

POLICY 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

1. 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 every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class, resource center, or study hall. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request and make-up 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 report accurate attendance in each assigned class; to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly; to provide any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request; and 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; 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 inform the student's parent or guardian in a timely manner of the

student's attendance problem and to work cooperatively 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, M.S. 120.101, the students of the school district are required to attend all assigned classes every day school is in session.

B. Attendance Procedures

1. Excused Absences.

a. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:

1. Illness.
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. Medical or dental treatment.
5. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
6. Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week.
7. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
8. Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension. Suspensions are to be handled as per the provisions of the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, M.S. 127.26 - 127.39.
9. Other good and sufficient reasons for absence approved by the principal.

b. Consequences of Excused Absences.

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. Examples of absences which will not be excused include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Truancy. An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.
2. Any absence in which the student/parent/guardian failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
3. Caring for other children at home or work at home.
4. Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work- release program.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences.

Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student's total cumulated unexcused absences. 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. Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to discipline in the following manner:

1. Teachers have the option of determining the appropriateness and acceptability of make-up work and of accepting, rejecting, or diminishing the value of make-up work submitted to cover unexcused absences.
2. student's parent or guardian will be notified of unexcused absences in an appropriate manner.
3. After three (3) cumulated unexcused absences in a quarter or six (6) in a semester, the administration may impose the loss of academic credit in the class or classes from which the student has been absent.

C. Tardiness.

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

1. Excused Tardiness. Valid excuses for tardiness may include:
 - 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
 - f) personal action;
 - g) physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood,
 - h) storm, etc;
 - i) late school bus.
 - j) an educational necessity verified in writing by a
 - k) staff member.
2. 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 and/or other measures including loss of class credit.

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

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any school-sponsored extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day and any school-sponsored on-the-job training programs.
2. A student may not participate in any school-sponsored activity or program if he or she has been absent from school that day, unless approved by the principal.
3. If a student is suspended from school, he or she may not participate in any school-sponsored activity or program that day.

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students/parents/guardians at the commencement of each school year. This policy shall also be available upon request in principal's and social worker's offices.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy becomes effective with the start of the 1999-2000 school year.

V. REQUIRED REPORTING**A. Continuing Truant**

M.S. 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of M.S. 120.101 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in M.S. 120.05, 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 or high school.

A student is not a continuing truant if the child is withdrawn from school by the child's parents because of a dispute with the school concerning the provision of special education services under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act or accommodations and modifications under the Americans with Disabilities Act, if the parent makes good faith efforts to provide the child educational services from any other source.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, M.S. 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 M.S. 120.101 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under M.S. 127.20;
4. that this notification serves as the notification required by M.S. 127.20;
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 M.S. 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 M.S. 260.191.

C. Habitual Truant

1. An 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 or high school.
2. A school attendance officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under M.S. 260A.