

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES  
FOR THE  
SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**K-12 PROGRAM**

**August 4, 2014**



*The Seminole Tribe of Florida Tribal Council and the Seminole Tribe of Florida Education Department have the right to interpret the content of these Policies and Procedures. Nothing contained in these Policies and Procedures confer any right, contractually or otherwise upon any third party. These Policies and Procedures may be amended at any time.*

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**K-12 PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**K-12 PRIVATE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

*The purpose of the K – 12 Private School Scholarship is to provide each recipient with the opportunity to attend an educational institution valued in academic excellence, integrity and fairness.*

**Costs covered by the Scholarship**

- Tuition
- Registration
- Books
- Lab fees
- School ID's
- Approved school bus transportation to/from school
- School required laptops (documentation is required from the school) and must meet the iPad/Computer policy.

All other school expenses, including uniforms, after school care, and other fees, are the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

This scholarship does not cover 'private summer school programs'. It applies only to the standard school year beginning in the fall and ending in May/June.

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Must be an enrolled member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Must submit an application in a timely manner, by/before required deadline(s)
- Must have *and maintain* a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 (\*\* see below)
- Please note the department will cease paying for the private school costs while the scholarship is in denial status and any outstanding balances will be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians should a student not meet the GPA requirements.
- Must be accepted into an approved accredited Private School (*List of approved/accredited K-12 schools can be obtained from the K-12 Advisor*)

- Must have successfully completed the previous academic school year and have been promoted to the next grade level (*except those students entering into kindergarten*).
- Cannot be Truant
- Proven Violations of this policy agreement will render the student ineligible for the ‘Private School Scholarship’.
- It will be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians to provide financial support for their child(ren) to continue attending private school, or enroll their child(ren) in the public school system if they are deemed ineligible for the K-12 scholarship.

### **Eligible Institutions**

An eligible school is an accredited school approved by the STOF Education Department. For a full list of eligible schools, please contact the K-12 Advisor.

*\*Note: Student that have a minimum GPA of 2.0 for school year 13/14 will be grandfathered in for school year 14/15 but will be required to attain and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 thereafter.*

### PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN/ UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRIVATE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The parent/legal guardian is expected to take an active role in his/her student’s education.

Parental/legal guardian responsibilities include the following:

- Must attend a minimum of 6 school meetings (from a combination of PTO, PAC, PTC etc.).
- Proof of attendance must be submitted to the Education Department. (*A written document on the school’s letter head confirming attendance within three (3) business days*).
- If necessary, the parents/legal guardians must contact the Education department to verify the dates/times of all PAC meetings.
- Parents/legal guardians are required to ensure that their student(s) adhere to the private school scholarship attendance policy.
- Applications for each new school year must be submitted by/before January 31<sup>st</sup> prior to the beginning of each school year. Funding will not be provided until applications have been approved.

### **Withdrawal from Private School:**

- The parent/legal guardians must contact the Education Advisor immediately should it be necessary to withdraw a student from school. Failure to communicate with the Education Advisor will result in the parent/legal guardian being responsible for the tuition and fees incurred and will also jeopardize future scholarships.

### **Transferring from Private School.**

- Transfers during the school year are not permitted and will not be covered by the Private School Scholarship.
- If a student transfers during the school year from one private school to another private school the parent/guardian will be responsible for any costs incurred at the new school.

- If transferring from one private school to another, parent/guardian must submit the required application to the education department by/before the prescribed deadline. Failure to do so will result in the denial of the scholarship.
- Parents/legal guardians must request the transfer prior to the January 31<sup>st</sup> application deadline.

**PRIVATE SCHOOL ACADEMIC RULES AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

***Nine week cumulative 2.5 Grade Point Average Requirement:***

- The student receiving scholarship shall maintain a 2.5 or higher cumulative GPA for each nine week grading period.
- The first failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher will result in the scholarship being monitored for the next grading period.
- If the student does not meet the required 2.5 GPA for two consecutive nine week grading periods, the scholarship will be reviewed and moved to denial.
- If the GPA requirement is met in the next nine week grading period, the scholarship will be reinstated.

***Student Attendance:***

- Maximum allowable number of absences for each school year is not to exceed ten (10) days.
- Upon the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence the student’s attendance will be closely monitored and the student may be deemed truant thereafter.
- Seven (7) unexcused absences within a 90 day school period will result in a referral to Truancy. Truancy can affect any future eligibility to the private school scholarship.
- If the student becomes compliant with truancy policy requirements and school standards, the student’s status will be reinstated to “*approved*” by the Education department
- After three (3) consecutive days of absences due to illness, the parent/legal guardian will be required to present a certified medical note from the student’s treating medical provider to the Education Department.
- A signed note from the parent/legal guardian is required in the event of absences due to a death in the immediate family and/or Clan.
- Failure to provide required medical notes to the Education Department will result in the absence being deemed unexcused
- If the student’s attendance has not improved, the scholarship will be placed into denial status.

