

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The complex process of education is maximized with continuity of instruction, classroom participation and interaction, experiences and observations gained during classroom learning activities, and the interaction and communications with instructors. This established principle of education underlies and gives purpose to the requirement of compulsory attendance in Minnesota and every other state in the nation. A pattern of regular attendance established in school will benefit the learner now, and will transfer to future schooling and into the workplace.

### **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. Responsibilities

##### 1. Student's Responsibility

- To attend and participate in all classes.
- When a student absence occurs, students are responsible to obtain and complete all makeup work.
- To obtain an admit slip to classes he/she missed. The admit slip should be picked up in the high school office before school begins upon returning to school from an absence.
- To complete a pre-arranged field trip form for family vacations, retreats or college visits with the office and teachers.

## 2. Parent or Guardian's Responsibility

- To ensure the student regularly attends school and participate in class activities and instruction.
- To inform the school in the event of a student absence.
- To work cooperatively with the school and the student to solve attendance problems that may arise.

**To CALL THE HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence or prior to the absence and provide a reason why the student will be absent. Parents/Guardians should call 218-927-2115, extension 3500 or email [jflagren@isd1.org](mailto:jflagren@isd1.org) to report absences. Failure to report absences in this timely manner will result in consequences. The absence will be considered unexcused which may result in students being turned in for Truancy, (ISS) In-School Suspension, grade reduction and or loss of privileges for the student.**

## 3. Teacher's Responsibility

- To take daily attendance and maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class and study halls.
- To be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply procedures uniformly.
- To provide all students that have been absent with assignments, and or assessments upon request.
- To work cooperatively with the student, parents and or guardian to resolve any attendance problems that may arise.

## 4. Administrator's Responsibility

- To enforce uniformly all district and state attendance policies to all students.
- To maintain accurate records on student attendance and be able to prepare a list of the previous day's absences stating the status of each.
- To inform parents or guardians of a student with poor attendance (Send a 3 & 5 day letter indicating students attendance problems).
- To work cooperatively with parents/guardian and students to solve attendance problems.

→ In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. # 120A22. The students of the school district are REQUIRED to attend all assigned classes and/or study halls every day school is in session. When the student's attendance has been excused by the school board, for completion of state and school district's required standards for graduation, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for being absence.

## 5. **Removal of Students from Class**

Teachers have the responsibility of attempting to modify disruptive student behavior by such means as conferring with the student, using positive reinforcement, assigning detention or other consequences, or contacting the student's parents.

When such measures fail, or when the teacher determines it is otherwise appropriate based upon the student's conduct, the teacher shall have the authority to remove the student from class pursuant to the procedures established by this discipline policy.

“Removal from class” and “removal” mean any actions taken by a teacher, administrator, or other school district employee to prohibit a student from attending a class or activity for a period of time not to exceed five (5) days, pursuant to this discipline policy.

Grounds for removal from class shall include any of the following:

1. Willful conduct that significantly disrupts the rights of others to an education, including conduct that interferes with a teacher’s ability to teach or communicate effectively with students in a class or with the ability of other students to learn;
2. Willful conduct that endangers surrounding persons, including school district employees, the student or other students, or the property of the school;
3. Willful violation of any school rules, regulations, policies or procedures, including the Code of Student Conduct in this policy; or
4. Other conduct, which in the discretion of the teacher or administration requires removal of the student from class.

Such removal shall be for at least one (1) activity period or class period of instruction for a given course of study and shall not exceed five (5) such periods.

