

Student Attendance

The Fargo Public Schools recognizes that regular attendance is necessary to achieve consistent educational progress. Classroom learning experiences are a meaningful and essential part of the educational system. Time lost from class is irretrievable, particularly a student's opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas with teachers. The absent student loses the benefits of lectures, discussions and participation with other students. These and similar considerations are proper educational values which will not necessarily be fully reflected in test results. Therefore, attendance, class participation and similar factors are proper educational values bearing on a student's academic achievement. In addition, North Dakota state law requires all children between the ages of 7 and 16 to be in attendance every day school is in session, with exceptions for illness and certain other incapacities. The law also provides local school boards with the authority to establish standards for attendance and charges the district with the responsibility to enforce provisions of the compulsory attendance law. This school district, therefore, considers encouragement of consistent and timely attendance a major responsibility.

Students are expected to be in the classes to which they are assigned on every school day. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children are in school unless a valid reason for absence exists and to notify the school when their child will be absent. It is the responsibility of the teachers to monitor student attendance and communicate with students and their parents when academic performance is affected by attendance. It is the responsibility of the school administration to enforce disciplinary measures when necessary and to provide a continuum of intervention and services to support families and children in keeping children in school. If an absence is known in advance, arrangements should be made in advance by the student to complete as much as possible of the school work that will be missed. Additional effort to make up work may be necessary upon the student's return.

A student's grade may not be lowered solely on the basis of absenteeism. However, if a student fails to make up all assignments within a reasonable period of time or completes make up work in a manner inferior to that achieved prior to the absence, grades may be affected.

The Superintendent will develop and enforce regulations to encourage and monitor student attendance, and to provide an administrative program of continuing intervention to minimize truancy.

General Policies

The faculty and administration strongly believe that good attendance at school is essential for academic progress and is the responsibility of both the students and parents. A student's contribution to and achievement in class are directly related to attendance.

We do not encourage vacations outside the allotted times as scheduled in the school calendar. Doctor, dental, or other appointments during the school day should be avoided, whenever possible. If an appointment is unavoidable, the time should be scheduled when a minimum of classes will be missed.

I. Absences/Tardies Defined: (Although all absences and tardies, excused and unexcused, will be marked as "absent" or "tardy", the unexcused absences are subject to disciplinary action.)

A. Excused absences:

1. Personal illness
2. Death or illness in the family
3. Weddings of relatives
4. Participation in wedding ceremonies
5. Family emergencies
6. School sponsored activities
7. Church activities as approved by school administrator
8. Trips requested by parents and approved by school administrator
9. Funerals of family, relatives or friends
10. Required court appearances
11. Medical and dental appointments

B. Unexcused absences:

1. Truancy (also known as cutting or skipping is defined as being absent from one or more classes without the consent of parents/guardians and or school officials. Truancy is also defined by behaviors such as failure to report to the office after being sent there, leaving class without a teacher's permission, abuse of pass usage, failure to leave after checking out and failure to go to class upon return to school.
2. Oversleeping.
3. Transportation problems.
4. Removal from class for disciplinary reasons (administration ordered suspension will not count as an unexcused absence, rather it will be coded as a suspension)

Senior High Attendance Regulations

The Fargo Schools' attendance regulations are based on the premise that full participation in class activities is very important in the total learning process. The regulations also emphasize that students who are tardy not only affect their own learning process but also disrupt others in the classroom.

Attendance is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents or guardians. This responsibility includes being aware of the school district standards for attendance, informing appropriate school officials of reasons for any absences of the student and developing an acceptable attendance pattern for the student.

I. Attendance Responsibilities

A. Students will:

1. Be in class each period by the time the final bell rings unless a valid reason exists for absence.
2. Convey to the school's attendance office messages and notes from home regarding absences and tardies.

3. Consult with teachers prior to any prearranged absence such as a family vacation, activity trip or religious holiday so work to be missed can be made up in advance whenever possible.
4. Check out with the attendance secretary any time it is necessary to leave school during the day. Documentation should be provided for the time gone (phone call from parent, letter from parent, doctor appointment slip, etc.). Unexcused absences will result if a student fails to check out properly.
5. Attend school the day of a performance, contest or activity in order to be eligible to participate or attend.
6. Attend all classes the day following a festival, tournament game, drama production, etc. which is held the evening before at the school or elsewhere.

B. Parents will:

1. Phone the Attendance Office of the school by 9:00 a.m. or as early as possible to report the absence of their student. An unverified absence will be considered unexcused.
2. Send explanatory notes for placement in the student's attendance file so they can be included if an attendance review becomes necessary.
3. Confer with school officials if absence becomes of concern.
4. Have authority to remove open campus privileges at any time.