***Proper Behavior:***

- Students who receive the scholarship are expected to adhere to their school’s Code of Conduct.
- The parent/legal guardian must notify the Education Department if the student is suspended, expelled or dismissed from school while on scholarship.
- The Education Advisor will offer assistance and if deemed necessary will make a referral to appropriate tribal department for additional assistance.

***Transportation/Bus Behavior:***

- Students who utilize any transportation provided and/or paid for by the Education Department are expected to comply with all transportation rules provided to the student and parent/legal guardian.
- Violations will result in disciplinary action according to the department's and/or agency's transportation policy provided to the student and parent/legal guardian. If a student is suspended or expelled from the transportation, it will be the parent's/legal guardian's responsibility to provide transportation to and from the school.
- Please note disciplinary action is based on the duration of the suspension
- If the student is expelled the parent/legal guardian will be responsible for providing transportation to and from school for the remainder of the school year.

***Violations include but are not limited to:***

- Violence, fighting or bullying while on the bus.
- Damage to the bus.
- Using and/or being in the possession of alcohol, illegal substances or firearms/weapons while on the bus.
- Use of profanity or foul language while on the bus.
- Students must remain seated while the bus is in motion. Students must keep their arms and heads inside of the bus at all times.
- Prohibits the lighting of matches or smoking on the bus.
- Consumption of food or beverages is not permitted on the bus.

***Report Card Policy:***

- It is the student's and/or the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to ensure all report cards are submitted to the Education Department within two weeks following the end of the grading period.
- Failure to provide the report cards as required may jeopardize the scholarship

***Expulsion:***

Each student is responsible for maintaining regular attendance, proper conduct and compliance with all policies.

- The Seminole Tribe of Florida Education Department will deny, withdraw or rescind the scholarship from any student who is or has been dismissed or expelled from private school.
- Referrals and assistance to alternate programs and services will be recommended for each student as needed.
- To be considered for any future scholarship, the student will be required to wait until the beginning of the next school year. The parent/guardian will be required to submit a New Application for the Scholarship and must meet all eligibility criteria.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

Before requesting a private school scholarship, the following is required:

- The parent/legal guardian must meet with the local Education Advisor to discuss the student's progress and needs to identify the best educational setting and school.
- All documents must be completed and submitted by/before the application deadline, before the student can be enrolled in the private school.
- Do not withdraw your student from his/her present school until the Private School application is approved by the Education Department.

To allow for the efficient and timely processing of all applications, ensure the following:

- Application: Can be obtained on-line via the Education Department's website, or at the Education department. All applications must be completed in full (no omissions).
- Timeline: All applications can be mailed or dropped off by/before the deadline date(s). No exceptions.
- Notification: Applications will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. Successful applicants will be notified by regular mail and/or by email at the address provided.

### **Education Release/Consent Form:**

An Education Information Release form must be signed by the parent/legal guardian. All education related information (report cards, interim/progress reports, etc.), will be maintained in confidential files.

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## **K-12 TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Education Travel Expenses covered:**

- a. Round trip transportation for student and one parent/chaperone including airfare, hotel, and car rental. Allotted 'per diem' will be paid to Tribal member parent, Tribal member chaperone and/or Education Staff only.
- b. All Travel must be approved/arranged by the Higher Education Program Manager through the STOF's Native American Travel Department.
- c. If a parent/chaperone is not available the student will be accompanied by a Higher Education Recruiter.
- d. Reimbursement for luggage fees is limited to one piece of luggage per student and chaperone. Any additional luggage or excess baggage weight requiring extra fees will be the responsibility of the student, parent and/or chaperone.
- e. Any intent to cancel and/or withdraw from a trip must be communicated to the Education Department within seven (7) working days prior to departure (if and when foreseen and allowable). *Documentation may be required.*
- f. If a student/parent fails to show up on the day of travel, or cancels the trip for reason(s) not approved by the Education Department (*other than emergencies*), the student/parent must reimburse the Education Department all costs incurred.
- g. If the student/parent/chaperone chooses to travel on their own accord, then all travel expenses will be their responsibility, and will not be reimbursable by the Education Department.
- h. All travels must be requested at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the departure date.
- i. The Education Department will not reimburse for the following:
  - a. Gas
  - b. Mileage
  - c. Tolls

### **Student Travel Requirements**

1. Students must be an enrolled member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.



2. K-8 Students will be allowed one (1) out of state school related trip per school year within the Continental United States.
3. High school students (11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> Grade) are allowed two (2) out of state college visits per school year. **International trips will not be sponsored by the Education Department.**

