

## **503 STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

### **I. PURPOSE**

- A. The school board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, 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.

### **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 and study halls every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class or study hall. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to an 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, to inform the school in the event of a student absence, and to 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 and study hall. It is also the teacher's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures 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 and study halls. 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 and to prepare a list of the previous day's absences stating the status of each. Finally, it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the student's parent 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 and/or study halls 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. Attendance Procedures

Attendance procedures shall be presented to the school board for review and approval. When approved by the school board, the attendance procedures will be included as an addendum to this policy.

**Elementary School Attendance**

Regular school attendance is a great boost to success in school. Please call the superintendent's office @ 436-2261 by 9 a.m. to report your child's absence. You may also call 436-3333 to leave a message for your child's teacher. When returning to school, please send a note explaining the absence. Also include in writing, needs for student to be excused from any school activities such as physical education or recess. It is the school board's policy that in order to receive credit in any school year in the elementary, a student cannot miss more than 28 days in a full school year. This may be appealed to the administration for legitimate reasons.

**Secondary School Attendance**

If a student is absent, a parent/guardian must call the high school office (436-2374) and report the absence, preferably between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. If this call cannot be made, the student must bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian on their return. The note must indicate the specific reason for the absence.

Without a call or note, the absence will be unexcused. The principal will make the final determination of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

### **Minimum Attendance Policy**

It is the school board's policy that in order to receive credit in any subject, a student cannot miss more than 14 days in a semester course or 28 days in a full year course. The school will send a notice to the child's parent or legal guardian by mail when the child has reached 7 days in one semester and thereafter every time another absence is recorded so that the parent may be kept up to date on their child's absence record. Any student missing more than the maximum will not receive credit for the course. A student or parent who wishes to appeal a denial of credit based on extenuating circumstances may appear before the school board to show cause. In the case of extended illness, students are encouraged to notify the school so that the possibility of homebound instruction can be explored. Such instruction will be provided upon a doctor's directive. If a student shows a dangerous pattern of absences, the principal will issue written warnings to the student and parents/guardians. Disciplinary or legal action may be taken. Individual teachers may make more restrictive rules involving attendance and make-up work within the confines of state guidelines and law.

### **Procedure Following Absences**

1. Students absent for an entire day must report to the high school office before 8:25 a.m. the following day to receive a make-up slip.
2. Students absent for part of a day must report to the high school office upon their return to school.
3. Work must be made up in the time allowed (2 days per excused absence) to receive credit. Makeup tests must be completed after school during the makeup test/detention session.
4. Unexcused absences will result in loss of credit for the time missed and disciplinary action.

### **Excused Absences**

Examples of excused absences are illness, professional appointments (medical, dental, eye), family emergencies, court appearances, death or illness in the family, funerals, work at home required by the parent, and religious trips. Seniors will be excused for two days during the year for college visits after seeing the counselor to set up a visit. A College Visit Form must be completed, signed, and on file in the high school office prior to the scheduled visit.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Examples of unexcused absences are oversleeping, missing the school bus, haircut appointments, tanning appointments, personal matters, work for an employer, shopping trips and skipping. The principal will make the final determination as to whether the absence is excused.

### **Student Personal Leave**

Each student in grades 10-12 will be allowed one personal day that can be taken, with prearranged parental/guardian excuse, for things not listed as excused

absences. Examples such as hunting, fishing, and shopping will apply. After the personal day is used, only acceptable reasons as described earlier will be excused. Personal days will not be allowed during the last two weeks of the school year. Personal days will not be allowed for any student who has incomplete/failing grades, outstanding detentions, or excessive absences. (7 or more days absent in one semester is considered excessive) Students in grades 7-9 will not be allowed a personal day but will be allowed one day for deer hunting, which must be pre-arranged with a parental/guardian excuse.

### **Tardy Procedure**

Students who are tardy to 1st period classes must report to the high school office for an admittance slip to class. Students must bring a signed note from a parent or guardian or the tardy will be unexcused. Oversleeping, personal reasons, eating breakfast, errands, or habitual car trouble are not valid excuses. Teachers will deal with students who are tardy to all other classes.

### **Truancy**

A pupil is a continuing truant if absent from school without valid excuse for three or more class periods on three days. Parents have the primary legal responsibility for educating their child. Frivolous reasons for absences that accumulate in numbers and jeopardize academic progress could constitute neglect. In normal situations, a student missing more than four (4) days in a quarter will probably suffer a lower grade. When there is no evidence that the parent is aware of the student's absence, parents will be phoned to verify their student's absence.

### **Skipping School/Classes**

Any student who is clearly missing from school without permission is considered skipping and will serve detention time equal to double the time skipped or will serve In-School Suspension(s).

### **Student Sign In and Sign Out**

Any student, regardless of age, who wishes to leave the school anytime during the day must have a written request from a parent or a call from home. This must be arranged before 8:25 a.m. or during lunch hour. Students must sign out at the office.

### **Illness and Injury**

A student who becomes ill must report to the office. Students will not be allowed to leave the building unless a parent comes for them or is informed of their leaving the school. Students who are injured in school should report the injury at once to the teacher in charge or to the school office. Each family is responsible for the costs of injury in all classes and athletics. An insurance waiver will be kept on file for all participants before the student can be in any activity.

### **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 principal's office.

### **IV. REQUIRED REPORTING**

#### **A. Continuing Truant**

Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for:

1. Three days if the child is in elementary school; or
2. Three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

#### **B. Reporting Responsibility**

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 provides that the school attendance officer 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. § 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
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. Ch. 260;

8. That if the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 260C.201; 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. A school district attendance officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 (Compulsory Instruction)  
Minn. Stat. § 120A.24 (Reporting)  
Minn. Stat. § 120A.26 (Enforcement and Prosecution)  
Minn. Stat. § 120A.28 (School Boards and Teachers, Duties)  
Minn. Stat. § 120A.30 (Attendance Officers)  
Minn. Stat. § 120A.34 (Violations; Penalties)  
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)  
Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 (Notice to Parent or Guardian When Child is Continuing Truant)  
Minn. Stat. § 260C.007, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant Defined)  
*Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565, 95 S.Ct. 729 (1975)  
*Slocum v. Holton Board of Education*, 429 N.W.2d 607 (Mich. App. Ct. 1988)  
*Campbell v. Board of Education of New Milford*, 475 A.2d 289 (Conn. 1984)  
*Hamer v. Board of Education of Township High School District No. 113*, 66 Ill. App.3d 7 (1978)  
*Gutierrez v. School District R-1*, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)  
*Knight v. Board of Education*, 38 Ill. App. 3d 603, 348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)  
*Dorsey v. Bale*, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)