

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 719
PRIOR LAKE - SAVAGE AREA SCHOOLS

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 legal guardian, teacher and administrators. This policy will assist students in attending class.

II. DEFINITIONS

MN COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

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are REQUIRED to attend all assigned classes and/or study halls every day school is in session, unless the student has withdrawn, has a valid excuse for absence or has been excused by the school board from attendance because the student has already completed state and school district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.

1. Parents/legal guardians should be aware that according to Minnesota State Law, a student who is absent for fifteen (15) consecutive days must be withdrawn.
2. No credit is earned during the time a student is not enrolled.
3. Students under 18 years of age who have any combination of 7 unexcused absences will result in a referral to Scott County Human Services for educational neglect.
4. If the student has suffered an extended illness and required work has not been completed, the class record will show an "Incomplete." A grade will be assigned after the work is completed according to the make-up policy guidelines.
5. If a student experiences an extended, long-term illness of 15 consecutive school days, the student may be eligible for homebound instruction. Parents/legal guardians should contact the school social worker or the principal to make these arrangements.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A. 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. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to an absence.

B. Parent or Legal Guardian's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's parent or legal 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.

C. 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 legal guardian and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

D. Administrator's Responsibility

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 and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

High School Student Attendance Policy

Expectation: With the exception of verified school-authorized absences, high school students are expected to attend each class every day.

Maximum Absence Rule - Students will not receive credit for a class in which absences (including those accumulated through tardies) reach 7 in one quarter.

Upon the 7th absence:

- The student will receive an "NC" if the student remains in class, follows behavioral expectations and meets all course requirements by the end of the quarter. An "NC" will have no effect on the student's grade point average.
- The student will receive an "F" if the student is disruptive and has to be removed from the class and placed in a study hall, if the student chooses to leave the class, or if the student does not meet all course requirements. An "F" grade will have a negative effect on the student's grade point average.
- The student may receive credit and earned grade if the student remains in the class, follows behavioral expectations, improves attendance, and meets all course requirements by the end of the quarter. A committee may grant the appeal, resulting in reinstatement of credit or deny the appeal, resulting in loss of credit in the course(s).

Absences that are not counted in the maximum absence rule include, but are not limited to the following:

- School-sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities;
- Official religious holidays;
- Death of an immediate family member (parent, step-parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent);
- Unique or emergency circumstances which are authorized by a school administrator;
- Chronic or long-term illnesses which are verified by a doctor's signed statement and

- authorized by the school administrator, and
- Authorized appointments with school personnel.

Absences that are counted in the maximum absence rule include, but are not limited to the following.

- **Verified** - Absences which are verified by the parent or legal guardian with reasons accepted by the school, such as illness, medical or dental appointments that cannot be made outside of school time; court appearances; pre-authorized, pre-planned absence of one day or more (arranged prior, preferably at least one week, to the absence in order to be verified); in-school suspension, out-of school suspension.
- **Unexcused** - Unexcused absences are inappropriate and insubordinate and will result in disciplinary consequences for misbehavior outlined in district policy. Unexcused absences occur when a student chooses to be absent from school without the approval of the school. Such absences include, but are not limited to, truancy, oversleeping, car trouble and planned absences which were not pre-approved by the school. Consequences will be assigned to students who have unexcused absences following current guidelines.
- **Tardies** - Tardies are defined as being late to class without a pass. Three tardies per class will be counted as one absence and will be applied to the maximum absence rule. Consequences may be assigned to students with excessive tardies.

Middle School Student Attendance Policy

Expectation: With the exception of verified school-authorized absences, middle school students are expected to attend each class every day.

Parent/legal guardians are required to call the school attendance line by 8:00 A.M. on days their child will be absent. Absences/tardies will only be excused if a parent/legal guardian has telephoned school or the student presents a written excuse signed by the parent/legal guardian; noting the duration of absence and the reason. The school reserves the right to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

Absences that are considered excused include, but are not limited to the following:

- School-sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities;
- Official religious holidays;
- Death of an immediate family member (parent, step-parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent);
- Unique or emergency circumstances which are authorized by a school administrator;
- Illness, injury, or hospitalization of the student. A doctor's note must be provided if your child is gone from school more than 10 total days over the school year, or 5 days in a row.
- Authorized appointments with school personnel.

Unexcused - Unexcused absences are inappropriate and insubordinate and will result in disciplinary consequences for misbehavior outlined in district policy. Unexcused absences occur when a student chooses to be absent from school without the approval of the school. Such absences include, but are not limited to, truancy, oversleeping and planned absences which were not pre-approved by the school. Consequences will be assigned to students who have unexcused absences following current guidelines.

Tardies are defined as being late to class without a pass. Consequences may be assigned to students with excessive tardies.

