law, such students may be entitled to receive an education tailored to their individual needs or abilities.

*Limited Excuse Absence.* Students absent solely to participate in an out-of-state School-approved activity shall constitute a limited excused absence. Limited excuse absences are to be treated as an excused absence provided: (1) the absences are limited to a maximum of twenty-four hours per school year, (2) the student must complete any missed classroom assignments, (3) and if the activity will cause the student to be absent for four or more consecutive school days, teachers must accompany the student for instructional assistance.

*Unexcused Absence.* A student's absence is unexcused if it is not an excused or limited excused absence. A student who is repeatedly has unexcused absences will be subject to disciplinary action.

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*Tardiness.* A student is tardy when a student is more than five minutes late for school or is late for the start of class. If student misses more than half a class, the student shall be considered absent for the class. A student who is repeatedly tardy will be subject to disciplinary action.

### Truancy

No student of compulsory school age shall be habitually truant.

*Habitual Truancy* – a student is absent without a legitimate excuse for any of the following:

- thirty (30) or more consecutive school hours, or
- forty-two (42) or more school hours in one (1) month, or
- seventy-two (72) or more school hours in one (1) year.

### Notification and Absence Intervention Team

The School's Attendance Officer must notify a child's parent, guardian or custodian if the child has "excessive absences" which shall be defined as *nonmedical* excused absences and unexcused absences with or without legitimate excuse for 38+ hours in one school month or 65+ hours in a school year. This notice shall be made in writing within 7 days after the date of the absence that triggered the notice.

If the student continues to be truant after the notification and surpasses the threshold for habitual truancy, the School must assign the student to an absence intervention team within 10 days after the absences surpass those for habitual truancy. This team must develop an intervention plan for the student to reduce or eliminate further absences within 14 school days after the student is assigned to the team. Absence intervention plans incorporate academic and non-academic supports to help the student and remove barriers to regular attendance. They shall also include counseling for those students classified as a habitual truant.

The team must make at least three (3) meaningful good faith attempts to secure participation in this process and any recommended truancy prevention mediation programs from the student's parent, guardian or custodian.

A good faith attempt shall include, but not be limited to, contacting the parent by:

- (1) An actual or automated telephone call;
- (2) A notification sent through the school's automated student information system;
- (3) A text message;
- (4) An email;
- (5) An actual visit to the student's residence; or
- (6) Any other method adopted by resolution of the School's governing authority.

The parent is permitted to participate through a designee. If the parent fails to respond or participate, then the School is required to investigate as to whether the failure to response trigger mandatory reporting to JFS and the team must develop the plan without parent participation.

The School has the discretion to extend the intervention plan or process over the summer months.

### Disciplinary Consequences for Truancy

On the 61<sup>st</sup> day after implementing the absence intervention plan, the Attendance Officer must file a complaint in the juvenile court if all of the following apply:

1. The student is absent without excuse for 30+ consecutive hours, 42+ hours in a school month or 72+ hours in a school year;
2. The School has made meaningful attempts to reengage through the absence intervention plan and any offered alternatives to adjudication;
3. The student has refused to participate in or failed to make satisfactory progress on the plan, as determined by the absence intervention team, or any offered alternative adjudication.

A complaint regarding a habitual truant where the parent, guardian, or custodian fails to get the child to attend school must be filed jointly against the student and the parent, guardian, or custodian. If the student is absent without excuse for 30+ consecutive hours or 42+ in a school month but the absence intervention team has determined that the student has made substantial progress on the absence intervention plan, the Attendance Officer is not required to file a complaint.

The School shall also make notification to the registrar of motor vehicles pursuant to ORC 3321.13, if applicable, and shall also initiate legal action under ORC 2919.222, 3321.20, and/or 3321.38, if applicable to the student's situation.

Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, the School shall not suspend, expel, or remove a student from school solely on the basis of the student's absences from school without legitimate excuse. A student who is habitually truant will be excused for the absences if it is determined that: (1) the student was enrolled in another school, or (2) the student's absence was excused by law or this policy, or (3) the student has received an age and schooling certificate.

### Attendance Officer Responsibilities

The Attendance Officer responsibilities shall be held by the Head Administrator or his/her designee. The School's Attendance Officer shall investigate all nonattendance, shall be vested with police powers, may serve warrants, and may enter workshops; factories; stores; and all other places where children are employed and do whatever is necessary in the way of investigation or otherwise to enforce the laws relating to compulsory education and the employment of minors. The Attendance Officer may also take into custody any youth of compulsory school age not legally employed on an age and schooling certificate who is not attending school and shall conduct such youth to the school he has been attending or should rightfully attend.

### Withdrawal

By law, a student will be withdrawn automatically if the student fails to participate in seventy-two (72) consecutive hours of learning opportunities and the absence is not excused pursuant to O.R.C. 3314.03(A)(6)(b). Upon a student's withdrawal pursuant to this provision, the School shall automatically notify the student's school district of residence pursuant to any applicable Ohio laws, rules and regulations.

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A student may be voluntarily withdrawn if a parent submits a written Voluntary Withdrawal notice to the Head Administrator.

