



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 and that the parent or guardian of a child is primarily responsible for assuring the child acquires the knowledge and skills necessary for effective citizenship.

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 scheduled classes every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from a scheduled class. 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 scheduled class. 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.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

- a. It is the administrator's responsibility to require students to attend all scheduled 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 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 to promote student attendance.
- b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, the students of the school district are REQUIRED to attend all scheduled 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. 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.

1. Excused Absences

- a. A parent, guardian, or other person having control of a child may apply to a school district to have the child excused from attendance for the whole or any part of the time school is in session during any school year. Application may be made to any member of the board, a truant officer, a principal, or the superintendent. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the child cannot attend school is a valid excuse.
- b. To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian may be asked to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. A note from a physician or a 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) that the child's physical or mental health is such as to prevent attendance at school or application to study for the period required, which includes:
 - (a) child illness, medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment, or a counseling appointments; including appointments conducted through telehealth.;
 - (b) family emergencies;
 - (c) the death or serious illness or funeral of an immediate family member;
 - (d) active duty in any military branch of the United States;
 - (e) the child has a condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis; or
 - (f) other exemptions included in this attendance policy.
 - (2). that the child has already completed state and district standards required for graduation from high school; or
 - (3). that it is the wish of the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child, that the child attend for a period or periods not exceeding in the aggregate three hours in any week, instruction conducted by a Tribal spiritual or cultural advisor, or a school for religious instruction conducted and maintained by a church, or association of churches, or any Sunday school association incorporated under the laws of this state, or any auxiliary thereof. This instruction must be conducted and maintained in a place other than a public school building, and it must not, in whole or in part, be conducted and maintained at public expense. A child may be absent from school on days that the child attends upon instruction according to this clause.
-
- ~~(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 counseling appointment.~~
 - ~~(5) — Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.~~

Updates excused absences; Adds note on unexcused absences

- ~~(6) Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in 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) Prearranged family vacations.~~
- ~~(13) A student's condition that required ongoing treatment for any health related issue (physical or mental).~~

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 should be made up in a timeframe determined in consultation with the teacher, administrator, student and parent. Any work not completed within this period could 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.

2. Unexcused Absences

- a. The following are examples of absences, which will not be excused:
 - (1) Any absence by a student, which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.
 - (2) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.

- (3) Work at home.
- (4) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
- (5) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- (1) Consequences of unexcused absences may include detention. Each school will address unexcused absences based on guidelines and procedures established in the school handbook.
- (2) Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student's total cumulated unexcused absences.
- (3) In cases of recurring unexcused absences, administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.

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. Verified 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 or dental, orthodontic, or mental health treatment.

Updates excused absences; Adds note on unexcused absences

- 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 tardy 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 unexcused tardies. Each specific building will deal with this matter based on the guidelines and procedures set forth by the school district.

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. In addition, the guidelines from the Minnesota State High School League will be followed related to participation. This could include participation in weekend activities or events.
- 4. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she shall 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 will 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.

Updates excused absences; Adds note on unexcused absences

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.05 (Definitions)
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)
Minn. Stat. § 260C.201 (Dispositions; Children in Need of Protection or Services or Neglected and in Foster Care)
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)
<https://www.mshsl.org/>

POLICY ADOPTED: February 17, 2009

POLICY REVIEWED: February 2010

POLICY REVISED: February 18, 2010, December 4, 2014, March 25, 2021