

**SCHOOL POLICIES
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 16**

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SERIES	500	Students
SUBJECT	503	Student Attendance
Adopted		February 27, 2001
Revised		August 24, 2004, June 13, 2006

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. 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, 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, or 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.
- 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 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, which may include counselor approved college visits.
- (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) Religious holidays.
- (11) Family vacations.
- (12) Family emergencies.
- (13) Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
- (14) Other reasons as approved by the building principal or designee

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.
- (2) Work missed because of absence must be made up within two (2) days from the date of the student's return to school. Any work not completed within this period may 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, e.g., a missed bus, personal reasons, car trouble, etc.
 - (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.
 - (4) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
 - (5) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (Three (3) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the High School, four (4) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the Middle School and five (5) tardies equal one unexcused absence for the Elementary Schools).
 - (6) 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. §§ 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.
 - (4) Students with unexcused absences shall be addressed on a case by case basis according to school procedures.

C. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness

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

2. Reporting Tardiness

- a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office or designated location for an admission slip.
- b. Tardiness between periods will be handled by the teacher according to school procedures.

3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

- a. illness;
- b. serious illness in the student's immediate family;
- c. a death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative;
- d. medical or dental 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 will be addressed according to each school's procedure.

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 on the day the unexcused absence is verified.
4. If a student is suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
5. Excused absences will be addressed according to each school's procedure.

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

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

IV. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. 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, junior high school, or high school.

B. 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 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. § 120A.22 and parents or 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 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. § 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 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 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 (Students enrolled in High School Alternative Attendance Programs are treated differently according to school procedure).
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.22 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.24 (Reporting)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.26 (Enforcement and Prosecution)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.28 (School Boards and Teachers, Duties)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.30 (Attendance Officers)
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)

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: Policy 506 (Student Discipline)