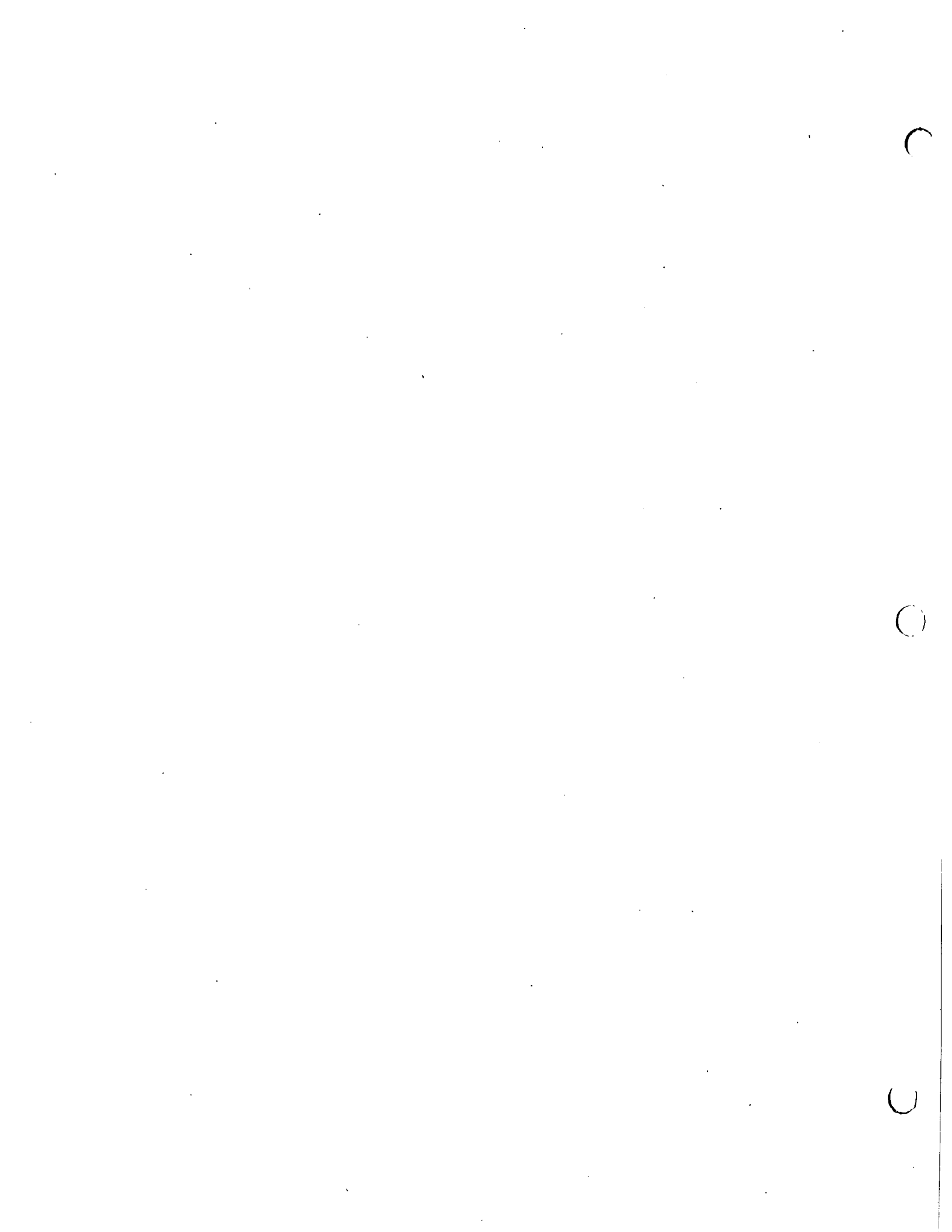
Reporting Requirements

The School must report to the Ohio Department of Education any of the following occurrences:

1. When student is absent 38+ hours in a school month or 65+ hours in a school year and the School sends notice to the parent, guardian or custodian;
2. When the child has been absent without legitimate excuse the number of hours to classify as a habitual truant;
3. When the child is adjudicated an unruly child for being habitual truant violates the court order regarding that adjudication; and
4. When an absence intervention plan has been implemented for a child.

*Ohio:* R.C. 2152.02, R.C. 2152.011, R.C. 3313.668, R.C. 3313.672, R.C. 3326.22, R.C.3321, et seq., O.A.C. 3301-69-02.

*Cross Reference:* Policy 3820, Resolving Issues with Attendance; Policy 4203, Emergency School Closings & Calamity Days; Policy 3540, Promotion and Retention of Students



**State of Emergency**  
**Attendance, Truancy, and Automatic Withdrawal Policy**

This policy was developed for implementation during the current State of Emergency, the 2020-2021 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic period, which may cause the school to implement its alternative education plan through a remote or hybrid distance learning model of instructional delivery. A hybrid model is any variation of combination of remote and in-person learning opportunities. This policy will supersede Ashland County Community Academy's permanent Attendance, Truancy, and Automatic Withdrawal Policy during this time and the school's permanent policy will remain in effect after the conclusion of the Ohio State of Emergency.

The Ashland County Community Academy Governing Board recognizes the importance of meeting each child's needs. Ashland County Community Academy's leadership will work with students and families to identify the needs of each student, enabling ACCA leadership to accommodate unique situations, of each student if they should arise. Barriers to attendance will look different, and may be more severe, during the 2020-2021 school year. It is likely that Ohio's most underserved students will be disproportionately affected by the pandemic, increasing risk of student absences; and therefore, the ACCA Governing Board establishes this policy to encourage student engagement and establish expectations of contact, documenting, and reporting processes relating to student attendance throughout the implementation of the school's alternative/remote learning education plan.

**Attendance Communication and Surveys**

Attendance at school is key to student achievement. Students are expected to attend school regularly during remote or hybrid learning instructional time. Ashland County Community Academy requires that parent(s)/guardian(s) are an instrumental support in this process. ACCA's Attendance Specialist will work closely with the School Resource Officer, School Liaisons or Support Staff, and Administration to communicate attendance related information and schedules. Communication of expectations and updates in regards to attendance, will be made through the use of phone calls, letters, ONE CALL NOW automated system, emails, school website and social media, newsletters, and surveys. In order for ACCA to serve students effectively, parent(s)/guardian(s) may be asked to complete surveys or needs assessments to collect data. Together, with the appropriate ACCA staff, parents(s)/guardian(s) will establish a plan of action that empowers them to support student attendance and academic engagement.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are surveyed or assessed in order to identify the following:

