

Adopted: April 17, 2000

***Sartell-St. Stephen School District 748
Policy 503***

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February 28, 2022
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October 15, 2018*

503 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 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 completed the studies ordinarily required in the tenth grade and has elected not to enroll or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Attendance Procedures

Attendance procedures will be included in all building handbooks for review.

1. Excused Absences

- a. A parent, guardian, or other person having control of a child may apply to a school district 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 a truant officer, a principal, or the superintendent. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the child cannot attend school is a valid excuse.
- b. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:

- i. Child illness, medical, dental, orthodontic, or counseling appointments; including appointments conducted through telehealth.
- ii. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- iii. A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- iv. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- v. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- vi. Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Family Emergencies.
- ix. Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
- x. A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.
- xi. Students participating in a prearranged non-school competition and performance activities.
- xii. Family vacations.
- xiii. College visits.
- xiv. Student safety concerns
- xv. 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, instruction conducted by a Tribal spiritual or cultural advisor, or a school for religious instruction conducted and maintained by a church, or association of churches, or any Sunday school association incorporated under the laws of this state, or any auxiliary thereof. This 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. A child may be absent from school on days that the child attends upon instruction according to this clause.

2. Unexcused Absences

- a. An unexcused absence by a student is one that was not approved by the parent and/or school district or an absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance guidelines.
- b. Actions taken by administration in the event of unexcused absences.
 - (1) The student's parent or guardian will be notified immediately of the unexcused absence.
 - (2) In cases of reoccurring unexcused absences, the administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
 - (3) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minnesota Statute sections 121A.40-121A.56.

3. Requirements following an Absence

Students who are absent are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher.

C. 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 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 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 disciplinary actions.

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 out of school suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
5. A student must be in attendance for at least ½ day, or have administrative approval, in order to participate in extra-curricular activities.

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.

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 Statute section 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minnesota Statute section 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 in 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, Minnesota Statute 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 Statute section 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minnesota Statute section 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statute section 120A.34;

5. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the child's enrolling or resident district;
6. 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 Statute section 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 Statute section 260C.201; and
9. 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. An 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, junior high 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 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 Statute section Chapter 260A.

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 Continuing Truant)
Minn. Stat. § 260A.05 (School Attendance Review Boards)
Minn. Stat. § 260A.06 (Referral of Truant Students to School Attendance Review Board)

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 Tp. High Sch. Dist. No. 113, 66 Ill. App. 3d 7 (1978)
Gutierrez v. Sch. Dist.t R-1, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)
Knight v. Bd. of Educ., 348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)
Dorsey v. Bale, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

Cross References: Sartell-St. Stephen District Policy 506 (Student Discipline)