*Note: College Trips must be coordinated through the Higher Education Program.*

4. Students will be allowed to participate in school sponsored field trips and will be allowed to attend field trips sponsored by the Education Department on a case by case basis, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for attendance and GPA.
  5. For general trips with, or those sponsored by the STOF's Education Department, each participating student must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher during the term he/she plans on attending a trip.
- \*\* A GPA of 3.0 or higher is required for those High school students seeking to attend the "Close Up" trip in Washington, D.C.*
6. Students must have a good attendance record for the current year in which travel is to take place. Attendance records will be checked by the STOF's Education Department. If a student has an excessive amount of absences, then the recommendations of **both** the School and the STOF's Education Department will be required to determine the student's eligibility to travel. *Note: Students who are truant will not be eligible to participate in educational trips.*
  7. Students who have behavioral issues on any trip sponsored by the Education Department will be counseled by the appropriate staff member and given an opportunity to make corrective changes. If the student continues to display inappropriate behavior they will be sent home.
  8. Students with a history of behavioral problems on previous trips will be reviewed for eligibility for any subsequent Education sponsored trips.
  9. The Education Department has a zero tolerance drug policy. All students will be drug tested before attending any overnight trips sponsored by the Education Department. Any student found using drugs during a trip sponsored by the Education Department will be sent home immediately and not eligible to attend any other trips for the remainder of the school year.

#### **Rules for Students on Education Department Trips**

1. Students that have passed drug screenings and met all academic requirements for travel will be assigned to an adult chaperone.
2. Students must be respectful and follow the directions of their assigned chaperones. Students must be accompanied by their chaperone at all times during scheduled activities and must keep their chaperone informed of their whereabouts during leisure time. Students are also required to maintain contact with the chaperone during leisure time.
3. Students will share rooms with other students of the same gender and must be in their assigned rooms after curfew. Room checks will be made and any student not in their assigned room will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the trip and sent home.
4. Students must **not** be in the room of any other student of the opposite gender.
  - Any students found at any time in the room of students of the opposite gender will be required to meet with the adult chaperone in charge of the trip.
  - These students may be sent home.

5. Alcohol and drugs are strictly prohibited and any student caught using drugs or alcohol will be sent home. Parents will be notified and a referral requesting a substance abuse evaluation will be sent to Family Services.
6. Students are representing their families and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. It is expected that all students will conduct themselves in accordance with the guidelines of this policy

*Note: Any behavior including but not limited to destruction of property, disrespect to adults or other students, criminal activity, the use of drugs or alcohol, fighting, inappropriate sexual behavior, refusing to comply with written or verbal rules, will result in the student being sent home and the incident will be noted and will impact any consideration for future trips.*

#### **Staff Procedures: Student Travel**

1. The staff member receives the completed Education Department Travel packet (Parent Agreement for Minor Traveling without a Chaperone and/or The Education Department Student Travel Guidelines) from the student or parent.
2. The staff member will review the student's attendance and GPA to confirm eligibility for the trip.
3. If the trip includes overnight stay, the parent and student will be instructed to:
  - a. Schedule a drug screening fourteen (14) days prior to departure date, and
  - b. Sign a release at the clinic/facility for the results to be sent to the STOF Education Department.
4. When the parent returns the signed travel packet and the 'cleared' drug screen has been received, travel arrangements will be requested by the Education Department for the student and accompanying parent or chaperone (if applicable).
5. The staff member will prepare a file for the trip to include the signed travel documents, contact numbers for parents/legal guardians and copies of the travel itineraries. This file will be maintained by the Education Department staff and taken on the trip for information and emergency purposes.
6. If a situation develops that requires a student to be sent home, the department's staff member will notify the K-12 Program Manager and the Administrative Assistant (*verbally and with follow up documentation*) for approval to proceed with the necessary 'return' travel arrangements.
7. The staff member will contact the parent/legal guardian to discuss the situation and arrangements that are being made for the return travel.
8. When the arrangements are finalized, the staff member will contact the parent/legal guardian and develop a clear plan for the student's arrival and pick-up at the destination.
9. The staff member will accompany the student to the airport, assist with airline check-in and accompany the student to the security check-in, and if allowable, to the departure gate.
10. The staff member will remain at the airport until the flight has departed. If the departing flight is delayed, the staff member will stay in contact with the student via cell phone or text to ensure they are secure at the departure gate and remain at the airport until the flight has departed.

11. The staff member will call the parent/guardian after the arrival time to ensure that the student arrived safely and is in the custody of the parent/legal guardian.

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## **K-12 SCHOOL BUS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

This policy is designed to ensure the safety of every student utilizing the bus and will be enforced by the bus drivers and monitors.

1. Bus drivers have the responsibility and authority to document to the local STOF Education Department incidents involving violation of the policy.
2. For violations of the rules other than incidents involving physical contact with another student, or an action against another student, including but not limited to theft, verbal threats or insults, the Education K-12 Advisor, after receiving the referral will contact the parents/legal guardian of the student and issue a verbal warning regarding the incident. A final decision will be made by the K-12 Program Manager and or the Education Department Director.
3. Any subsequent referral(s) for repeated violations will result in a one day suspension from utilizing the bus. Subsequent referrals could result in a suspension of three, five, seven and nine days. Any referral after a nine day suspension will result in a removal from the bus for the rest of the school year.
4. Violations against another student will result in more serious consequences. For referrals involving physical contact with another student, including physical aggression or inappropriate touching can result in a three, five, seven or nine day suspension to be determined by the Education Department.
5. Violations against another student including but not limited to theft, verbal threats or insults can result in a suspension on three, five or seven days to be determined by the Education Department.
6. The Education Department is responsible for the safety of all the students that utilize the buses, and as such, reserves the right to remove any student from riding Tribal vehicles if/when they have endangered the lives of other students, bus personnel, pedestrians or other motorists.
7. All incidents other than those resulting in a verbal warning (see # 2) will be reported in a letter to the parents/legal guardian of the student and a copy of the letter will be documented in the student's file.