- Current/accurate contact information
- Transportation needs
- Availability/interest in the alternative learning schedule (with or without on-site instruction)
- Digital Access (internet connection/WIFI/Hot Spots)
- Accessibility to technology (computer/phone/tablet)
- Request of special accomplishment (technology support or training)
- Additional services needed (social/emotional, special needs, accommodations)

## Documentation of Attendance and Attendance Communication

Ashland County Community Academy will communicate and retain the following documentation addressing attendance information and expectations:

- Parent surveys and assessments will be retained by the school documenting family contact information, on-site attendance availability and/or preferred alternative learning model, response to connectivity and technology needs to support remote/hybrid learning instructional hours.
  
- ACCA will implement a parent/guardian attendance contract that addresses expectations for remote and/or hybrid learning.
  
- Technology provided to the parent/guardian, for the use of student instruction, will be documented and tracked through the use of ACCA's asset inventory policy. Technology support will be provided by ACCA (damage/loss must be documented as required by ACCA's asset inventory policy)
  
- ACCA Administration, Faculty, and staff will log all/any communication pertaining to a student's instructional hours and participation in an effort to ensure engagement while participating in remote/hybrid learning.
  
- Attendance will be tracked by the ACCA Attendance Office, primarily the Attendance Specialist and Executive Administrative Assistant. Attendance will be tracked in hour increments and be reported weekly within EMIS. The format used to track attendance for each class within the school will be consistent and will be reviewed by TBT and BLT on a regular basis.
  
- Class schedules, lesson plans, and Odysseyware classes will be documented identifying hours of instruction assigned to/associated with each assignment, lesson, activity, or assessment. Classroom teachers will document student attendance hours aligned to all methods of instruction/learning, in regards to remote/hybrid learning. Assignments will identify the hours of instruction associated with completion of each lesson or activity assigned and delivered during instruction (teachers will determine the number of hours they expect an assignment to take for a typical student and use that number of hours to gauge that student's attendance).
  
- Any communication between ACCA and the parent/guardian with regards to schedule changes and updated information
  
- ACCA will implement a State of Emergency health and safety policy. This policy will be made available to all parent(s)/guardian(s) to communicate health and safety precautions, staff and students expectations in regards to the health and safety for all individuals at ACCA.

### **Attendance: General Absences**

While Ashland County Community Academy's State of Emergency Attendance, Truancy, and Automatic Withdrawal Policy complies with student absences and intervention strategies as defined in OAC 3301-69-02 and ORC 3321.191, ACCA's policy also aligns with the Ohio Department of Health's Guidelines for K-12 schools during this State of Emergency.

Ashland County Community Academy will:

1. Document all absences, excused or unexcused;
2. Retain teacher instructional hours/contact logs;
3. Expect student on-site attendance during alternative education, on-site instructional days unless accommodations are requested, documented, and approved by administration;
4. Expect and document student remote attendance during alternative education, remote instructional days; unless accommodations are requested, documented, and approved by administration;
5. Make accommodations for temporary internet outages or technical difficulties;
6. Take into account parent/guardian requests for accommodations;
7. Update individualized education plans and 504 plans to add attendance accommodations as may be necessary;
8. Monitor daily absences to identify possible trends;
9. Document absences due to COVID-19 illness or household /family exposure to the illness resulting in required or requested quarantine or isolation and make student attendance accommodations as may be needed.

### **Excessive Absences**

A student shall be considered excessively absent when the student is absent (with or without legitimate excuse) 38 hours or more in one school month or 65 hours or more in one school year. No student shall be suspended or expelled based solely on the number of absences incurred.

When a student is excessively absent from school:

1. ACCA will notify the parent/guardian of the student, in writing, within seven days of the predetermined triggering absence (a copy will be placed in the student's file in main office);
2. The student will follow the school's plan for absence intervention; and
3. The student and family may be referred to community resources.

