



## **Certifiable Excused Absence Policy**

At Pivot Charter School, we firmly believe that a strong partnership between families and the school is crucial for the development of our students. One of the fundamental pillars of a successful educational journey is regular attendance. Attending school consistently not only ensures that students gain knowledge and skills but also fosters a sense of responsibility, discipline, and commitment. We understand that life can sometimes present unexpected challenges, and absences may be necessary. However, it is vital to follow Pivot's absence policy to ensure that any missed days are appropriately documented and addressed. By adhering to this process, we can work together to support your child's academic progress while complying with the necessary regulations.

Our school's truancy process is designed to identify and address any attendance concerns promptly. It involves close communication between the school administration, teachers, and families. We also want to highlight the significance of excused absences. We recognize that there are legitimate reasons for students to be absent from school. It is important to notify the school about these absences in a timely manner. By doing so, we can ensure that your child's attendance records accurately reflect the reasons for their absence.

### **Definition of a Truant Student**

The California Legislature defines a truant student in very precise language. In summary, it states that a student, "... missing more than 30 minutes of instruction without an excuse three times during the school year must be classified as a truant and reported to the proper school authority." This classification and referral helps emphasize the importance of school attendance and is intended to help minimize interference with instruction. The Education Code section that defines a truant reads as follows:

(a) A pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, shall be classified as a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

The law allows for schools to determine how to implement truancy laws. Pivot has a very clear policy for truancy and how we determine whether independent study is an appropriate educational placement for the student. However, the Education Code also stipulates that there are some reasons for **EXCUSED** absences where the student would not be considered truant.



### **Summary of Reasons for Excused Absences at Pivot Charter Schools (Ed Code 48205):**

1. The student has a debilitating illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health. They may still reside at home, is hospitalized, or is in a treatment facility,
2. A local health officer has issued a quarantine,
3. The student has a medical, dental, vision, or chiropractic appointment,
4. For jury duty,
5. The student is the custodial parent of a child who has a medical appointment, including absences to care for a sick child, for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor,
6. An appearance in court,
7. Attendance at a funeral service, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California,
8. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at a religious retreat,
9. To serve as a member of a precinct board for an election,
10. To spend time with an immediate family member on active military duty,
11. To go to the student's own naturalization ceremony and become a U.S. citizen,
12. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.

### **Certifying Excused Absences at Pivot Charter School**

Students who are absent for any of the above reasons, must provide written documentation of the reason for the absence for it to be considered an excused absence. In most of the above-mentioned cases, the absences are short term. In the case of the student being sick at home, hospitalized or in a treatment center, the following requirements apply.

1. The parent/guardian must provide a written memo from the attending physician of the student specifying that the student is too ill to participate in school. The memo must include:
  - a. The start and end date of the illness or expected time period the student will be absent and can not participate in school activities. This memo must be signed and placed in the student's file for review by all Pivot staff.
  - OR
  - b. The start date of the student's illness wherein they cannot participate but with no end date. A memo with no end date **MUST** be submitted every 30 calendar days to the Educational Coordinator and will be maintained in the student's file for review by all Pivot personnel.



Once the physician has written a certified excused absence memo that stipulates that the student CAN NOT attend school, all courses and access to the curriculum will be CLOSED immediately. If a parent or student requests access, the doctor must provide a revised certification of absence demonstrating that the student is permitted to “attend school” and to what extent.

### **Special Education Students with Certified Excused Absences**

For students whom a doctor has determined cannot attend school, and who have an active IEP, an IEP meeting MUST be held within 5 school days to draft an IEP amendment reflecting the new circumstances. For students who qualify for special education, whose doctor has specified they may participate in SOME schooling each week, the IEP team will amend the IEP to reflect a proportional amount of services according to the doctor's suggestion.

If a student qualifies for medically excused absences and has provided Pivot with the above doctor's certification, truancy procedures may not be initiated and the teacher of record will determine that the student is “excused” in our attendance system.

### **Students with Mental Health Challenges**

Students who have received a certified excused absence memo for mental health reasons may not be permitted to re-engage in school without a release from the doctor stipulating that the student may re-engage in an online system, and a safety meeting must be held prior to the student resuming school work.