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## COMPUTER POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Education Department Policy and Procedures request for computers (iPad, laptop, Microsoft Pro 3 tablet, personal computer) is as follows:

### **Students Grade 6 – 12:**

1. All middle and high school students are eligible to receive a computer but must have a letter from their school stating that a computer is **REQUIRED**.
2. Computers **required** by schools for students in grades 6 -12 will be provided by the Education Department. The parent/legal guardian will be responsible for an i-Tunes account (if required), printers and any expenses other than books, including but not limited to all damage, upgrades, and replacement costs for lost units.
3. Students receiving a computer from any Education Department program will not be eligible to receive another unit for five years from the date the first one is received.
4. The computers purchased by the Education Department for students grades 6 -12 will not exceed a purchased price of \$1,200. All expenses that exceed \$1,200 will be the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. This includes but is not limited to more expensive computers, additional software, i-Tunes accounts, printers, wireless and cell service, and accessories.

### **Higher Education Students:**

1. Both full time (12 credit hours) and part time (9 credit hours) Higher Education students are eligible for a computer only after being enrolled for thirty days in their course of study.
2. The student must provide proof of current enrollment status and be in good standing with their tribal scholarship.
3. The Education Department will reimburse the Tribal Member for the purchase of the unit not to exceed \$1,200.
4. Higher Education students are eligible to receive a computer every five years if they meet the enrollment requirements.

5. The student will be responsible for an i-Tunes account (if required), printers, and any expenses other than books, including but not limited to all damage, upgrades, and replacement costs for lost units.

**Vocational School Students:**

1. Vocational school students are eligible for a computer after being enrolled for thirty (30) days in their course of study.
2. The student must provide proof of current enrollment status and be in good standing with their tribal scholarship.
3. The Education Department will reimburse the Tribal Member for the purchase of the computer not to exceed \$1,200 with the submission of original purchasing receipt.
4. Vocation school students are eligible to receive a computer every five years if they meet the enrollment requirements.
5. The student will be responsible for an i-Tunes account (if required), printers and any expenses other than books, including but not limited to all damage, upgrades, and replacement costs for lost units.

**NOTE: The following applies to all students:**

1. If the student's tuition is inclusive of a computer, the student is not eligible for a unit through the Education Department.
2. Each parent/legal guardian/student must sign the Computer Agreement upon receipt of the unit.
3. In the event that it is discovered that a student has used his/her computer in an inappropriate manner as determined by the Education Department the computer may be confiscated and the Education may refuse to provide a replacement to the student.

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## **HOME EDUCATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

- A. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian or home school administrator to notify the district school superintendent of the county in which the parent/legal guardian resides of his or her intent to establish and maintain a home education program.
1. The notice must be in writing, signed by the parent/legal guardian, and must include the names, addresses, and birthdates of all children who will be enrolled as students in the home education program.
  2. The notice must be filed in the district superintendent's office within 30 days of the establishment of the home education program.
  3. If the student is presently enrolled in a school, the parent/legal guardian must 'officially' withdraw the student from the school.

*Note: This process insures that the students are not considered drop outs or truant from the public school system.*

- B. The Home Education Scholarship is provided annually and must be completed, submitted and approved prior to the beginning of the school year. Parents/legal guardians renewing must submit applications prior to July 15<sup>th</sup>.
- C. Parents/legal guardians who choose the home education option must submit a copy of the letter of intent (form) to the Education Director or designee and complete a Pre-Qualifying Application for Home School, for:
1. review
  2. approval of the plan
  3. approval of the accreditation of the provider
  4. to verify certification of the instructor(s), and curriculum
- D. If the Pre-Qualifying Application is approved, the parent/legal guardian will be provided a Home Education Scholarship Application that must be completed and submitted for the Director of Education or designee to authorize payment for services. Upon review and final approval by the Director of Education or designee, applicable expenses from the date of final approval will be eligible for reimbursement and students will be eligible for support services provided by the Education Department.

*Note: Parents/legal guardians that do not submit the required letter of intent to the Director of Education or designee, or do not complete the Home Education Scholarship application and receive approval from the department, will not be reimbursed for any expenses for Home Education.*

- E. The home school teacher must maintain a portfolio of records and materials for each student. The portfolio must consist of the following:
1. A log of educational activities that is recorded daily, including the instruction provided, text books and materials used and all assignments.
  2. Samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks, or creative materials used or developed by the student.

