

AHS Attendance Information

Taken from the 2018-19 Student Handbook

ATTENDANCE POLICY (503)

GRADE 9-12 STUDENTS

MINNESOTA STATE ATTENDANCE LAW

The Minnesota compulsory instruction law requires students between the ages of seven and seventeen to receive educational instruction by attending school. (Minnesota Statute 120A.22) When a student fails to attend school as required by law, or repeatedly skips classes, the student may be disciplined by suspension or expulsion.

The School District reserves the right to require medical documentation in order to excuse an absence.

CONTINUAL TRUANT

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

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

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minnesota Statute 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 Minnesota Statute 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minnesota Statute 120A.34;
4. that this notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statute 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 Minnesota Statute Chapter 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 Minnesota Statute 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.

HABITUAL TRUANT

1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 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 truancy officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minnesota Statute Chapter 260A.

Regular attendance in all classes is vital to insuring a quality learning experience and productive future for all students. Classroom experiences are both meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Regular class attendance instills self-discipline, exposes the students to group interactions with teachers and fellow students, enables the student to hear and participate in class discussions, and involves the student in educational experiences not available in other circumstances. Make-up assignments can never fully replace the learning experience students' miss when they are absent from class.

The Austin High School attendance policy is based on the following beliefs:

1. Encourages all students to attend school.
2. Can be consistently and efficiently administered.
3. Has consequences and holds students accountable.
4. Has a systematic method of intervention, which is needed to support students' attendance.
5. Is supported by staff, students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the community.
6. Is communicated and understood by staff, students, and parent(s)/guardian(s).
7. Identifies responsibility of students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

ABSENCE CLASSIFICATIONS

All absences will be classified by the school administration as follows on absence slips and attendance reports:

College	= COL	Vacation	= VAC
Excused	= EXC	Out School Susp	= OSS
Homebound	= HMB	School Activity	= SCH
In School Susp	= ISS	Tardy	= TDY
Judicial	= JUD	Truant/Skip	= CUT
Medical	= MED	Unexcused	= UNX
Medical, school	= MDS	Tardy Reportes	= TDR
Social Worker	= CSW	Guidance Counselor	= GCC
Office	= OFF	Nurse	= NUR
Illness	= ILL	Medical Tardy	= TDM

EXCUSED ABSENCES

With the exception of students who are emancipated from their parents, all students must provide the Attendance Office with a note which is signed by the student's parent/guardian and which states a valid reason for the absence or they may e-mail, the AHS Attendance office at ahs.attendance@austin.k12.mn.us. The parent or guardian may also call the attendance office at (507) 460-1806. An emancipated student is one who does not live with and also is not economically dependent upon his or her parent, a guardian, a family member or other adult. An emancipated student must also provide the Attendance Office with a note stating a valid reason for the absence but may sign the note himself or herself. Students must complete the "Attendance Signature Release Form" to be eligible. This form can be picked up in the attendance office.

If a student fails to provide the Attendance Office with such a note or phone call before or upon the student's return to school, the absence will be counted as unexcused. An absence will be excused if the student provides a written note which is signed by a parent/guardian or e-mail and states that the absence is/was a result of the one of the following conditions:

1. Illness, injury, or hospitalization of the student.
2. Disability of the student. If a student suffers from a permanent or temporary disability which prevents the student from regular attendance, verification from the student's physician specifying the nature of the disability and the anticipated duration of the disabling condition will be required once per school year. For each absence, the student's parent must provide the attendance office with a signed note verifying the reason for the absence.
3. Medical, dental, and other professional appointments (not haircuts or tanning sessions), which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. These appointments may include translation services for immediate family.
4. Family emergency, serious illness in family, or death in the family.
5. Religious holidays.
6. Attendance at a course of religious instruction for up to three hours each week as provided by Minnesota Statutes 120A.22, subd. 12(3). Before attending such a program, the parent/guardian must obtain approval from the Attendance Office.
7. Mandatory court appearances. Must be verified with a court subpoena or letter from lawyer and/or parent/guardian.
8. Conditions beyond the student's control. If a student is absent for part of a day because of conditions beyond the student's control, the student must provide the Attendance Office with a note. Examples of conditions beyond a student's control include, but are not limited to, absence as a result of an automobile accident, an absence as a result of inclement weather which delays the student's arrival on the school bus and staying home because of inclement weather with parental permission.
9. **College Visits:** Pre-approved college visits for up to two days during the school year. Written verification from the college visited is required for up to two days of college visits during the school year-
10. Compliance with any provision of a disabled student's Individual Education Program Plan or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.
11. Special education assessment performed by or at the direction of School District personnel. A student will be given a school-related absence (**SCH**) which will not count against the cap of nine (9) excused absences.