C. School personnel will:

1. Take attendance each period Via PowerSchool.
2. Phone parents if an absence is not accounted for. (Written notification will be sent if parents cannot be reached by phone.)
3. Notify parents of unexcused absences or habitual tardiness and inform them that loss of credit will result if this behavior is repeated. (See Section II.)
4. Notify parents when absences for excused reasons are jeopardizing the student's progress in the class or likelihood of successfully completing the class. (An attendance review may be held with the student. Parents/guardian and the student will be notified of the review.)
5. Provide an opportunity for students to make up all assignments within a reasonable time period for excused absences. Assignments for prearranged absences will be determined in advance as much as possible. The teacher may require additional assignments to compensate for any loss of class discussion and lecture information. As a guideline, a student will generally be given two days to complete make up work for each day of absence. The teacher may extend this time for extenuating circumstances. If the student has missed a class period for an unacceptable or unverifiable reason, the teacher is under no obligation to provide make up work (test, quiz, paper, presentation) and may give the student a zero for the day.
6. Have authority to remove open campus privileges at any time and enforce disciplinary measures when necessary.

II. Penalties and Procedures for Unexcused Absences

A. First unexcused absence

The attendance office personnel notifies parent/guardian and detention is assigned (one hour per truancy). The student will be notified that a parent conference will be held if any other unexcused absence occurs, that open campus privileges may be withdrawn, that

a contract will be required. The parent/guardian and the student are informed that three unexcused absences will result in being dropped from the class with a failing grade.

B. Second unexcused absence

The attendance office personnel notifies parent/guardian and detention is assigned (one hour per truancy). The administrator reviews the attendance with the student. An attendance contract is initiated and parents are notified. A copy of the contract will be mailed to the parent/guardian.

C. Third unexcused absence

If a student has a third unexcused absence in a given class, he/she will be dropped from the class with a failing grade. This action will be handled by an administrator. The parents/guardians will be notified. Students who are 16 or older no longer enrolled in a minimum number of classes, may be dropped school. Students will be allowed to return to school on the first day of the next semester. Students under age 16 will be referred to Juvenile Court for truancy procedures.

III. Penalties and Procedures for Tardiness

Tardiness is a matter of serious concern because the student not only misses a portion of the class but also disrupts the teacher and students who have begun the period. In addition, timeliness is a very important trait which will continue to be required in higher education and employment.

A. Any three tardies in a single class will equal an unexcused absence. The attendance office personnel assign detention and notify the parent/guardian.

B. At two unexcused absences for tardies (6 tardies) a contract will be completed which indicates that any additional tardy or unexcused absence will mean removal from the class for the semester. Parents/guardians, teachers, and the counselors will be notified.

IV. Other Provisions

A. Building administrators have the right to make exceptions to the unexcused absence and tardy regulations.

B. Married students and students living away from home may, upon consultation with the principal, assume responsibility for absence verification.

C. Administrators may request medical verification of illness in cases of excessive absenteeism.

Middle and Elementary School Attendance Regulations

It is important that parents and their student(s) develop the practice of good attendance and punctual behavior patterns early in their school years and continue to understand their importance.

Parents will be requested to call the school when a child is to be absent so the school can account for all students. When a child is absent and the reason for the absence is not known, the school

secretary will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible to determine the reason for absence.

When school absenteeism excused/unexcused and/or tardiness becomes excessive the parents will be contacted and the following steps may occur:

- Tier 1: On the 9th absence
 - First letter is sent home
 - Teacher/counselor contacts family with concerns
- Tier 2: On the 13th absence
 - Second letter is sent home
 - Administrator/Counselor visits with parent/guardian
 - Team documents interventions in MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Support)
- Tier 3: On the 18th absence
 - Third letter is sent home
 - SARB (Student Attendance Review Board) paperwork may be submitted
 - If SARB referral is made, release of information signature is obtained
 - Fourth letter is sent home to indicate that SARB referral has been made
 - Team documents interventions in MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Support)

At the end of a school year, students that are at a Tier 2, Tier 3 or those that had a SARB (Student Attendance Review Board) referral will start the new school year reset at Tier 1 and monitored closely.

Legal Reference:

NDCC 15.1-20 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

15.1-20-03. Compulsory attendance law - Enforcement - Penalty.

4. Any person who fails to ensure that a student is in attendance as required by this chapter is guilty of an infraction for a first offense and is guilty of a class B misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense.

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