*Note: Failure to produce the portfolio(s) upon request will result in a recommendation to the Director of Education for a referral to the Truancy Coordinator of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Further failure to comply with the request to produce the portfolio(s) will result in a referral to the Tribal Truancy Committee. Reimbursements for any subsequent books, materials etc., will be suspended.*

- F. The home school teacher must present a detailed progress report for each student to the Education Department on the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Monday of every month for review. The report will include but not be limited to:
1. Grades for each subject
  2. Attendance (if applicable)
  3. Any concerns the teacher has regarding the student
  4. A summary from the teacher regarding the student's overall performance

After required reviews, the reports will be kept in the student's Education Department file.

The monthly student reports will result in the following:

1. Students that are not making adequate progress will be evaluated by the Education Department for additional services.
  2. The student's progress will be reviewed the next month. If the performance issues are still present, the student will be referred to the K-12 Program Manager to develop an intervention plan.
  3. The intervention plan will be designed to address the issues and needs of the student.
  4. The student may be referred for evaluation by the Center for Diagnostics and Therapy (CCDT), Family Services or other service providers (if applicable).
- G. The plan for any/all students referred for performance issues in Home Education will include but not be limited to:
1. The home school teacher will be given thirty (30) school days to improve their student's performance.
  2. During this thirty (30) day period, the home school teacher must keep a daily log of all student work and educational activities, noting the date, time spent on subject areas, the names of thirty (30) day period the student's work must be evaluated by a certified teacher holding a valid State Certificate to teach academic subjects. The teacher must note the student's progress and sign the report.
  3. The homeschool administration/teacher must submit the teacher's evaluation to the STOF's K-12 Program Manager, Director of Education or designee. After the evaluation is reviewed, the K-12 Program Manager will provide a letter to the parent/legal guardian with recommendations including but not limited to: continuation of the home education plan,



discontinuing the home education plan to consider a more suitable placement in a traditional school setting or subsequent referrals to service providers for additional intervention.

*Note: Parents/legal guardians/students/ who fall within a non-compliance status or refuse to comply with the recommendations from the Education Department or designated service providers will face immediate suspension of the Home Education Scholarship including all financial support and support services. The parents/legal guardians will be referred to the Truancy Coordinator for additional intervention.*

- H. The portfolio will be preserved by the parent/legal guardian for two years and must be made available for review by the district school superintendent, or the district school superintendent's agent upon 15 days written notice.
  - 1. Parent/legal guardian is required to submit a copy of the written notice received from the district school requesting review to the Education Department.
  - 2. A copy of the student's portfolio will be kept in the Education Department and updated after each review.
- I. The home school teacher will provide for an annual educational evaluation.
  - 1. The evaluation must be accredited and accurately document that the student is achieving educational progress according to expectations for his/her grade level.
  - 2. The home school teacher must select the method of grade level appropriate evaluation and must file a copy evaluation annually with the district school superintendent's office in the county where the student resides.
  - 3. The parent/legal guardian will also present a copy of the annual evaluation to the Education Department of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The annual educational evaluation will consist of one of the following:

- A. A teacher selected by the parent/legal guardian must evaluate the student's educational progress upon review of the portfolio and discussion with the student. The teacher selected must hold a valid regular State certificate to teach academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level OR
- B. The student must take any nationally accredited, normed student achievement test administered by a certified teacher and produce (passing) results to the STOF Education Department and the prevailing School District. OR
- C. The student must take a state student assessment test used by the school district and administered by a certified teacher, at a location and under testing conditions approved by the school district and Education Department of the Seminole Tribe of Florida; and produce (passing) results to the STOF Education Department and the prevailing School District. OR
- D. The student will be evaluated by an individual holding a valid, active State Teaching Certificate and produce (passing) results to the STOF Education Department and the prevailing School District. OR
- E. The student will be evaluated with any other valid measurement tool as mutually agreed upon by the district school superintendent of the district where the student resides, the Education Department of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the student's parent/legal Guardian and produce (passing) results to the STOF Education Department and the prevailing School District. OR
- F. When the annual evaluation indicates that the student has not achieved adequate progress or is performing below ability, the student will be referred to the K-12 Program Manager for review and recommendations. The K-12 Program manager after review and consultation with the Education Director and appropriate sources will notify the parent/legal guardian with the recommendations. Recommendations will include but not be limited to:

1. Reinstatement in Home Education on a probation status. The student will be given 30 school days at the beginning of the next school year to improve performance. The student's progress will be reviewed and followed by additional recommendations.
2. Denial of Home Education scholarship with a recommendation for an alternative educational placement.
3. Referral for further evaluation or services.

*Note: Education Department's approval for continuation in the home education program will be contingent upon the student demonstrating educational progress commensurate with his or her ability at the end of the probationary period.*

*Note: Parents/legal guardians who refuse to comply with the recommendations of the Education Department or designated service provider, will be denied for the Home Education Scholarship. The student may be referred to the Truancy Coordinator for review and intervention.*

A written termination of the home education program will be created by the Education Department and filed in the district school superintendent's office within thirty (30) days after said termination.