12. Pre-approved testing, including college testing and military testing. Approval must be obtained from the Attendance Office at least twenty-four hours prior to the absence.
13. Pre-excused participation in a school-sponsored activity. Examples include, but are not limited to, participation in a school-sponsored field trip, foreign exchange program, student council, state tournament participation or students riding on a fan bus to a state tournament, Knowledge Bowl, athletic contests, music lessons pre-arranged with the music teacher or a school-sponsored music performance. School-related (**SCH**) absences will not count against the cap of nine (9) absences.
14. Work on an educational assignment or exam with another teacher in the building that spills over into another class period. In this instance, a note from the teacher rather than from the parent is required.
15. Visits to the Principal's or Assistant Principal's Office and scheduled visits to the office of the counselor, school psychologist, or activities director. In this instance, a note from the principal, assistant principal, counselor, school psychologist or activities director rather than from the parent is required.
16. Absence from class as a result of an in-school or out-of-school suspension is counted as excused.
17. The Minnesota Drivers test or permit test may be excusable as the office is not open after school hours.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

1. Parents should be aware that according to Minnesota State Law, a student who is absent for fifteen (15) consecutive days must be withdrawn.
2. No credit is earned during the time a student is not enrolled.
3. Students under 18 years of age who have any combination of seven (7) unexcused absences may result in a Truancy Petition being filed with the Mower County District Court, Juvenile Court Division.
4. If the student has suffered an extended illness and required work has not been completed, the class record will show an incomplete. A grade will be assigned after the work is completed according to the make-up policy guidelines.
5. If a student experiences an extended, long-term illness of 15 consecutive school days, he/she may be eligible for homebound instruction once a doctor's excuse is obtained. Parents should contact a counselor or the principal to make these arrangements.

FALSE EXCUSES

Any student who submits a false excuse or forges the signature of a parent/guardian or school personnel on an excuse will receive an unexcused absence for the day(s) in question and will be subject to school discipline.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trip permission forms will be issued to students prior to participating in out-of-town school related field trips. A parent/guardian signature is required before students will be allowed to go on any field trip outside of Austin. The absence will be coded **SCH** for this school related activity.

MEDICAL ABSENCE

If students have been out of school for two days or longer because of illness or hospitalization, and if they bring a note from their doctor stating the medical condition and length of absence, the attendance record will be corrected to reflect the fact that the absence was due to a medical reason and is coded **MED**. Doctor excused absences will not count against the cap of nine (9) absences.

TARDIES

A tardy is coded **TDY**. Tardiness is disrespectful and disruptive to the learning environment. Students are expected to be to class on time.

1. Tardiness is arriving for any class period after the bell sounds.
2. For attendance purposes, if a student arrives more than 15 minutes late, they will be counted as UNX for that period unless the student has a valid pass.
3. Every 4 tardies, teachers can assign the student a consequence that could include staying after school, completing an assignment related to missed information, or a personal reflection. Students that do not complete the consequence will be assigned detention from administration.
4. Habitual tardiness will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action.

UNEXCUSED AND/OR UNVERIFIED ABSENCES

Any absence, which is not excused under this policy, will be counted as unexcused and is coded UNX. Oversleeping, a malfunctioning alarm clock, problems with a car, missing the bus, shopping, visiting friends, appointment at a tanning booth, **are not** a basis for an excused absence.

ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Distribute high school attendance policy to all students, parents, and staff.
2. Plan interventions for students with excessive absences.
3. Communicate with parents regarding chronic student non-attendance.
4. Review disputes of classification(s) of absences.
5. Review teachers' course syllabi.
6. Adopt/encourage school-wide policies/practices, which provide incentives for regular attendance.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend each class and arrive on time prepared to learn and participate.
2. Sign a verification form that you have read and understood all course syllabi.
3. If an absence occurs, which is not school related, follow this procedure:
 - a. Provide a signed note, e-mail, or phone call from parent/guardian within two (2) school days of the absence to the high school Attendance Office. Along with the phone call,

written documentation or e-mail is still requested from a parent. Please send all attendance e-mails to: ahs.attendance@austin.k12.mn.us

- b. Make up required activities, classroom assignments, tests, and quizzes within 5 days of return unless other arrangements are made with the classroom teacher or administrator.
4. If a pre-excused absence occurs, follow this procedure:
 - a. Bring a note from parent/guardian at least two school days before absence occurs, and obtain a Request to Leave form from the Attendance Office.
 - b. Show the pre-excused absence form to each teacher.
 - c. If a student must leave school early, he/she must check out with the Health Office or Attendance Office **BEFORE LEAVING THE HIGH SCHOOL**. If a student does not follow this procedure, the absence will be unexcused. The student must check in with the Attendance Office when returning to school.
5. With the exception of students who are emancipated from their parents, all students must provide the Attendance Office with a note or email which is signed by the student's parent/guardian and which states a valid reason for the absence. Students must complete the "Attendance Signature Release Form" to be eligible. This form can be picked up in the Attendance Office.
6. **ATTENDANCE FAILURES** – (Grades/Credits)

Credit **may** be withheld for courses in which a student has 10 or more absences. Those absences may be a combination of parent excused and unverified absences within a semester course, or can be excused or unverified exclusively. Students may have the grade in the class(es) impacted changed to an "H".

