

# THE GRAHAM FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

The Graham School

The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University

Graham Elementary and Middle School

## **Attendance Policy (amended and approved by all 3 boards on 8/19/24)**

### **Positive School Climate**

The Graham Family of Schools (TGFS) aims to help all students grow in their academic and social-emotional learning, ongoing. All efforts are focused on preparing students to be successful in achieving this mission as they work toward full readiness for the next grade level and ultimately college and careers. Our aim is to continuously advance students' skills and demonstrate critical analysis and problem solving, collaborative teamwork, thoughtful reflection on experiences, sharing in responsibility for academic success, and creating a safe learning community for all.

In order to achieve this mission at our schools, TGFS will:

- Maintain and promote a growth-mindset toward all students and staff such that everyone has an expectation to grow in their intelligence, and display of it;
- Foster in students a commitment to self-direction about their own learning and to the school and wider community in which they live;
- Teach at all grade levels with sensitivity to brain development in children, including course and class lessons that focus on human brain development and its relation to learning, and grow students in their academic learning and social-emotional development;
- Utilize the community outside the school doors as a resource to advance experiential learning for our students;
- Treat all students and staff with compassion, honesty, and respect;
- View academic achievement as a reflection of both student and teacher jointly teaming for success;
- Create, state, and display norms for how people are expected to act at school regarding academic work and behavioral interactions;
- Design an operational strategy at each TGFS school for advancing our work in academic achievement, social and emotional learning, grade advancement, and college and career readiness.

As part of this mission, TGFS abides by Ohio House Bill 410 which outlines our interventions and plans for students missing too much school.

### **Attendance Policy Overview**

Ohio House Bill 410 encourages and supports a preventative approach to excessive absences and truancy. Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, TGFS has adopted an attendance policy that outlines our interventions for students missing too much school.

Regular school attendance is an important ingredient in students' academic success. Excessive absences interfere with students' progress in mastering knowledge and skills necessary to graduate high school or be prepared for higher education or the workforce. To support academic success for all students, TGFS will partner with students and families to identify and reduce barriers to regular school attendance. TGFS utilizes a continuum of strategies to reduce student absence including, but not limited to:

- Notification of student absence to the parent or guardian;
- Development and implementation of an absence intervention plan, which may include supportive services for students and families;

- Counseling;
- Parent education and parenting programs;
- Mediation;
- Intervention programs available through juvenile authorities; and
- Referral for truancy, if applicable.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

Chronic absenteeism is defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act as missing **10 percent or more (~18 days, or 92 hours) of the school year** for any reason. It includes **excused and unexcused** absences. This includes “*excessive absences*” in which a student is absent 38 or more hours in one school month with or without a legitimate excuse or absent 65 or more hours in one school year with or without a legitimate excuse. TGFS will work with our community partners to help any chronically absent students get to school every day. Early intervention can keep chronic absenteeism from becoming truancy.

### **Habitual Truancy**

Habitual truancy is reflected by any student of compulsory school age **who is absent without legitimate excuse** from his or her public school for **30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month or 72 or more hours in a school year**. Truancy counts only absences without a legitimate excuse. When a student is habitually truant, the law requires the school to follow several administrative procedures and legal solutions to make sure the student attends school regularly.

### **Legitimate Absences**

Every student should be in school every day. Even if an absence is excused, it still results in loss of important instruction time for the student. TGFS requests documentation of a legitimate excuse for any absence. Any absence without appropriate documentation is considered unexcused. Documentation must be received within 7 days of the student’s absence date. If not received within 7 days, then the absence(s) is considered unexcused.

*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.

### **Attendance Intervention Team**

The purpose of the attendance intervention team is to establish a student-centered attendance intervention plan for every student who is habitually truant by identifying specific barriers and solutions to attendance.

The attendance intervention team is cross-sector and includes the participation of the student and the parent or guardian or parent appointed designee. If a parent or guardian or parent appointed designee is non-responsive to the attendance intervention team’s outreach, then the attendance intervention team will assess if the non-response requires a mandated referral to the child protective services agency.

When a student is habitually truant, the following will occur:

- 1) Within seven (7) days of the triggering absence, TGFS will do the following:
  - a) A member of the School's Attendance Intervention Team (AIT) will make three (3) meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the student's parent or guardian or appointed designee on the attendance intervention team.
- 2) Within ten (10) days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to a specific member of the AIT;
- 3) Within fourteen (14) days of being assigned a member of the AIT, TGFS will develop the student's attendance intervention plan **and send a copy of the attendance intervention plan to the parent or legal guardian;**
- 4) If the student does not make progress on the plan within sixty-one (61) days or continues to be excessively absent, TGFS may file a complaint in the juvenile court.
- 5) When a student is identified as having excessive absences and/or being habitually truant, TGFS will inform the student's parent or guardian that the student has been placed on the attendance intervention team and make three meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the student's parent, legal guardian or parent appointed designee on the attendance intervention team.

TGFS must notify a child's parent, guardian or custodian if the child has "excessive absences" which shall be defined as when *nonmedical* excused absences and unexcused absences exceed 38 hours with or without a legitimate excuse 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. A "medical excused absence" shall include:

- (1) personal illness;
- (2) illness in the family necessitating the student's presence;
- (3) quarantine of the home;
- (4) death in the family;
- (5) appointment with a health care provider (doctor, dentist, orthodontist, mental health provider, etc.); or
- (6) on a case-by-case basis, any other set of circumstances the School deems to be a good and sufficient cause for medical absence from school.

### **Zero Tolerance**

TGFS has a zero tolerance policy for violent, disruptive or inappropriate behavior by students per Ohio Revised Code 3313.534. TGFS has removed "excessive absences" from its zero tolerance policies. TGFS will not suspend or expel students for being absent from school.

### **Suspension**

TGFS will not suspend (out of school) or expel students for truancy. TGFS will be proactive in working with families and community organizations to break down barriers that prevent students from attending school.

### **Automatic Withdrawal**

A student will be automatically withdrawn from TGFS if they have missed, without a legitimate excuse, 72 consecutive hours.

### **Absence Notifications**

School begins promptly. Students who are not with their teacher when the first bell rings are considered unexcused without a legitimate excuse. A student who is returning from an unexcused absence must be signed in at the front office by a parent and/or legal guardian along with appropriate documentation for the student's absence.

TGFS expects all students to be in their appropriate class when the bell rings, and prepared for instruction. The family of the student should contact the school by 8:00am with advance notice of their student's pending absence on a given day. If no notice of the student's absence is received by the school, the school will attempt to contact the student's parent and/or legal guardian within the first 120 minutes of

the school day. The attempt may be made via a live telephone call, automated telephone call, a notification through the school's automated student information system, a text message, email, home visit, or another notification procedure adopted by the school.

Attendance is an extremely high priority at TGFS and Ohio law. **TGFS has an overall attendance rate goal of 96% for the school year!**