1. If a student is removed from class, the school district shall notify the parent or guardian of the student’s removal from class and make reasonable attempts to convene a meeting with the student’s parent or guardian to discuss the problem that is causing the student to be removed from class.
2. Removal from class is a serious consequence for a rule violation. It should not be taken lightly by any of the parties involved. Teachers are encouraged to use the following strategies as a response to behavior before it requires removal from class: 1) warn the student, 2) telephone parent, 3) check with student’s cumulative folder, 4) consult with the principal or guidance counselor, 5) consult with special education personnel, 6) detain student after school, 7) send further written reports to student’s home, 8) suspend from extracurricular activities.
3. The Principal will provide custodial care of students that are removed from the classroom and will see that the policies and provisions of this section are observed.
4. In any referral, if the principal feels that violation is serious enough, a student may be suspended from all classes under the provision of the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.
5. A student may be removed from a class (or an activity period, or receive an in-school suspension) AFTER the teacher consults with and receives approval from the principal or his or her designee.
6. Initial consultation with the principal typically involves teachers calling the office before sending the student to the office. The principal (or the designee) should agree on the manner in which the student will be sent to the office before the student is released from the classroom.
7. The teacher shall provide the principal with the following information when making the initial notification of a removal: 1) specific grounds for removal, 2) length of the period of removal, 3) any request for immediate administrative support.
8. Students will be sent to the principal’s office or another area clearly designated by the principal.
9. Extended removal can take place with administrative approval and an informal conference involving the teacher, administrator, and student. The length of time beyond the initial removal shall be the decision of the administrator after consulting with the

teacher. A reasonable attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian shall be made before the informal conference occurs.

## 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.

Learning is enhanced by regular attendance. The education process requires a continuity of instruction, classroom participation, guided practice along with support and encouragement from the parents/guardians in order for students to obtain their maximum educational benefit. Regular attendance in well-planned instructional activities taught by competent instructors is vital to the learning process. A good pattern of attendance established in school will benefit the learner now, and will help ensure future successes in postsecondary education/training and in the workplace. Student absences will be recorded as either excused or unexcused.

When students are absent from school, a note stating the reason for the absence from the parent or legal guardian excusing the student's absence must be presented to the high school office within two days of the absence or the absence will automatically be recorded as an unexcused absence. Emails will not be accepted. The school administration reserves the right to refuse or accept any note excusing a student's absence depending on the circumstances of the absence.

### **Excused Absences**

To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian must verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school, in advance or within two (2) school days after the absence.

1. Illness
2. Pre-arranged family vacation (**limit of 5 consecutive days per semester**)
3. 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.

### **Exempt Absences**

(Requires proper documentation to be officially coded as exempt) (doctors notes, documentation from licensed health care professionals, court subpoenas and other official documentation not generated by parents or guardians).

1. Court ordered appearances
2. Funeral
3. Serious illness in the immediate family or family emergency – parent, siblings, grandparents
4. Medical / dental appointments (may require note from physician's office)
5. Pre-arranged school sponsored activity / field trip (if pre-arranged by teacher / advisor or student)
6. Pre-arranged college visits (limit of 2 days per year for 11-12 grade students)
7. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood and or storm damage, etc.
8. Active duty in any military branch of the United States.

### Excessive Absenteeism

All absences, even if excused, negatively impact a student's education. **If students exceed 10 total absences (excused or unexcused) in a year, a parent/guardian conference will be required to review circumstances surrounding the absenteeism.** Based on the findings of the conference, a doctor's note to verify condition or other official verification may be required prior to excusing subsequent absences. Excessive absenteeism will limit opportunities to pre-arrange an absence to attend school sponsored activities. It is the responsibility of the parent and student to arrange for an attendance conference.

**<sup>2</sup>Pre-Arranged Absences-** Parents/advisors must notify the office of the request to pre-arrange an absence **3 days prior** to the departure. At that time the student will obtain a **pre-arranged absence form** from the office and have teachers and/or a parent complete the appropriate information for family vacations, college visits, or field trips. **Make-up time for pre-arranged absences will be one day for each day absent. Administration reserves the right to use discretion in the pre-arrangement criteria. Students will also pre-arrange school field trips to ensure their eligibility is appropriate. Students that have excessive absences will not be allowed to participate in field trips/school sponsored activities that require time out of class without a principal's permission.**