Credit will not be granted until a meeting with an administrator and the attendance appeal is approved or the student completes summer school for the course(s) in question. Until credit is restored, a held grade is reported on the report card and transcript as an "H". This held grade is counted the same as an "F" in the grade point average for the term. Refer to Appeals Process Page 12.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Encourage students to attend class regularly.
2. Limit absences by scheduling appointments, vacations, college visits, etc. on non-school days.
3. Notify the Attendance Office, in writing, of an extended pre-excused absence at least two days before the absence.
4. **Send a note with your child or e-mail or call the High School Attendance Office within two (2) school days of any absences.**
5. Contact the Attendance Office, counselor, and/or teacher if you have any concerns about your child's attendance.
6. Hold your child accountable for regular attendance and for following the attendance policy.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Follow the high school attendance policy.
2. Report any discrepancies or changes in the daily attendance report to the attendance office since the Infinite Campus record is the official record.

3. Take attendance each class hour and attempt to enter any absences or tardies into Infinite Campus during that class period.
4. Communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s) if a student's attendance will adversely affect his/her grade.

ABSENCES

ATTENDANCE APPEALS PROCESS

1. Parents/guardians and/or students will be mailed a letter describing the Attendance Appeals process. The student and/or parent may schedule an Appeals meeting if they feel they have just reason for excessive absences. If parents are not in attendance, written documentation will be mailed stating the outcome of the meeting.
2. Students who accumulate total of ten (10) absences within a semester course may lose credit for that class(es) unless the attendance appeal is approved, the student is put on an attendance contract, or the student attends summer school for the course(s) in question.
3. Upon recommendation of the administration, the credit may be reinstated.
4. Students involved in a course credit appeal shall attend all scheduled classes while the appeal is being processed. Students receiving "loss of credit" under this procedure may elect to audit the course without receiving a grade (or credit) or they may choose to be assigned to a study hall.
5. Until credit is restored, a hold grade is recorded on the report card and transcript as an "H". This held grade is counted the same as an "F" in the grade point average for the term.
6. Only one (1) attendance appeal can be used per year.

INCOMPLETES

A grade of "incomplete" (I) indicates that work must be completed before a grade is issued. Instructors will inform students of the amount of time they have to finish such work. Ten (10) school days will be the maximum time allowed to make up an incomplete. Any incomplete not made up within the allotted time will change to a failure (F).

LOSS OF CREDIT

No credit may be given for any course in which a student exceeds a total of ten (10) or more absences a semester course. Unless the absences are successfully appealed, the student will receive no credit for the entire semester the class is in session. At loss of credit, an "H" is recorded on the report card and permanent record, and counted the same as an "F" in the grade point average for the term.

MAKE-UP POLICY

Any absence by a student from a class hour will entitle the student to make-up work from that hour. Make-up work is due to the instructor according to the class syllabus.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS – PARENTS INFORM SCHOOL OF ABSENCES

1. Parents are encouraged to call the Attendance Office, 460-1806, if there is any question regarding the absences reported. The Parent Portal web-based computer program can also be used to check student attendance. Parents need to pre-register on-line **each year** with the school to use this program.
2. Parents/guardians of students who have three (3) or more unexcused absences in one or more classes during a term will be notified by mail of that fact. The notice shall inform the student and parent/guardian of the attendance policy and possible loss of credit in the class.
3. If a student has five (5) unexcused absences in any one class another letter will be sent to the parents/guardians and a truancy referral may be filed with the Mower County District Court, Juvenile Court Division. A meeting with Mower County Attorney's Office and AHS School Administration will be held to review attendance guidelines, procedures and expectations. Following this meeting if attendance continues to be a concern, a conference will be held with the student, principal and/or Mower County truancy officer to explain the holding of credit, an audit of the absences, and truancy process.
4. If a student reaches seven (7) and/or ten (10) unexcused absences in any one class, another letter will be sent to the parents/guardians. AHS Administration will continue to work with the family and Mower County through the truancy process.
5. The student and parent may schedule an Attendance Appeals Meeting if they have just reason to appeal the absences. The Appeals Meeting will be scheduled through the Assistant Principal's secretary. They can be contacted by calling 460-1805.
6. Holding of credit will be automatic unless an administrator reinstates credit. If credit is denied, the student will be given the option of taking a study hall or auditing the class without receiving credit. Credit that is on hold can only be reinstated by an administrator.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Office Records

All absences and tardies are recorded in the school's central computer system from data provided by both teachers and administrators. Paper copies of parent notes, requests to leave, tardy slips and parent notes are kept on file from year to year.

OPEN LUNCH

1. Only seniors qualify for open campus during lunch time.
2. Parents must give written permission and assume full legal responsibility.