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SERIES	500	Students
SUBJECT	503	Student Attendance
Adopted		February 27, 2001
Revised		August 24, 2004; June 13, 2006; May 9, 2017; May 10, 2022; June 7, 2022; August 12, 2024; April 14, 2026

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. Minnesota Compulsory Instruction

In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minnesota Statutes, section 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the student has already completed state and school district standards required to graduate from high school, or has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student, parent or guardian, teacher, and administrator to work together cooperatively regarding student attendance, missed assignments, and any attendance problems that may arise.

C. Attendance Guidelines

1. Excused Absences

- a. A parent, guardian, may apply to the principal or designee to have the child excused from attendance for the whole or any part of the time school is in session during any school year. 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.
- c. Legitimate Exceptions:
 - (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, orthodontic, or 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) Other reasons as approved by the school administrator or designee

d. Response to 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. Unexcused Absences

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

- (1) Truancy. An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district, e.g., a missed bus, personal reasons, car trouble, etc.
- (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) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (three (3) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the High School, four (4) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the Middle School and five (5) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the Elementary Schools).
- (6) Any other absence school administrator or designee.

b. Response to Unexcused Absences

- (1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 121A.40-121A.56.
- (2) 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) Consequences for unexcused absences shall be determined by the school building administrator.

D. Tardiness Guidelines

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.

2. Excused Tardiness

Valid reasons 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.

3. Unexcused Tardiness

- a. An unexcused tardy is failing to be in an assigned area at the designated time class period commences without a valid reason.
- b. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office or designated location for an admission slip.
- c. Tardiness between periods will be handled by the teacher according to identified school procedures.
- d. Three (3) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the High School four (4) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the Middle School and five (5) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the Elementary Schools.

- E. 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 on the day the unexcused absence is verified.
 4. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
 5. Excused absences will be addressed according to each school's procedure.

III. RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBSERVANCES ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable efforts will be made by the school district to accommodate any student who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for religious observance or American Indian cultural practice, observance, or ceremony. Requests for accommodations should be directed to the building principal.

IV. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

1. 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.
2. The school district will provide annual notice to parents of the school district's policy relating to a student's absence from school for a religious or cultural observance.

V. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. Continuing Truant

Minnesota Statutes, section 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minnesota Statutes section 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minnesota

Statutes section 120A.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for:

1. Three (3) days if the child is in elementary school; or
2. Three (3) or more class periods on three (3) days if the child is in middle school, or high school.

B. Reporting Responsibility for Continuing Truant

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minnesota Statutes section 260A.03 provides that the school administrator or designee shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means. Such notification shall include applicable statutory provisions.

C. Habitual Truant

A habitual truant is a child who is at least twelve (12) years old and less than eighteen (18) years old who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven (7) school days if the child is in middle school or high school, or a child who is seventeen (17) years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one (1) or more class periods on seven (7) school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.22, subdivision 8. Pursuant to section 260C.163, subdivision 11, habitual truant also means a child under the age twelve (12) who has been absent from school for seven (7) school days without lawful excuse, based on a showing by clear and convincing evidence that the child's absence is not due to the failure of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian to comply with compulsory instruction laws.

D. Reporting Responsibility for Habitual Truant

A school district attendance designee shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260A.