

POLICY 506 : Attendance Policy
Adopted: 9-17-2025

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 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 including the updating of attendance records for students who arrive late. It is expected for teachers to provide work for any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

- a. 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. 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

Attendance procedures shall be presented to the school board for review and approval. When approved by the school board, the attendance procedures will be included as an addendum to this policy.

1. Excused Absences

a. To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian may be asked to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. 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.

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

(13) A student's parent/guardian has notified administration of an upcoming family vacation

c. Excused absences of 15 minutes to 50% of the school day will result in a half day absence.

d. Excused absence of greater than 50% of the school day will be a full day absence

e. 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.
- (2) Work missed because of absence must be made up within 3 day 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 district.
- (2) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
- (3) Weather too hot/too cold
- (5) Transportation problems (car won't start, etc)
- (6) Overslept
- (7) Missed the school bus
- (8) Staying home to babysit
- (9) Travel/Vacation without prior approval from administration b.

Consequences of 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.
 - (a) On the 3rd cumulated unexcused absence in a year a student's parent or guardian will be notified from LIFE Prep by

mail and email that his or her child is nearing a total of 5 unexcused absences. After the 5th unexcused absence, the student and the parent or guardian will be referred to truancy in their county.

(b) After such notification, within a reasonable time, the school will request a conference with students and parent/guardians regarding the student's absences. The notification will state that the school strongly urges the student's parent or guardian to request such a conference.

C. The Attendance Committee of the Board will coordinate with the school administration to identify students with ongoing attendance concerns. With administrative support, the committee will set up outreach calls to contact the families of these students. Following phone communication, an in-person meeting will be scheduled with each family to further discuss concerns and collaboratively develop a plan to support the student's regular attendance.

(4) A student is considered unexcused/truant if he/she is absent without an acceptable excuse for all or part of the day during which school is held. Part of the school day is defined as any time period that exceeds 15 minutes.

(5) Mandatory Retention Meeting

(a) If a student exceeds 20 unexcused absences, Administration will require parents/guardians of student to attend a meeting discussing the possibility of retaining the student the following year. Retention is defined as a student remaining in the same grade for next school year. During this meeting, Administration, Grade Level Teachers, Specialists, and Parent/Guardians will discuss whether or not retaining the student will be beneficial to their academic success. Many factors other than attendance will be weighed when discussing retention: academic performance, readiness for the materials/standards in grade level/rigor, and social/emotional factors.

(b) Students with an IEP will not be subject to the same Mandatory Retention Meeting. A retention meeting for a student with an IEP will be held by the IEP Team and in no way pertains to this policy.

C. Tardiness

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness.

2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness

a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office for a tardy slip.

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 or appointment.
- 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.
- h. transportation delays due to weather which result in the student arriving within an hour of official 7:45 start time

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. If a student tardiness/late arrival is greater than 15 minutes (without a valid excuse), then it will be considered an unexcused half day absence.

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 at the front desk.

V. 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 for:

1. Three days if the child is in elementary 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 the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
6. That if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260C;
7. 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 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 services and procedures, under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260A.

VI. 10-DAY ATTENDANCE LIMIT POLICY

- A. To promote consistent attendance and ensure student wellbeing: Once a student has reached **10 total absences** (excused and/or unexcused combined) during the school year, **any additional absences will be marked as unexcused** unless:
 1. A **doctor's note** or verification from a licensed medical provider is provided, or
 2. The absence is otherwise approved by school administration.
- B. This policy is in place to prevent chronic absenteeism and ensure students receive the full benefit of their education.

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)