

## 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 regulations of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning and 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 completed the studies ordinarily required in the tenth grade and has elected not to enroll or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Maximum Absence Rule – Middle / High School

ALL ABSENCES WILL BE COUNTED in the accumulation of the maximum number 10 per school year, except as otherwise provided herein.

1. Classification of Absences

- a. School Authorized Absences – these need to be verified at the time of the absence and are not counted in the 10-day maximum rule. Make up work is required.
  - (1) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action. Student/parent must provide paperwork to school to verify court appearance.
  - (2) Official Religious holiday.
  - (3) Medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment, or counseling appointment when doctor's note is provided or approved by the school nurse.
  - (4) Funeral-death of an immediate family member i.e., grandparents, brothers, sisters, parents (significant extended family members at the discretion of the principal)

- (5) 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.
- (6) Two days per year for personal trips to schools or colleges (verified, pre-approval needed)
- (7) Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
- (8) Any absence which the student has been excused in writing by an administrator or faculty member.

b. Excused Absences - To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian must contact the school and indicate the reason for the student's absence from school within 24 hours of the absence. These are counted in the maximum absences number 10 per school year rule. Make up work is required. If extenuating circumstances exist, please contact the school's administrator.

The following are examples of absences will be considered excused and count towards the maximum absences number 10 per school year.

- (1) Illness or medical/dental appointment not verified by a doctor
- (2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- (3) A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- (4) Emergency work Needed at home up to 3 days per year. At the discretion of the principal.
- (5) Family Vacation
- (6) Two days per year for personal trips to schools or college (not verified)

c. Consequences of Excused Absences

- (1) Students 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) Work missed because of absence must be made up within 2 days from the date of the student's return to school. Any work not completed within this period shall result in "no credit" for the missed assignment. However, the building principal or the classroom teacher may extend the time allowed for completion of make-up work in the case of an extended illness or other extenuating circumstances.

- (3) The typical student misses 5-7 days per school year.
- (4) When students reach 5 excused days, families will receive a letter informing them of how many days their student has missed.
- (5) When students reach 10 excused days, families will receive a letter of concern informing them that if their student misses more than 10 days the absences will now be required to be excused by a doctor or the school nurse.
- (6) If a doctor or school nurse excuse is required but not provided, the absence will be considered unexcused.

2. Unexcused Absences- all unauthorized and unexcused absences are considered as truant absences except as otherwise provided herein. These absences are counted in the maximum absence rule. Detention may be assigned and disciplinary action will be taken which may result in loss of partial grade credit in the course.

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

- (1) Absences that are in the excused category, but are beyond the student's 10 days of allowed excused absences per year.
- (2) An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.
- (3) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
- (4) Includes days missed for illness where the absence is required to be excused by a doctor or the school nurse and no documentation is provided.
- (5) Student needed at home (i.e. babysitting, work, etc.).
- (6) Work at business, except under school sponsored work release program
- (7) Any other absence not included under the excused absence attendance procedures
- (8) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (3 tardies equal one unexcused absence).

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- (1) After 3 unexcused absences, families will receive a letter informing them of their student's unexcused absence.
  - (a) A letter will be filed with the county under state guidelines indicating the child is considered a "continual truant".
  - (b) A phone call or conference may be arranged with school administration, social worker, or counselor with the parent/guardian and the student.

- (c) Student will be required to serve detention or In-School Suspension.
  - (2) After 5 unexcused absences, families will receive a letter informing them of their student's unexcused absence.
    - (a) Families may receive a letter requiring parents/guardians to attend a meeting with the county attorney's office, representatives from Human Services and the school district. At this meeting a plan for regular attendance will be developed..
    - (b) Student will be required to serve detention or In-School Suspension.
  - (3) If a student accumulates 7 unexcused absences, the student will be considered "habitually truant". A letter will be sent to families and a copy sent to Child Protective Services and the county attorney.
    - (a) Student will be required to serve detention or In-School Suspension.
    - (b) Student may be referred to Truancy Court.
    - (c) Student will be required to serve detention or In-School Suspension.
  - (4) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56.
  - (5) Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student's total cumulated unexcused absences.
  - (6) 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. Make Up Policy- All work for absences must be made up. Any work not completed shall result in a "no credit" for the missed assignments. Verified absences receive full credit for work missed but not participation credit. Unverified/truant absences will receive no credit for work completed. Students will have two days for each day absent to make up work.

C. Tardiness.

- 1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.
- 2. 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 in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative;
- d. medical or dental 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.
- b. Consequences of tardiness may include detention after 3 unexcused tardies. In addition 3 unexcused tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence.

D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored On-the-Job Training Programs.

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day and any school-sponsored on-the-job training programs.
2. School-initiated absences will be accepted and participation permitted.
3. A student may not participate in any activity or program if he or she has an unexcused absence from any class during the day.
4. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
5. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a physician's statement or a statement from the student's parent or guardian clearing the student for participation that day. The note must be presented to the coach or advisor before the student participates in the activity or program.

**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 each 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 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. § 260C.007, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant Defined)  
Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 (Notice to Parent or Guardian When Child is Continuing Truant)  
*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)

*Adopted: 06/03*

*Revised: 05/23*