

503 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

[Note: The provisions of this policy substantially reflect statutory requirements.]

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

It is the student's right to be in school. It is also the student's responsibility to attend all assigned classes and study halls every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class or study hall. It is the student's responsibility to bring a note to the office excusing the absence within 2 days after returning to school. And to complete, 3 days in advance, a pre-arranged absence form with the office and teachers, for family vacations, retreats, college visits, etc. 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. It is also the responsibility of the parent or guardian to contact the high school prior to 8:30 a.m. the day of the absence and provide a reason for the absence. Absences may be reported by calling 218-927-2115, Ext. 3500 or by e-mailing: ahs-attendance@isd1.org.

3. Teacher's Responsibility

It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class and study hall. 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. Finally, it is the teacher's responsibility 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 and study halls. 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 by mailing letters to parents after the student reaches 3, 5 and 7 days of unexcused absences. To mail a letter 2 parents when a student has reached 10 absences, whether excused or unexcused. To work cooperatively with parents and the student to solve attendance problems.

b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 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, 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.

1. Excused Absences

a. 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, in advance or within two (2) school days after the absence. 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 or exempt absences. (Exempt absences are not counted as part of the 10 allowed parent excused absences. These reasons are signified by an * behind the reason.)
- (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 a counseling appointment. *(exempt if documentation is received from provider)
 - (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) 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) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.*
 - (13) Pre-arranged family vacations. A completed and signed "Pre-Approved Absence" form must be filed in the office 3 days prior to the absence. (**limit of 5** consecutive absences per semester)
 - (14) Pre-arranged college visits. Completed "Post High School Visitation" form must be on file in the office 3 days prior to the visit. (limit of 2 days per year for students in grades 11 & 12).*

Excessive Absenteeism

All absences, even if excused, negatively impact a student's education. If students exceed 10 total absences (excused or unexcused) in a school 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.

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 an administrator'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 per year for juniors and seniors will be excused if pre-arranged.

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 must be made up within 2 days from the date of the student's return to school. Any work not completed within this period shall 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) 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 failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures. (i.e not bringing a note, not signing out in the office, leaving class/the building without permission)
 - (3) Work at home, including babysitting, watching a family member.
 - (4) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
 - (5) Oversleeping, alarm didn't work, parent didn't wake me, etc.

- (6) Hair appointments, picture appointments, shopping, outdoor activities.
- (7) Missing more than 15 minutes of a class without a pass.
- (8) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy, including no reason given for absence.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- (1) Initially, 2 hours of after school detention and/or loss of privileges for each unexcused absence per class hour missed.
- (2) Repeat offenders may be assigned in-school suspension (ISS), community/school service or out-of-school suspension (OSS). Absences resulting from official out-of-school suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56. Students assigned detention, ISS or OSS for unexcused absences or attendance issues will be ineligible to participate in any co-curricular club or extracurricular activity until all detention has been served.
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, the administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
- (4) From the first through the third cumulated unexcused absence in a [quarter or semester] the student will not be allowed to make up work missed due to such absence.
- (5) After the 3rd, 5th and 7th cumulated unexcused absences, a student's parent or guardian will be notified by mail of the unexcused absences. After such notification, the student or his or her parent or guardian may, within a reasonable time, request a conference with school officials regarding the student's absences and the prescribed discipline. The notification will state that the school strongly urges the student's parent or guardian to request such a conference.

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.
- c. Students who are more than 15 minutes late to class will be considered absent from that class period.

3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

- a. Illness.
- b. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- c. Medical, dental, orthodontic, or mental health treatment.
- d. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- e. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- f. Any tardiness for which the student has been excused in writing by an administrator or faculty member.

4. 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 includes 1 hour of detention after the first 4 unexcused tardies in a quarter, and 1 hour of detention for every tardy after the fourth.

D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities and Events

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity/event scheduled either during or outside the school day.
2. A student must be in class a minimum of three full class periods (**not including lunch**) immediately prior to departure from AHS to participate in events/activities.
3. School-initiated absences will be accepted and participation permitted.
4. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a healthcare provider's statement clearing the student for

participation that day. The note must be presented to the activities director before the student participates in the activity or program.

5. If a student is suspended/removed from school, he or she may not participate in any school sponsored activity that day.
6. A student may not participate in any activity or program if he or she has an unexcused absence from any class during the day.

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

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 the 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 on three days 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. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the child's enrolling or resident 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 Minn. Stat. Ch. 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 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 per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year 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 per school year and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school.
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 appropriate services, authorities and procedures, under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A.

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.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 a 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)