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## **APPROVED “STATE” VIRTUAL SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1. The parent/legal guardian of a Seminole Tribal member students who want to sign up for an approved State’s “Virtual School” to achieve extra credit or make up credit, must meet with the local STOF K-12 Advisor in the Education Department.

- The K-12 Advisor will contact the public school and make arrangements for the class/classes.
- The student will be required to access the Virtual system and complete the assignments.
- The K-12 Advisor will assist with issues, request tutoring if necessary and monitor the student’s progress.

2. Seminole Tribal member students who elect to enroll “full time” in the State’s Virtual program must complete and agree to the following guidelines:

- A. The student and parent/legal guardian must meet with the local K-12 Advisor to discuss the State’s Virtual School option.
- B. After discussion and review of the student’s academic standing, if the K-12 Advisor agrees with the Virtual school option, the student and parent/legal guardian will:
- Complete The Virtual School Application Form attesting that the student will be enrolled in a minimum of four (4) academic core classes: Mathematics, Science, English and Social Studies **and** two (2) elective classes that will keep the student on track for high school graduation.
  - The parent/legal guardian and the student agree to complete all requirements for high school graduation including FCAT testing, EOC exams, achieving the 24 required credits and maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.0.
  - The student will agree to do the work and keep abreast with the assignment requirements.
  - The student will report any issues or difficulties to the K-12 Advisor in a timely manner.
- C. The student and parent/legal guardian agree to follow the K-12 Advisor’s direction regarding:
- Scheduling classes.
  - Further evaluation by the Education Department for additional services.
  - Alternative options if the student is not successful in the Virtual Program.

3. Students who are dropped from the Virtual program due to failure to complete assignment(s), must consult with the K-12 Advisor regarding alternative options, including but not limited to,

- enrolling into regular school classes
- enrolling into a private school (if approved)
- enroll in the STOF GED program (if appropriate)

4. Students who are dropped from the Virtual program that do not contact the K-12 Advisor or who do not reenroll in an alternative option will be referred to the K-12 Program Manager for intervention.

- The K-12 Program Manager will contact the student and parent/legal guardian and discuss alternative options and offer assistance.
- Students who are not reenrolled after these interventions have been offered will be referred to the Truancy Coordinator for review and recommendations.

5. The Truancy Coordinator will contact the student and parent/legal guardian and discuss the situation, alternative options, and the consequences of failing to reenroll the student.

- Students who are not reenrolled after these interventions have been offered will be referred to the Truancy Committee for review and recommendations.

**Education Department**

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## **TRUANCY POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Purpose:**

To address the issue of truancy, the Tribal Council passed Resolution C-319-10 establishing the Tribal Truancy Committee and Tribal Wide Truancy Policy. Amendments were made to the Truancy Committee and Truancy Policy in Resolutions C-166-11 and C-059-12.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida Truancy Policy applies to all enrolled Tribal member students and is applicable to students in public school, private school, home education, treatment programs and all other educational settings or institutions.

### **Defined Terms:**

**Active Truant** – is a student who is on the initial 10 day monitor status period, 30 day secondary monitor period and during the period of time the student’s per capita payment is being banked. The student will be deemed an active truant until they achieve compliance with the attendance requirements.

**Compliance** – is achieved when the parents and students have met the attendance requirements and/or other stipulations assigned by the Truancy Coordinator or Truancy Committee.

**Monitor status** – Once the student becomes compliant with the attendance requirements, they will be removed from active truant status, but will remain in a monitoring status:

1. Monitor One status: is for the initial 10 day school period (Procedure 3a.). (Active status)
2. Monitor Two status: is for the rest of the school year (Procedure 4). (Compliant status)
3. Monitor Three status: is for students who have their per capita payment banked (Active status).
  - a) Student attendance will be monitored for two years from the date their per capita payment is banked.
  - b) Students who meet and maintain the attendance requirements will be considered compliant.

**Non-compliance** - is when the parents or students have not met the attendance requirements and/or other stipulations assigned by the Truancy Coordinator and/or the Truancy Committee.

**Tardy** – is recorded when students are late for school and/or classes. At some schools multiple tardies are compiled and tabulated as unexcused absences.

**Truant** - a student will be deemed truant when he/she has recorded seven (7) unexcused absences in a ninety (90) day period, or has been referred for truancy by a school, school district or other source.

**Unexcused absence** - is any absence that is not excused by a parental note, medical note, or a note from the Seminole Tribe Education Department excusing absences due to the death of a family/tribal member or department sponsored trips or activities.

