STUDENTS

Attendance Policy 503-NB

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. 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.

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

b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minnesota Statutes section 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

The superintendent shall develop procedures to implement the policy for district schools and keep the school board informed of any changes in these procedures.

1. Excused Absences

a. To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian will verify within two days of the absence, in writing or by phone, the reason for the student's absence from school. The school district reserves the right to request documentation for any excused 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 absences:

(1) Illness. (Documentation from a medical provider may be required.)

(2) Serious illness or injury 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 counseling appointment.

(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) Family member on military leave

(13) Religious or cultural observance

(14) Successfully appealed absences

(15) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.

(16) Up to 2 days per year during the junior and senior years to explore Post-Secondary educational options ie: colleges, universities, trades programs.

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. The student is responsible for contacting teachers to initiate makeup work.

(2) Work missed because of absence must be made up. The building principal or the classroom teacher will 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.

(3) Work at home/Needed at home.

(4) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.

(5) Vacations with family.

(6) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies. Three unexcused tardies equal one unexcused absence.

(7) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy. For Example: Hunting, Fishing, 4-H, Rodeo, etc.

b. Protocols for Unexcused Absences

(1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minnesota Statutes sections 121A.40-121A.56.

(2) 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.

C. Tardiness

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness. A student will be marked tardy if they arrive to class within ten minutes of the bell. Students that are more than ten minutes late will be marked absent.

2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness

a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office or classroom for an admission slip.

b. Tardiness between periods will be handled by the teacher.

3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

a. Illness.

b. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.

c. A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.

d. Medical, dental, orthodontic, or mental health treatment.

e. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.

f. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.

g. 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 may include detention after 3 unexcused tardies. In addition, for students ages 12 through 17, 3 unexcused tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence. Three late to school unexcused tardies for students ages 11 and under are the equivalent to one unexcused absence.

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

1. 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.

2. School-initiated absences will be accepted and participation permitted.

3. A student may not participate in any activity or program if he or she has an unexcused absence from any class during the day.

4. If a student is suspended from any class he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.

5. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a physician's statement or a statement from the student's parent or guardian clearing the student for participation that day. The note must be presented to the coach or advisor before the student participates in the activity or program.

III. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable efforts will be made by the school district to accommodate any student who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for a religious observance. Requests for accommodations should be directed to the building principal.

IV. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

1. 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 each principal's office.

2. The school district will provide annual notice to parents of the school district's policy relating to a student's absence from school for religious observance.

IV. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. Continuing Truant

Minnesota Statutes section 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minnesota Statutes section 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 120A.05, without valid excuse within a single school year.

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.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minnesota Statutes section 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 Minnesota Statutes section 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minnesota Statutes section 120A.34;

4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statutes section 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 Minnesota Statutes Chapter 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 Minnesota Statutes section 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 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 shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate district services and procedures.

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 Township 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: NB Policy 506-NB (Student Discipline)