

Student Attendance and Absences

I. Purpose

The Fargo Public School District recognizes that regular school attendance is the joint responsibility of the student and their parent/guardian and is essential for student success in school. The District shall abide by compulsory attendance requirements in state law for all enrolled students. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with and enforcement of these requirements.

Absences, even with the approval of the parent/guardian, which are excessive and/or interfere with the student's educational programming, may be interpreted as educational neglect and Child Protection Services may be notified.

II. Definitions

The following definitions shall be used for this policy and are in accordance with North Dakota Century Code 15.1-20:

1. **Excused absence** is defined as an absence from school, if that absence is supported by either a verbal or written excuse supplied by the student's parent, teacher, or school administrator; and articulates the type of documentation that may be requested to verify a student's absence.
2. **Unexcused absence** is any absence not supported by the verbal or written excuse required for an excused absence.
3. **Tardy** is defined as the arrival after the official start of school or a class period. Any arrival that is more than ten minutes after the official start of school or a class period is considered an absence.

All absences count toward a student's total attendance, regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Students who are absent from school due to a school sponsored extracurricular activity shall be marked as present.

III. Attendance Requirements, Verification, and Actions

In order to be in attendance as required by compulsory attendance laws, a student may not be absent from school without excuse for more than the following:

1. Three consecutive school days during either the first or second semester;
2. Six half days during either the first or the second semester;
3. Twenty-one class periods.

The District may require applicable documentation to verify an excused absence such as medical documentation from an appropriate licensed healthcare provider.

In accordance with North Dakota law, the District may withhold credit, remove a student from a course, or take other measures, including the issuance of detention, against a student who exceeds the specific number of absences or tardies. Prior to withholding credit or removing a student from a course, the building principal must consult the appropriate Associate Superintendent.

IV. Reporting Requirements

North Dakota law defines what constitutes a compulsory attendance violation. Suspected violations of the compulsory attendance law shall be reported to the building principal and will be investigated in accordance with law. When a compulsory attendance violation is substantiated, the District shall comply with law enforcement reporting requirements under law.

Legal Citations

N.D.C.C. ch. 15.1-20

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