### **Truancy Policy:**

#### ***Student Attendance:***

- Maximum allowable number of absences for each school year is not to exceed ten (10) days.
- Upon the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence the student's attendance will be closely monitored and the student may be deemed truant thereafter.
- Seven (7) unexcused absences within a ninety (90) day school period will result in a referral to Truancy. Truancy can affect any future eligibility to the private school scholarship.
- If the student becomes compliant with truancy policy requirements and school standards, the student's status will be reinstated to "*approved*" by the Education department
- After three (3) consecutive days of absences due to illness, the parent/legal guardian will be required to present a certified medical note to the Education Department.
- A signed note from the parent/legal guardian is required in the event of absences due to a death in the immediate family and/or Clan.
- Failure to provide required medical notes to the Education Department will result in the absence being deemed unexcused
- If the student's attendance has not improved, the scholarship will be placed into denial status.
- The department will cease paying for the private school costs while the scholarship is in denial status and any outstanding balances will be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians

### **Truancy Committee:**

The Truancy Committee consists of representatives from each of the following departments: Seminole Police Department, Family Services Department, Education Department, the Pemaeytv Emahakv Charter School and the Ahfachkee School. The Committee also includes two tribal members from the Hollywood, Big Cypress, Immokalee and Brighton reservations, and may include one tribal member representative from the Ft. Pierce, Tampa, Naples and Trail communities. The Truancy Committee convenes on the third Wednesday of each month, or as necessary to review Truancy referrals received and processed by the Truancy Coordinator.

### **GED Students:**

The Truancy Committee authorized by Tribal Council Resolution C-319-10, recognizes that GED may be the best option for some students to complete their high school education.

- Students under the age of 18 who withdraw or drop out of school will be contacted by the Education Department.
- The student will be notified that they are required to enroll in an approved GED program within five (5) business days.
- The student must submit verification regarding the enrollment to the Education Department. Students who do not comply with GED enrollment will be referred to the Truancy Coordinator.

**Home Education Students:**

Home Education is based primarily on performance consistent with applicable State Statutes and policies of the Education Department of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

- The Education Department will monitor settings where attendance is recorded and follow the standard procedure for referrals to the Truancy Committee (if/when applicable).
- The Education Department will also work diligently to address performance issues with Home Education Students.
- If/When interventions have been applied without positive results, the students will be referred to the Truancy Committee for review and recommendations.

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## **TRUANCY COMMITTEE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1. The Truancy Committee will meet on the third Wednesday of each month, including a representative from the referral source, to staff the case, discuss issues and the efforts that have been made to address the situation and recommend solutions.
2. A letter with a meeting time, date, location and reason for the meeting with the Truancy Coordinator will be mailed to the parents/legal guardians, followed by a phone call to confirm the meeting with the parents/legal guardians.
  - a) If the parents/legal guardians fail to attend the first meeting with the Truancy Coordinator:
    - a second meeting with the Truancy Coordinator will be scheduled within ten (10) business days and
    - a letter will be hand delivered to the parents/legal guardians by the Seminole Police Department, or via certified mail to the known address or as an attachment to the monthly per capita payment via the Office of Trust Management or the Treasurer's Office.
  - b) If the parents/legal guardians fail to attend the second meeting with the Truancy Coordinator after being duly notified:
    - the Truancy Coordinator will inform the Truancy Committee and the Committee will recommend, with supporting documentation to the Executive Administrative Officer (EAO), that the student's monthly per capita payment be withheld.
    - The EAO will review the recommendation and documentation and if the recommendation is approved, the student's per capita payment will be withheld until the parents/legal guardians and student(s) become compliant with the guidelines of the Truancy Policy.
    - All banked monies will be automatically deposited into the student's minor special trust account.
3. The Truancy Coordinator, parents/legal guardians and a committee member from the respective reservation may be present to review and discuss the truancy issues, the actions taken to address the issues and the Committee's policy as stipulated below:
  - a) The parents/legal guardians will be placed in Monitor One status and given ten (10) school days to improve their student's attendance.
  - b) During the ten (10) day school day period, the student(s) must attend school every day.



