

503 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

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, teachers and administrators. This policy will assist students in attending class.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Student 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 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 daily and one week in advance for a vacation**, 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 guardian and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.
- D. **Administrator's Responsibility**
 - 1. 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, to inform the student's parent or guardian of the student's attendance, and to work cooperatively with students and their parents/guardians to solve attendance problems.

2. 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.

III. EXCUSED ABSENCES – K-12

A. Legitimate exemptions.

1. To have the child excused from attendance for the whole or any part of the time school is in session during any school year. Application may be made to any member of the board, a truant officer, a principal, or the superintendent. The school district may state in its school attendance policy that it may ask the student's parent or legal guardian to verify in writing the reason for the child's absence from school. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the child cannot attend school is a valid excuse. The board of the district in which the child resides may approve the application upon the following being demonstrated to the satisfaction of that board:
 - a. that the child's physical or mental health is such as to prevent attendance at school or application to study for the period required, which includes:
 - i. child illness, medical, dental, orthodontic, or counseling appointments;
 - ii. family emergencies;
 - iii. the death or serious illness or funeral of an immediate family member;
 - iv. active duty in any military branch of the United States;
 - v. the child has a condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis; or
 - vi. other exemptions included in the district's school attendance policy;
 - b. that the child has already completed state and district standards required for graduation from high school; or
 - c. that it is the wish of the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child, that the child attend for a period or periods not exceeding in the aggregate three hours in any week, a school for religious instruction conducted and maintained by some church, or

association of churches, or any Sunday school association incorporated under the laws of this state, or any auxiliary thereof. This school for religious instruction must be conducted and maintained in a place other than a public school building, and it must not, in whole or in part, be conducted and maintained at public expense. However, a child may be absent from school on such days as the child attends upon instruction according to the ordinances of some church.

B. Excessive Excused Absences –

1. When patterns of excessive excused absences are detrimental to the success of a student, district personnel will implement interventions listed on the Attendance Intervention Checklist, included as Appendix A.
2. A parent/guardian may clear four days per academic quarter that school is in session. Subsequent clearances for illnesses/appointments require verification by a doctor or other valid health care professional, unless otherwise approved by the building principal. It is recommended that students/parents provide notes from providers for all visits, as that note will prevent that absence from counting towards excessive excused absences and truancy. Additional absences beyond 4 per quarter, without documentation or preapproval of a vacation will result in the absence being counted as unexcused.

C. Consequence for Unexcused Absences – High School

An unexcused absence of half of any class period during the day will result in detention assigned to the student. An unexcused absence is an absence for a reason that is not acceptable by this policy. Three unexcused absences of three periods or more will mean that the student will be identified as a continuing truant and the parent/guardian will be contacted by school officials regarding the students' absences and the student will be referred to Winona County Restorative Justice. Seven unexcused absences of three periods or more will mean that the student will be identified as a habitual truant and school officials will file educational neglect or truancy charges against the parent/guardian and juvenile.

D. Habitual Truancy – K-12

A habitual truant is a student who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days; if the child is in elementary school or for three or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school. A student who becomes a habitual truant according to Minnesota Statue 260C.007 Subd. 19, will be reported to legal authorities to assure compliance to Minnesota Compulsory Instruction laws.

E. Pre-approval Procedures for Family Vacations and Unique Situations – K-12

~~One~~ Vacations and ~~unique/unusual situations~~ may be excused ~~per school year~~. A vacation will be defined as a planned ~~and preapproved~~ absence of 2 ~~5 or more~~ days that requires preapproval one week prior to the event. Students and parents must request approval by completing a pre-approval form included as Appendix B and presenting it to the principal at least one week prior to the expected absence. Each request will be considered based on the number of days that the student will be absent, the number of previous excused and unexcused absences, ~~the academic status of the student, and the possible educational benefit of the absence.~~ Vacations that are not preapproved will be documented as unexcused absences.

- F. No more than two total days per school year for personal trips to higher education schools or college campuses will be excused.

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IV. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES – K-12

- A. All absences require that the parent/guardian contact the school. They should call the school before 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the absence. They need to inform the office of the student's absence, give their permission for the absence, and state the reason for the absence. In special circumstances where the parent/guardian is not able to call the school, the school must receive an explanation of the absence from the parent/guardian within 48 hours of the absence.
- B. When absences are known about in advance, the student is expected to make arrangements to complete make-up work prior to being absent.
- C. It is the student's responsibility to check with the teachers regarding make-up work before or after school.
- D. The school reserves the right to request verification information such as required court appearances, funeral leaves, etc.

