

Student Attendance

I. Purpose

- A. The School Board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, creates a safe learning environment, benefits students socially, provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students, and establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. It is intended to be positive and not punitive.
- B. This policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parent or guardian, teacher, and administrators. This policy will assist students in attending class on time.

II. General Statement of Policy

A. Responsibilities

1. Student's Responsibility

It is the student's right to be in school. It is also the student's responsibility to attend all assigned classes every day, on time, and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures in this policy and outlined in parent and student handbooks when absent from an assigned class or study hall. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to absence.

2. Parent or Guardian's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to ensure the student is attending school, inform the school in the event of a student absence, follow the correct procedures outlined in this policy and in parent student handbooks, and work cooperatively with the school and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

3. Teacher's Responsibility

It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class. It is also the teacher's

responsibility to be familiar with all procedures outline in this policy and in handbooks governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly. It is also the teacher's responsibility to provide any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request. Finally, it is the teacher's responsibility to work cooperatively with the student's parent or guardian and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

4. **Administrator's Responsibility**

- a. It is the administrator's responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes. It is also the administrator's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly to all students, to maintain accurate records on student attendance. Finally, it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the student's parents or guardian of the student's attendance and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.
- b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, the students of the school district are REQUIRED to attend all assigned classes every day school is in session, unless the student has been excused by the school board from attendance because the student has already completed state and school district standards required to graduate from high school, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Definition of Absences

If a student has missed 15 consecutive school days during the regular school year or five consecutive school days during summer school or intersession classes of flexible school year programs without receiving instruction in the home or hospital setting, the school district must drop the student from its enrollment roll and classify the student as withdrawn for funding purposes. *See* Minn. Stat. § 126C.05, Subd. 8.

1. **Excused Absences**

- a. To be considered an excused absence, upon request, the student's parent or legal guardian will be asked to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. A note from a physician or licensed mental health professional stating that the student cannot attend school is a valid excuse.
- b. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:
 - 1) Illness.

- 2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- 3) A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- 4) Medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment, or a counseling appointment.
- 5) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- 6) Religious instruction not to exceed three hours any week.
- 7) Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- 8) Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
- 9) Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension. Suspensions are to be handled as excused absences and students will be permitted to complete make-up work.
- 10) Family emergencies.
- 11) Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
- 12) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.

c. Consequences of Excused Absences

- 1) Student whose absences are excused are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher.

2. Unexcused Absences

a. The following are examples of absences which will not be excused:

- 1) Truancy. An absence by a student, which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.
- 2) Any absence in which reporting requirements were not met.
- 3) Work at home.
- 4) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (3 tardies equal one unexcused absence).
- 5) Any other absence not included under the excused absences in this policy.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- 1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. § 121A.40-121A.56., and will not be counted in a student's total cumulated unexcused absences.
- 2) In cases of recurring unexcused absences, the administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.

- 3) Student with unexcused absences shall be subject to discipline in the following manner:
 - a. After 3 accumulated unexcused absences a student's parent or guardian will be notified by mail.
 - b. After such notification, the student or his or her parent or guardian may, within a reasonable time, request a conference with school officials regarding the student's absences and the prescribed discipline. The notification will state that the school strongly urges student's parent or guardian to request such a conference.

C. Tardiness

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.
2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness
 - a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office for an admission slip.
 - b. Tardiness between periods will be handled by the teacher.

3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

- a. Illness.
- b. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- c. A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- d. Medical, dental, orthodontic, or mental health treatment.
- e. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- f. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- g. Any tardiness for which the student has been excused in writing by an administrator or faculty member.

4. Unexcused Tardiness

- a. An unexcused tardiness is failing to be in an assigned area at the designated time class period commences without a valid excuse.

D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored Programs

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day.

2. School-initiated absences will be accepted and participation permitted.
3. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.

III. Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students and parents at the commencement of each school year. This policy shall also be available upon request in the District Office.

IV. Required Reporting

A. Continuing Truant

Minn. Stat. provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minn. Stat. and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat., without valid excuse within a single school year for:

1. Three days if the child is in elementary school.

B. Reporting Responsibilities

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. provides that the Director or other designated school official shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

1. That the child is truant;
2. That the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
3. That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school pursuant to Minn. Stat. and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minn. Stat.
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat.
5. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the district;
6. That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
7. That if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under Minn. Stat.;
8. That if the child is subject to juvenile court proceeding, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat.; and
9. That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

C. Habitual Truant

1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 16 or 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school.
2. The Director or other designated school official shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent and legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minnesota Statute.