Parents/legal guardians are asked to send a note to the main office in advance of an absence for an appointment or vacation. The student will be given a pre-signed note to show to teachers whose classes will be missed, and to get class assignments prior to leaving school. When leaving school during the day, the student must be signed out by a parent/legal guardian in the main office. Homework and any work given in advance to the student are due immediately when the student returns to school.

Elementary Student Attendance Policy

Parents/legal guardians are required to notify the office via a note or telephone call prior to 10:00 a.m. on or before the day their child will be absent for any reason.

Dismissal During the Day

Parents/legal guardians are asked to call, send a note or an email with their child prior to appointments and vacations, etc. Parents/legal guardians will be asked to show an ID prior to taking a child from school property. Dismissal for a student will be from school office only.

Excused Absences

An absence will be excused if the parent/legal guardian calls or emails the school or provides a written note which is signed by a parent/legal guardian and states that the absence is a result of one of the following conditions:

1. Illness, injury, or hospitalization of the student. Students are allowed up to 10 total absences a year, or 5 days in a row, due to illness. A doctor's note must be provided if your child is gone from school more than 10 total days over the school year, or 5 days in a row. Absences that are not counted in the 10-day maximum include chronic or long-term illnesses which are verified by a doctor's signed statement and authorized by the principal.
2. Medical, dental, and other professional appointments which cannot be scheduled outside school hours. This does not include haircuts, etc.
3. Family emergency, serious illness in family, or a death in the family.
4. Religious or cultural holidays or observances as approved by the administration.
5. Mandatory court appearances.
6. Conditions beyond the student's control. Examples are: automobile accident or delayed school bus due to inclement weather.
7. Pre-approved family trip/vacation. Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to schedule such trips during school breaks and vacations. Students are allowed a maximum of 5 days of pre-approved family trips/vacations. Absences beyond the 5-day maximum are unexcused absences.
8. Compliance with any provision of a disabled student's Individual Education Plan, Section 504 Accommodation Plan, or Individual Health Plan.

Unexcused Tardies and Absences

Examples are:

1. Running late
2. Oversleeping
3. A malfunctioning alarm clock
4. Missing the bus
5. Shopping
6. Visiting friends
7. A haircut
8. At home or outing with parents/legal guardians
9. Non-district sporting activities

Tardies

The student's day begins at the elementary school start time. Students are tardy after this time and must be signed in at the office and receive a tardy slip to take to their teacher. Excused tardies are limited to medical and dental appointments or religious observances. If the student is tardy or released early for more than a 2-hour period, the student will be considered absent for ½ day. Five unexcused tardies are equal to 1-day unexcused absence.

Family Activity

We understand that students may need to be absent from school occasionally to participate in family activities/vacations. However, family activities/vacations which cause students to be absent more than 5 school days are discouraged and will result in unexcused absences. Your child's academic progress depends upon consistent attendance and subsequent access to all educational programming. Although missed assignments can be completed, it is extremely difficult to replicate instructional activities, discussions, small group work, etc. that have taken place while your child was absent from school.

Please notify your child's classroom teacher and the school office well ahead of time when you know your child will be absent due to a planned family activity/vacation. Your child will be expected to complete all homework upon the student's return

Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities

1. Hold your child accountable for regular attendance and for following the attendance policy.
2. Limit absences by scheduling appointments, vacations, etc. after school or on non-school days.
3. Notify the office by phone call, email or in writing of an extended absence before the absence. Contact the principal to discuss an extended absence.
4. Students must be present for important testing dates such as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAII), and the MAP tests. Testing dates are published on the district calendar.
5. Contact the office, social worker, and/or teacher if you have any concerns about your child's attendance.

B. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

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

C. REQUIRED REPORTING

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 or high school.

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 legal guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
3. That the parent or legal guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the child at school

- pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 and parents or legal 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 district;
 6. That the parent or legal 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/legal guardian 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 legal guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

Habitual Truant

1. A 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, junior high school, or high school, or 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. A school district attendance officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services 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. § 120A.35 (Absence from School for Religious Observance)
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 (1975)
Slocum v. Holton Bd. of Educ., 429 N.W.2d 607 (Mich. App. Ct. 1988)
Campbell v. Bd. of Educ. of New Milford, 475 A.2d 289 (Conn. 1984)
Hamer v. Bd. of Educ. of Twp. High Sch. Dist. No. 113, 66 Ill. App.3d 7, 383 N.E.2d 231 (1978)
Gutierrez v. Sch. Dist. R-1, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)
Knight v. Bd. of Educ., 38 Ill. App. 3d 603, 348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)
Dorsey v. Bale, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

Cross References: [Policy 506 \(Student Discipline\)](#)

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An Equal Opportunity School District