

# VOYAGER PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL (revised December, 2006)

## ATTENDANCE POLICY (S-006)

Attendance is a critical factor in school success. The learning process requires continuity of instruction and participation in discussions, group work, class dynamics, and demonstrations of learning. Because Voyager's program is designed around "hands-on", multi-sensory learning experiences, the work cannot be easily "made up" independently at home. Students who are chronically absent miss out on what makes Voyager's program so unique.

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility in the state of Hawaii. The Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) requires a child who is six(6) years of age and not yet eighteen(18) on January 1st of any school year, to attend either a public or private school unless formally excused from school via the proper and legal procedure. All public schools are tasked with enforcing this compulsory attendance law. Parents have the legal responsibility to make sure their children attend school on a regular basis. Students who are chronic absentees may be referred to Family Court for educational neglect.

Families are strongly encouraged to plan family vacations and trips to coincide with school intercessions and breaks and to avoid taking children out of school during regular scheduled school days.

Excused absences may include (but are not limited to):

- Illness or injury documented by a doctor's note
- Doctor or dentist appointment
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious practices or holidays
- Court appearance
- Family emergency
- Pre-approved family vacations that have been discussed with teacher in advance (at least 2 weeks before departure date) and for which an education plan is in place.

**For less than 10 unexcused absences:** regular monitoring will include documentation in student's cumulative file and on end-of trimester progress report.

**For 10-15 unexcused absences:** Principal and school counselor will be notified. A notification letter or school conference will be scheduled to identify the source of the lack of attendance. Parent/guardian may be required to submit a doctor's excuse for any and subsequent absences due to illness.

**For 16-20 unexcused absences:** A mandatory family conference is scheduled with the Principal or school counselor to discuss parent's legal responsibility with regard to compulsory education, the root cause of the problem, and to develop an improvement plan that is agreed to and signed by the family.

**For 21+ unexcused absences:** A school team meeting comprised of any three(3) of the following: Principal, Counselor, SSC, and Lead Teacher will be held to determine the need to file a *Family Court Petition* for educational neglect. Following the meeting the family is notified and the improvement plan is modified or the petition is filed. If transportation is identified as one of the leading causes, the family may be encouraged to attend the neighborhood school for the following year and admission to Voyager PCS may be denied.

\*\*Children with excessive absences may be required to repeat the same grade the following school year.