- c) Only absences excused by a physician's note or absences due to the death in the immediate family/clan will be excused.
  - d) Students are required to maintain timely and consistent attendance.
4. If the student complies and remains in attendance for the ten (10) school day period, the student will be removed from 'Monitor One' status and placed on Monitor Two Status for the remainder of the school year. Thereafter, the student(s)'s attendance will be consistently monitored and evaluated.
    - a) Any further unexcused absences or excessive tardiness during the school year will result in a second referral to the Truancy Committee. Excessive tardiness is also determined by the policy of the referring school and subject to the Truancy Committee's evaluation.
    - b) If a second referral is made to the Truancy Committee within the same school year, the Committee will follow the guidelines set forth in Section 5 of the policy.
  5. If the student is not in compliance during the ten (10) school day period and unexcused absences or excessive tardiness, a recommendation with accompanying documentation will be sent to the EAO to bank the student(s)'s monthly per capita payment.
    - a) The student and parents/legal guardians will be given a period of thirty (30) school days to comply with the Committee's recommendation.
    - b) During the thirty (30) school day period, the student(s) must maintain consistent attendance, must be punctual on a daily basis, and must not have any unexcused absences-
    - c) Only those absences with a documented physician's note, or absences due to the death of an immediate family member/clan, will be excused.
    - d) If the student/parents/legal guardians comply with the Committee's recommendations, at the end of the thirty (30) school day period, the Committee will submit a recommendation with accompanying documentation to the EAO to release the student(s)'s monthly per capita payment.
    - e) If the student/parents/legal guardians continue to be noncompliant, the student's monthly per capita payment will continue to be withheld/banked until all requirements have been satisfied.
    - f) All withheld/banked monies will be deposited into the student's minor special trust account and will be disbursed in accordance to the regulations of the Office of Trust Management.
  6. Any parent/legal guardian that has been referred to the Truancy Committee and their student's monthly per capita payment withheld/banked will be placed on Monitor Three status for a period of two (2) calendar years from the date of the withholding of the per capita payment.
    - a) A subsequent referral to the Committee during the two (2) year period will be treated as a 'noncompliance' case and a recommendation with accompanying documentation will be sent to the EAO to bank the student's per capita payment until compliance is met in accordance to the Truancy Committee policy.

### **Special Situations**

*Note: Students referred to truancy at the end of the school year will be reviewed by the Committee at the summer meeting scheduled in July and follow-up will proceed according to policy requirements. Students*

*on the truancy report at the end of the school year will also be reviewed at the July meeting according to policy.*

*Note: Students admitted to residential treatment programs during the school year will be reviewed by the Committee with the Family Services Department.*

- If the program does not have an educational component for the student to attend, the Committee will send a recommendation with accompanying documentation to the EAO to withhold/bank the student(s)'s per capita payment.*
- The student's case will be reviewed at the end of treatment and if the student is enrolled in school and complying with all other Committee requirements and recommendations, the EAO will be updated accordingly.*
- The student will be monitored according to the terms of this policy.*

*Note: The Truancy Coordinator will update the Truancy Committee regarding students who become compliant during the interval between committee meetings.*

- The Committee will review and prepare recommendations and forward to the Truancy Coordinator.*
- The Truancy Coordinator will prepare a report with accompanying documentation for the EAO requesting the release of the student's per capita payment. \* This only applies to students who are on Monitor One status who are able to achieve compliance in the interval between Committee meetings.*

*Note: If the regular scheduled Truancy Committee meeting is cancelled and has to be rescheduled, the Truancy Coordinator will provide a report to the committee members.*

- The Committee members will review the report and provide recommendations to the Truancy Coordinator.*
- The Truancy Coordinator will prepare a report with accompanying documentation and submit to the EAO for appropriate action.*

### **Truancy Procedures for GED Students**

If a student elects to pursue a GED in lieu of completing High School, the follow will apply:

1. The Truancy Coordinator will meet with the parents/legal guardians and the student to discuss enrollment into an approved GED program. The student will be given five (5) business days to enroll in the GED program. Once enrolled the following stipulations apply:
  - a. The student will be assigned a tutor and will be required to study for the GED exam for a minimum of ten (10) hours per week for thirty (30) days.
  - b. The student's progress will be monitored and documented by the Education Department.
  - c. Students, who enroll after the required five (5) business days, must meet the minimum ten (10) hours study requirement for thirty (30) day.
  - d. If the student does not meet the ten (10) hour study requirement, the Truancy Coordinator will be notified.

- e. The student is required to complete the GED program within six months unless the student has an IEP and/or the Director of Education has approved for the student to continue the GED process.
  - f. Students will be assisted by the Education Department to satisfy the requirements of the local school boards. If necessary, additional time may be approved by the Director of Education for students to meet the requirements.
2. The Truancy Coordinator will prepare a referral regarding the student and present it to the Truancy Committee. The following stipulations will be applied:
    - a) The Truancy Committee will recommend (with accompanying documentation) to the EAO that the student's monthly per capita payment be withdrawn/banked until compliance for the minimum study requirement of ten (10) hours is met for thirty (30) days or the student passes the GED exam.
    - b) The student's progress will be monitored by the Truancy Coordinator and once the student meets compliance with the study requirements, the Committee will be notified. The Committee will recommend with accompanying documentation to the EAO that the student's monthly per capita payment be released.
  3. The student will remain under the supervision of the Education Department and be required to meet the minimum requirement of ten (10) hours of study until they complete the GED, or until the program ends, in accordance with the Education Department policy.
  4. Students who have been reported to be withdrawn, or have dropped out from school, and have been contacted by the Truancy Coordinator or Education Department staff and refuse to sign up for the GED, will be referred to the Truancy Committee.
    - a. The Committee will recommend with accompanying documentation to the EAO to withdraw/bank the student's monthly per capita payment until the student enrolls in an approved GED program, meets the minimum ten (10) hours of study requirement for thirty (30) days or passes the GED.
    - b. Students who become compliant by signing up for the GED will be monitored and supervised according to the requirements and stipulations of this policy.

