

503 Student Attendance

I. Purpose

The school district believes full-time attendance to be an essential element in the student's educational process. Regular attendance fosters a climate conducive to learning, perpetuates effective teaching, protects the integrity of the school day and ensures quality education. Regular attendance, a responsibility that should be shared by students, parents, and school, is one means by which a student learns responsibility and self-discipline. Student absenteeism is often the cause of many failures in school. Consequently, the following attendance policy is intended to be positive and not punitive

II. General Statement of Policy

In accordance with the Minnesota Department of Education and Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 (compulsory Instruction Law"), the students of the school district are required to attend all assigned classes every day school is in session unless a valid reason is given.

A. Responsibilities

1. Student's Responsibility

Students have the right to attend classes at the elementary school level. Students attending an elementary school have the responsibility to maintain punctual, regular attendance.

2. Parent or Guardian's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to ensure the student attends school, to inform the school in the event of a student's absence, and to work cooperatively with the school and the student to develop acceptable attendance patterns.

3. Teacher's Responsibility

Teachers will record and report accurate attendance for each student to the office. Teachers are expected to assist students, upon request, in their attempts to complete

work missed as a result of excused and unexcused absences.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

It is the administrator's responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes. 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 absence. The school reserves the right to determine if an absence is excusable. Finally, it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the student's parent or guardian of the student's attendance and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.

B. Attendance Procedures

If a student is absent or will be absent from class or arrive late to school, the student's parent or guardian must notify the school office prior to the beginning of the school day. Notifications can be made through a phone call, personal contract or by a note. Absences not reported by parents may be counted as unexcused. Office personnel will attempt to contact parents of unexcused students after the school day has begun to ensure their location; however, the student's absent status may still be considered unexcused.

C. Classification of Absences

Excused Absences are:

- Illness of the student, which causes him/her to remain home or go to the doctor
- Medical/Dental Appointments
- Death of a family member or near relative
- Religious holiday (please inform the office ahead of time)
- Family vacations on a limited basis
- Out of school suspension
- Some examples of absences that are NOT EXCUSED:
- Parents who do not call the office to report their child's absence
- Overslept

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MN State Statute 120A, 121A and 260
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- Missed the Bus
- Car Trouble
- Baby-sitting
- Needed at home

Unexcused Absence:

1 day—Contact by phone informing parent of policy
3 days—first letter to parent and a copy is given to the classroom teacher
5 days—Letter to parent requesting a doctor's note for any further absence
6 days—conference request with parent, co-director and classroom teacher
7 days—Educational Neglect / Truancy Report filed with Sibley County and a letter to parent informing them about report filed

Excused Absences:

*8 days of excused absences per trimester—a letter will be sent to the parent, on a case by case basis. A copy of the letter will be given to the classroom teacher.

*24 days or more per school year may warrant an Educational Neglect / Truancy Report to Sibley County. This will be determined on a case by case basis.

Excessive Tardies:

- 5 tardies—phone call to parent about concerns
- 8 tardies—letter to parent
- This will be determined on a case by case basis

III. Dissemination of Policy

This policy will be made available to all students and parents at the commencement of the school year in the Green Isle Community School Handbook. This policy will also be available upon request in each Director's office.

IV. Required Reporting

A. Continuing Truant

1. State law (Minn. Stat. § 260A.02) provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the Compulsory Instruction Law and is absent from instruction in a school without a valid excuse within a single school year for:

- a. Three days if the child is in elementary school; or
- b. Three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school or high school.

2. When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. § 260A.03 provides that the building administrator or designee will notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

- a. That the child is truant;
- b. That the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
- c. 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;
- d. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat. § 120A.34;
- e. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the district;
- f. That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
- g. That if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under Minn. Stat. § Ch. 260; and
- h. 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.

B. Habitual Truant

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1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for either (1) seven school days if the child is in elementary school or (2) one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school or high school. Also, a habitual truant is a child who is 16 or 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.

2. The building administrator or designee will refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minn. Stat. § Ch. 260A. V. Support for Student Attendance

Legal References:

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)
Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565 (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 (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)