### College Visits

Authorized only when a student has pre-approval. Pre-approval requires filling out and returning the Post High School Visitation Form into the attendance office **three days prior** to the college visit. Two college visits will be excused if pre-arranged

### Unexcused Absences

Examples include but are not limited to:

1. Skipping
2. Walking out of class, left class early without permission, arriving more than 15 minutes late to class
3. Oversleeping, alarm didn't work, parent didn't wake me
4. Hair appointments, picture appointments, shopping, outdoor activities
5. Transportation problems, car trouble, ride was late
6. Work (at a non-school sponsored program) or other work related activities, babysitting or watching family members
7. Leaving the building for any reason without permission or signing out in the office
8. Other absences not defined as school authorized or excused including no reason given for an absence
9. A student who misses more than 15 minutes of class will be considered absent unexcused.

### Consequences for Unexcused Absences

- **Office Intervention-**Initially, 2 hours of before or after school detention and/or loss of privileges for each unexcused absence per class. Consequences will escalate for repeat offenders to possibly include ISS, community/school service or OSS.
- Students assigned detention, ISS or OSS for unexcused absences or attendance issues will be ineligible to participate in any co-curricular club or extra-curricular activity until all detention has been served.
- With administration discretion, an attendance contract may be written to extend the possibility of receiving credit.
- A letter will be sent to informing the parent/guardian when a student has 3 and 5 unexcused absences. **Home Intervention-**Parent contact or meeting. Home intervention is at the discretion of the parent.

- **County Intervention - Habitual truants** will be referred to County Social Services and Court Services. **Habitual truants** are students that have an unexcused absence from one or more classes for 7 or more days in a school year.

### **Tardies**

Any student that arrives to class after the beginning bell has sounded will be marked tardy unless otherwise indicated by the teacher.

- A student who arrives after class begins without a pass is considered tardy.
- **A student who arrives more than five minutes after class begins is considered excessively tardy and should be sent to the office for an admit slip. (4 excessive tardies will equal 1 hour of unexcused absence, which will result in 2 hours of detention)**
- **A student who reports to class without a pass and is late by more than 15 minutes of will be considered absent unexcused.**

### **Consequences for Unexcused Tardies**

- **Office Intervention- One hour of detention will be assigned for 4 tardies per class per quarter. Students will also receive an additional hour of detention for every tardy after their fourth.**
- **Home Intervention -Parent contact or meeting.**

### **Attendance and Activities**

#### **Attendance for Participation in Extra Curricular Activity/Events**

1. A student must be in school a minimum of three full class periods (**not including lunch**) immediately prior to departure from AHS to participate in events/activities.
2. If a student has an unexcused absence during the day of an extra-curricular activity, detention will be assigned, and he/she will not be able to practice or represent the school in any activities that day or night.
3. If a student is suspended/removed from any class, he or she may not participate in any school sponsored activity that day.
4. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a healthcare provider's note clearing the student for participation that day. The note must be presented to the activities director before the activity program.
5. 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.

### **III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY**

Copies of this policy shall be available to all students and parents in the student handbook and on the district website. This policy shall also be available upon request in each principal's office.

### **IV. REQUIRED REPORTING**

#### **A. Continuing Truant**

Minn. Stat. § 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and is absent

from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 120A.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 if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. § 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 Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
5. The 5 day letter will be sent to parents, students, and Aitkin County Health and Human Services.
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 Minn. Stat. Ch. 260C;
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 Minn. Stat. § 260C.201; and
9. That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

C. Habitual Truant

1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 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, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. sec 120A.22, subdivision 8.
2. A school district attendance officer or other designated school official shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to the appropriate services, authorities, and procedures, under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A and Ch. 260C.

The School Board and School Administration reserve the right to make changes to this handbook when needed. Changes to the handbook will be posted in the offices of the respective buildings.

**Source:** Independent School District No. 001, Aitkin, MN

**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, 383 N.E.2d 231 (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)

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