

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

I. PURPOSE

A. The Albany Area School Board believes that students regular school attendance is:

- (a) directly related to students' success in academic work;
- (b) benefits our students socially;
- (c) provides opportunities for important communications between teachers and students;
- (d) establishes regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student.

The purpose of our policy is to encourage regular school attendance; it is intended to be positive and not punitive.

B. Our policy also recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by our students, the parent(s) or guardian(s), teacher(s) and administrator(s). This policy will assist students in attending class.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Responsibilities

1. Student's Responsibility

It is the student's duty 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 school, 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 promptly 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/or study hall. It is also the teacher's

responsibility to become familiar with all procedures regarding attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide any student who has been absent with any missed assignments. Finally, it is the teacher's responsibility to work cooperatively with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) 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 school and all assigned classes and/or 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 absences stating the status of each absence. Finally, it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the student's parent or guardian of the student's attendance problems and to work cooperatively with parents, teachers, and student(s) to resolve tardiness and/or attendance problems if possible.
- b. In accordance with the regulations of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, and the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. 120.101, the students of the school district are REQUIRED to attend school, all assigned classes, and/or study halls every day school is in session, unless the student has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Attendance Policy

1. Excused Absences

- a. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:
 - (1) Illness. After repeated absence due to illness, the principal may choose to require a doctor's note for any further excused illness.
 - (2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
 - (3) A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
 - (4) Medical or dental treatment.
 - (5) Court appearance 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) Administratively pre-approved family trip or pre-approved school/college trip.

(9) Removal of student pursuant to a suspension. Suspensions will be handled as excused absences and students will be expected to complete make-up work/assignments.

(10) Parent note: "Needed at home".

b. 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(s).

(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.

(2) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.

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

(4) Failure to present a doctor's note after being notified to do so by the principal regarding any further absences.

(5) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

(1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. 127.26-127.39.

(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, or may seek the assistance of County Social Services as regards educational neglect.
- (4) Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to school discipline in the following manner:
- (a) A student with an unexcused absence will not be allowed to make up any work missed due to such absence.
 - (b) After school detention and/or in-school suspension.
 - (c) A student's parent or guardian will be notified by certified mail that his or her child is nearing a total of 5 unexcused absences and that, after the 7th unexcused absence, the student will be reported to the County Attorney for truancy, or Stearns County Social Services for educational neglect.
 - (d) 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.
3. **Unapproved Absences:** These are absences excused by the parent but not excused by the school.

Consequences: There will be no disciplinary consequences for the student, however, the student will have no time extension to complete any school work. School work is due as previously scheduled.

Special note: Unapproved absences will be counted as unexcused absences for the purpose of determining truancy. Seven (7) unapproved absences will trigger a letter to the county attorney or to Stearns County Social Services.

C. Tardiness/Early Withdrawal

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness/early withdrawal.
2. 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 and reported by the teacher to the principals office.

3. Consequences Of Tardiness/Early Withdrawal

- a. Three (3) unexcused tardies and/or three (3) unexcused early withdrawals from school are equivalent to one (1) day of 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; student participation will be permitted in any extra curricular activity. [See 3 and 4 below.]
3. A student must be in attendance for the last half of the day (e.g., in the secondary schools, the last two (2) blocks.) to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity or program.
4. If a student is suspended (in or out of school) from any class, he or she shall not be permitted to participate in any activity or program for that day or day(s).

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

Copies of this policy shall be published for all students and parents in the FOCUS at the commencement of each school year (or other time as needed to communicate the intent of this policy). This policy shall also be available upon request in each principal's office.

IV. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. Habitual Truant

Minn. Stat. 260A.02 provides that a habitual truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minn. Stat. 120.101 and who is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat. 120.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for:

1. Seven (7) days if the child is in elementary school; or
2. Seven (7) or more class periods if the child is in secondary school (7-12).
3. A school attendance officer shall refer an habitually truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially identified as habitually 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 certified 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. 120.101 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minn. Stat. 127.20;
4. that this notification serves as the notification required by Minn. Stat. 127.20;
5. that alternative educational programs and services may be available in the 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. 260.191; 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.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. 120.101 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. 120.102 (Reporting)
Minn. Stat. 120.103 (Enforcement and Prosecution)
Minn. Stat. 120.11 (School Boards and Teachers, Duties)
Minn. Stat. 120.14 (Attendance Officers)
Minn. Stat. 127.26 - 127.39 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Minn. Stat. 260.015, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant defined)
Minn. Stat. 260A.02 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. 260A.03 (Notice to Parent or Guardian when Child is Continuing Truant)
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)
Cambell 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.3d7 (1978)
Gutierrez v. School District R-1, 585 P.2d935 (Co.Ct. App. 1978)
Knight v. Board of Education, 348 N.E.2d299 (1976)
Dorsey v. Bale,521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

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