*Especially during this State of Emergency, ACCA encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) to make any doctor, dentist, medical appointments, etc., for times other than planned school instructional hours.*

## Habitually Truant

Habitually truant is defined as being absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 hours in one school month, or 72 hours or more in a school year.

When a student is habitually truant:

1. Within 7 days of the predetermined, triggering absence, the school will:
  - a. Select members of the absence intervention team (at least two school staff): including but not limited to: Executive Director, Director of Special Education, Lead Teacher, Attendance Specialist, School Resource Officer, Support Services, the student, parent(s)/guardian(s)/custodian, and external support services retained by student (mentors, case workers, counselors, etc.); depending on the specific needs of the student and/or parent(s)
  - b. Make 3 meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in the Absence Intervention Team Meeting and Plan  
*If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to respond, the school will investigate whether the failure to respond triggers a mandatory reporting to the public children services agency for the county.*  
*The Absence Intervention Team will be instructed to develop an intervention plan for the student notwithstanding the absence of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).*
2. Within 10 days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team
3. Within 14 days after the assignment of the team, the school will develop the student's absence intervention plan; (ACCA shall provide written notice of the plan to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) within 7 days of developing the plan);
4. If a student does not make progress on the plan within 61 days or continues to be excessively absent, the district will file a complaint with the juvenile court.

## Withdrawal

In accordance with Ohio Law, a student will be automatically withdrawn from Ashland County Community Academy if the student (without legitimate excuse) fails to participate in 72 consecutive hours of learning opportunities, whether remote, hybrid, or on-site instruction. A withdrawal notice will be sent to the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) by the ACCA Attendance Office and ACCA Administration.

When a student of compulsory age withdraws from school, the school shall ascertain the reason for withdrawal. If the reason for the withdrawal is for a reason other than a change in residence and the student is not enrolled in another program (within 2 weeks of withdrawal), the school shall notify the proper county institutions. Failure to enroll in another educational program, permitted by law within two

weeks of the withdrawal, will result in the notification of the registrar of motor vehicles and the juvenile judge of Ashland County, by ACCA administration.

### **Reporting Attendance/Absences**

Ashland County Community Academy will collaborate with its EMIS Coordinator to ensure accurate attendance reporting. The attendance will be reported in hours as aligned with assigned instructional hours during the State of Emergency. ACCA will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) as indicated herein regarding absences and will work with parent(s)/guardian(s), faculty, and staff to make accommodations to student attendance requirements as may be needed during this time.

ACCA shall report as soon as practical to the Ohio Department of Education each time a student exceeds the threshold of absences, the date a notice was sent to parent(s)/guardian(s), the date when a student qualifies as habitually truant, when an adjudicated, unruly child violates a court order, and when an intervention plan has been implemented.

If the student is violating the court order regarding the student's adjudication as an unruly child for being habitually truant, the ACCA Governing Board hereby authorizes the school's administrator or his/her designee to notify the Juvenile Court in Ashland County, or the county in which the student resides, and inform the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the notification.

### **Collaboration**

The Ashland County Community Academy Governing Board recognizes the importance of collaboration among ACCA Administration, Faculty, Support Staff, Support Services, students, and parent(s)/guardian(s) during this State of Emergency. Furthermore, the Governing Board has taken into consideration the guidance provided by the Ohio Department of Education, to assist in creating an Attendance, Truancy, Withdrawal policy that focuses on attendance intervention and accommodating the specific needs of the student's education plan, whether remote, hybrid, or on-site.

ACCA Administration consulted with the Ohio Department of Education, Office of School Sponsorship, ACCA faculty and staff, ACCA support services staff, and parents, along with the ACCA Governing Board, to develop this policy, during this State of Emergency.

ACCA will continue to work with local agencies regarding attendance intervention and encourage families, ACCA staff, ACCA support staff, community partners, community members, and stakeholders to bring any concerns regarding this policy to the attention of ACCA Administration at any time.

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