V. STUDENT MAKE-UP WORK

- A. For excused absences, students will be given the number of days absent plus one to turn in all make-up work and take tests or quizzes after returning from the absence. Work or tests announced prior to a pre-approved absence will be taken on time if the teacher feels it is appropriate. Example: A test was assigned for Friday and the student was pre-approved to miss class on Thursday. The student will take the test if the teacher believes the student is ready.
 - 1. This may be extended only for extenuating circumstances and with the approval of the teacher and/or Principal.
 - 2. Students will only be allowed a maximum of two (2) weeks after the end of a quarter to make up work unless the teacher grants an extension with the approval of the Principal.

- B. For unexcused absences, students have a right to obtain the information they have missed from their teacher due to any absence. However, if the absence is unexcused it is the teacher's discretion whether or not to award full credit for work missed during that absence.

VI. Tardiness – K-12

- A. Tardies - "A little late is too late!" If you arrive to school late, you are to report to the office for a pass. You must have a parental note indicating the reason you are late in arriving to school. If students do not have a note they will be assigned an unexcused tardy. If you are going to be late to your next class because of a previous class or teacher having detained you, get a pass from the teacher responsible and take it with you.
- B. At the high school, teachers are encouraged to address student tardies in their classrooms. Students that have issues with excessive tardies may be referred to administration for assistance. Students referred to the office for excessive tardies in the classroom may be assigned detention or other consequences.

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Revised: November 12 (1st Reading)

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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 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 (1978)
Gutierrez v. School District R-1, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)
Knight v. Board of Education, 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)

Appendix A

Attendance Intervention Checklist

When attendance issues are detrimental to a student's success at school, district personnel will use the Attendance Checklist to begin interventions intended to encourage regular school attendance. The following interventions will be used and documented in all cases concerning attendance including educational neglect, unexcused absences and truancy.

1. _____ Attendance data check.
 - Check current year and previous year's attendance reports for attendance data and / or history of attendance issues.
 - Check with school nurse for any medical indicators that affect attendance / history of medical problems.

2. _____ Telephone / contact parent(s) / guardian(s)
A telephone or direct parent / guardian contact will be made to:
 - explain attendance record to date.
 - explain attendance laws and school policy.

3. _____ Letter sent to the home upon the third unexcused absence.

If telephone or direct discussions are not possible and / or when attendance issues continue to be detrimental to student success, a letter will be sent to the home that:
 - explains the student attendance record to date
 - explains attendance laws and school policy.

4. _____ Liaison
A liaison will attempt to discuss interventions and or options to be implemented to encourage regular school attendance between absences 3 and 6.

5. _____ School meeting / home visit.
A meeting will be offered to discuss interventions and / or options to be implemented to encourage regular school attendance on unexcused absence number 5.

6. _____ Turn in documentation to the county legal authorities upon unexcused absence 7.

Appendix B

**Request Form for Student Absence
For a Family Vacation/Trip**

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According to school policy, student absences for family vacations/trips may be excused. These absences need to be pre-approved by the school principal at least one week before the expected absence. Information that is considered when making approval decisions include the student's current academic situation, attendance record, progress toward graduation and type of vacation/trip.

Absences due to family vacations/trips may be detrimental to success in school.

Student Name _____ Date of Request _____

Parent Name _____ Telephone Numbers _____

I am requesting that my son/daughter be excused on the following day(s) for a family vacation/trip:

Will the student be with a parent during the absence? _____

Other information :

Parent's Signature _____

Approved _____ Not Approved _____ Date _____

Principal's Signature _____

Vacation Form/Homework Request

Based upon state statute and school policy 503, ISD 857 schools will excuse absences for one vacation per year, not to exceed five school days; additional school year trips will count against students four excused absences per quarter and may result in unexcused absences for all or part of the trip and/or additional absences for that quarter. **Please complete the following steps at least one week prior to departure to excuse absences:**

1. Notify the office at least one week prior to departure (below):

Student Name _____ Today's Date _____

Parent Name _____ Telephone Number _____

I am requesting that my son/daughter be excused **on the following day(s)** for a family vacation/trip:

(Dates of Absence)

Parent's Signature _____

2. Present Homework Request (below) to teachers for completion. (Allow multiple days for homework compilation.)

Class	Assignment	Teacher Initials

3. Return this form to the office at least one week prior to vacation. A copy of the completed form will be provided to the student. (Date Received by the Office _____)

4. Gather homework materials needed to complete over vacation/absence.

5. Upon return, communicate with teachers regarding work completed during vacation, and determine what additional work requires completion.

