Attendance Policy/Procedure

To ensure that children and families receive optimal benefit from the Head Start Program it is crucial to maintain regular attendance and punctuality. Head Start Staff will emphasize the benefits of regular attendance and work with the family when a child’s attendance is of concern. (The child has missed two consecutive days of classroom or has missed two consecutive home based home visits)

Policy/Procedure:

- Parent(s) or Guardian(s) must contact the Head Start Staff on the first day of the child’s absence or home visit cancellation. For center-based options, if the parent or guardian has not made contact after 1 hour of the program start time then the staff must initiate contact. Staff efforts will be tracked on the CACFP attendance tracking form.

- Head Start classroom staff must contact the Family Support Specialist or Community Relations Manager when a child has been absent for 2 consecutive days or has missed 2 consecutive home based home visits without contact from the parent/guardian. If the family does not have a telephone or other method of contact, a home visit must be made.

- In the event of a planned absence, advance notice must be given by the Head Start parent in writing and mailed to the Community Relations Manager one week prior to the planned absence. A form is provided in the Parent Handbook and staff have electronic copies.

- In the event of an extended, unexcused absence of 4 consecutive days or 3 consecutive home-based home visits a child may be dropped from the program and replaced by a child on the waiting list. The dropped child may be readmitted when a vacancy occurs at the site, depending on their eligibility status and point ranking.

- A child ill for more than 4 consecutive days in the classroom may be required to have a physician’s verification to be determined an approved extended absence.

- Center-based children consistently attending less than 85% of the time, without an approved excuse, may be at risk of being dropped from the program. (For example, children consistently missing one day a week for a prolonged period of time.) The Family Support Specialist and Community Relations Manager will work with the parent/guardian to improve the child’s attendance before dropping the child from the program through in person contacts and the tiered attendance warnings letters.

- Within the first 60 days of program start date and regularly thereafter, the parents or guardians of all classroom enrollees will receive a report on their child’s attendance as well as information about the importance of attendance.

- Attendance will be monitored weekly and reported on monthly by the Community Relations Manager. If program attendance drops below 85%, all excuses will be analyzed and, when necessary, strategies to improve attendance will be implemented.

- Families will be encouraged to be punctual when attending classrooms or maintaining home visits. In cases of persistent tardiness, staff and the Community Relations Manager will work with the family to identify any needs of the family to improve
punctuality. Excessive and prolonged tardiness may result in a child being dropped from the program.

- A child will be counted as present, regardless of what time they leave, if they are in the classroom at the time when attendance is tracked in the Child Plus system. Children who arrive after attendance is tracked will be changed to present.

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45CFR Section 1302.16

Approved by Policy Council on 10-3-18.