

ABOUT ATTENDANCE

Regular and timely attendance is essential for a consistent academic growth, maintenance of social relationships and emotional security. Daily attendance develops the child's sense of rhythm in their school life. Similarly, a timely arrival in the morning and departure at pick-up eases the anxiety that children often confront when transitioning between home and school. Good attendance is a pre-requisite for your children to receive the maximum benefit from our educational program.

ABSENCES

All parents are legally obligated for their children to attend school. According to California law, there is no distinction between unexcused or excused absences. Please schedule doctor appointments and vacations when school is not in session to avoid causing a school absence.

If you know that your child is going to miss some school days, please consider requesting Independent Study three days in advance of the initial absence. An Independent Study plan enables the child to continue the studies that are occurring in class, reducing the sense of overwhelm and confusion the student may encounter upon the return from an absence.

ILLNESS

A sick child is best cared for at home. Please keep your child home if he or she:

- Has an active fever or had a fever within the past 24 hours
- Has vomited within the past 24 hours
- Has an actively communicable infectious condition such as:
 - Chicken Pox, *Conjunctivitis (pink eye), Diphtheria, German Measles, Hepatitis, *Head Lice, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Poliomyelitis, Pertussis/Whooping Cough, Ring Worm, or Scarlet Fever
- *In cases of Conjunctivitis, attendance is allowed once treatment has begun.
- *In cases of Head Lice, student may return to school following the use of a recommended lice treatment. Be sure to notify your class teacher and the office at the first sign of nits or adult lice.

If your child is sick, please call the School Office at 707-762-9020 before 8:00 AM and provide the reason for the absence, the expected duration, and any important information regarding communicability of the illness.

TARDY ARRIVAL

In the Waldorf classroom, there is a rhythm to the day, with opening activities which prepare the child to work effectively, as well as closing activities which allow the group to end as one and to bring a sense of completion. It is essential that your child arrive at school on time to benefit from the entire class day. When children arrive late, they not only miss out on the important warm up period of the day, they enter their lessons with anxiety and worry. Additionally, the late arrival is disruptive to the lesson and other students in class.

It also triggers a huge amount of administrative work. Mandatory attendance reporting to our auditor, our chartering district, the county office of education, and the state, add up to inordinate amounts of time spent whenever your child is even a few minutes tardy. Please, please, respect everyone's time and your child's experience by arriving well ahead of the 8:10 bell every day. Everyone will thank you!

A good goal is to strive to arrive at school a full 10 minutes before the morning start time to enable your child to settle in and be ready for the school day, which begins at 8:15 promptly.

The School defines tardiness as arriving at the classroom door after the teacher has greeted the children and begun the school day. The school is open and schoolyard supervision begins 15 minutes before the official beginning of the school day. We strongly encourage all families to arrive early and build in a grace time in their morning routine. All children need at least a few moments to arrive, settle in, and get to the door, and most benefit from 10-15 minutes of time at school before the school day begins. In short, we urge you to arrive well before the bell to allow plenty of time!

If a child arrives after the teacher commences class (8:15 AM), they are considered tardy. Please do not leave your child alone to find her way to class when she is tardy. If the class teacher has closed the classroom door for the start of lesson, do not knock or walk into the classroom. Parents must accompany their child to the office for a tardy slip. Upon returning to the classroom, slip the tardy slip through the classroom door. The teacher will invite the student into class when ready for the transition.

If families demonstrate a pattern of tardiness, parents will be asked to meet with administration to address the problem. Repeated tardy arrivals will result in a letter home to inform parents of the pattern. Significant tardiness, in excess of 30 minutes, is considered a reportable event for the purposes of determining truancy.

TRUANCY

Education Code 48260 states that a child *"who is absent from school without valid excuse more than three days or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on each of more than three days in one school year is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district."* For the purposes of determining truancy, Absences shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies, justifiable personal reasons, and as permitted by law, Board policy and administrative regulations. Letter of truancy will be drafted for students with 5 or more days of unexcused absences. If absences continue the case will be referred to the Executive Director for intervention. Even in cases of valid excuse, such as illness, students absent in excess of 10 days require a physician's note or conference with the administrator to determine the justification for the absence.

If excessive absences or tardies occur, the school may take the following set of progressive steps:

- Verbal reminders to the family from teacher or other school staff, as appropriate.
- First letter home from Director as a warning after the 3rd overall unexcused absence.
- Second letter home after 5th total unexcused absence or Tardy, requiring parent(s) and older students to meet with Director.
- Other steps may be recommended at the time of the meeting with the Director, such as student and/or parents donating time to school to compensate for lost class and administrative time. An agreement will be signed by the family that acknowledges their commitment to solving the tardiness problem.
- Families make an appointment and meet with the Director about the attendance problem within two weeks of notice or the case is referred to Live Oak's Board of Directors.
- Third letter home after 9th unexcused absence or tardy; at this time the case is referred to Live Oak's Board of Directors. The School Board will meet to determine appropriate next steps, which could include, but is not limited to, referral to the local Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) and/or the Sonoma County District Attorney's office.