



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

POLICY:	503
ADOPTED:	04/04/05
REVISED:	08/22/22

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define school attendance expectations. This policy recognizes that class attendance is a joint responsibility to be shared by the student, parents or guardians, teachers and administrators.

II. General Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the district to fully comply with Minnesota Statute section 120A.22, which requires the students of the district to attend all assigned classes every day school is in session, unless: the student has been excused because the student has already completed state and district standards required to graduate from high school; has withdrawn; or has a valid excuse for an absence.

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. This policy is intended to be positive and not punitive.

Any time a student is not in school it is considered an absence. The school district has the right to excuse or not excuse the reason for an absence within the Student Attendance policy. Schools are required to notify parents when a child has had three unexcused absences. The district reserves the right to request additional documentation if necessary to verify an absence.

A. Responsibilities of Reporting Absences:

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.

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 of a student's absence and to work cooperatively with the school and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise. To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or guardian should communicate with the

attendance office on the day of the absence either by telephone, note, or email and provide the reason for the student's absence. Parent or guardian notification of the absence must occur within 5 days of the initial absence.

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.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

It is the administrator's responsibility to work collaboratively with teachers to monitor and support student attendance and 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 that may arise.

III. Attendance Procedures

The attendance procedures are included in the appendices of this policy and in Student Handbooks. Reference Appendix I for districtwide Attendance Procedures and Guidelines. Reference Appendix II for Elementary Schools Attendance Procedures. Reference Appendix III for Secondary Schools Attendance Procedures.

IV. Required Reporting

A. 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 either (1) seven school days if the child is in elementary school or (2) one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school or high school. Also, a habitual truant is a child who is 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.
2. The building administrator or designee will refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent or legal guardian to appropriate services and

procedures, under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260A. For specific information on School Attendance requirements in Dakota County go to www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/Parenting/SchoolAttendance.

3. The district reserves the right to report students truant if they accumulate more than 10 excused absences during the year.

B. Continuing Truant

1. State law (Minnesota Statutes section 260A.02) provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the Compulsory Instruction Law and is absent from instruction in a school without a valid excuse within a single school year for:
 - a. Three days if the child is in elementary school; or
 - b. Three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school or high school.
2. When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, (Minnesota Statutes section 260A.03) provides that the building administrator or designee will notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:
 - a. That the child is truant;
 - b. That the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
 - c. 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;
 - d. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statute section 120A.34;
 - e. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the district;
 - f. That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
 - g. That if the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings under Minnesota Statute Chapter. 260; and
 - h. 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.

V. Student Status

A student, regardless of age will be dropped from the roll and classified as withdrawn if the following occurs:

- A. the student misses the first week of school; or
- B. the student is absent from school for 15 consecutive school days during the regular school year.

A referral to Dakota County shall be made after 7 days of unexcused absences.

VI. 199 Online Student Attendance

- A. Daily Attendance
 - a. Daily attendance must be taken for all students at least once per day.
- B. Direct Interaction for Attendance
 - a. Daily teacher instructional contact may be provided via participation in class sessions, live interactive video calls, instructional management websites, completed work submitted to the instructional management site, email exchanges and/or phone calls.
 - b. Documented interaction with a teacher must exist for the student to be considered in attendance. Students for whom no teacher has direct interaction on a given day are reported as absent for that day.
- B. Frequent Absences
 - a. Each school's 199 Online learning plan includes a process to identify and follow-up with students experiencing frequent absences to assure that issues of equitable access or barriers to participating in instruction can be identified and resolved.

VII. 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.

VIII. Support for Student Attendance

Each school site will develop procedures that promote regular student attendance

and prevent absenteeism and truancy. When possible, the district will work with other organizations and agencies to support regular student attendance. (See appendices I, II and III)

IX. Dissemination of Policy

1. This policy will be made available to all students and parents on the district's website and in Student Handbooks. This policy will 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.

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.28 - School Boards and Teachers, Duties
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 Ed., 429 N.W.2d 607 (Mich. App. Ct. 1988)
Campbell v. Board of Ed. 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, 383 N.E.2d 231 (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)
www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/Parenting/SchoolAttendance

Cross References: Policy 506 - Student Discipline
Student Handbooks
Student Behavior Expectations Handbook

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The school district believes regular attendance to be an essential element in the student's educational process. Regular, punctual attendance fosters a climate conducive to learning, perpetuates effective teaching, protects the integrity of the school day and ensures quality education. Regular, punctual attendance, a responsibility that should be shared by students, parents, and school, is one means by which a student learns responsibility and self-discipline. To encourage attendance, the school district herein adopts the following attendance requirements for Inver Grove Heights Schools:

I. Attendance Procedures and Guidelines

If a student is absent or will be absent from class or arrive late to school, the student's parent or guardian must contact the school office before noon the day of the absence. Phone calls are preferred to report absences. If a phone call cannot be made, a note with a phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached will be acceptable on the day the student returns; otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused. The parent or guardian must contact the school within 5 days of the initial absence to change an absence from unexcused to excused. If for some reason a parent is unable to follow the above procedure, the building administrator or designee must be contacted.

II. Classification of Absences

A. Excused Absences

An excused absence indicates an acceptable absence from school or class with parental/guardian and school permission. Full credit is given for all make-up work, and it is the teachers' and parents'/guardians' obligation to assist the student with all makeup work. A student should complete all missing work within a period equating to two days per day of excused absence from school. Students should proactively request work or assignments in cases of prearranged absences.

The following absences are considered excused:

1. Illness. Medical documentation may be required after the tenth day of illness in any school year.
2. Death or terminal illness in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative

3. Court appearance
4. Religious holiday or observance
5. Emergency conditions such as fire or flood
6. Official school field trip or other school-sponsored activity
7. Medical, dental or orthodontic treatment or counseling appointment
8. Driver's examination
9. College visit
10. Active duty in any military branch of the United States
11. Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension. Suspensions will be handled as excused absences and a student will be permitted to complete make-up work
12. Spectator at a school-sponsored activity with parent permission.

B. Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence indicates that the student is absent from school or class with or without the consent of the parent/guardian, for a reason which is not acceptable to the school as listed in Section II.A. Make-up work may be required at the end of the designated grading period as defined by the school. The following are examples of absences that will not be excused:

1. an absence by a student that was not approved by the parent/guardian and/or the school district
2. any absence in which the student failed to comply with the reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures within five school days
3. working on school assignments or preparing for exams at home
4. work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program
5. oversleeping, missing the bus, or volunteer work
6. family trips/vacations for which the school is not notified

7. other absences not authorized by the school or parent/guardian

III. Monitoring Absenteeism

- A. Administration will monitor both excused and unexcused student absenteeism. The school will utilize the table below to provide communication to parents.
- B. The school notification system will provide communication electronically to parents with each absence from the school day or a class.
- C. School administration will monitor excused medical absences and work with families to improve attendance.
- D. School administration will follow the steps below based on the number of absences a student has incurred.

Elementary School	
Each Unexcused Absences	Automated phone call and email to parents/guardians
3 Unexcused Absences	Automated phone call, email, and letter mailed home to parents/guardians
5 Unexcused Absences (medical documentation may be required)	School contact with parent/guardian for problem solving
7 Unexcused Absences	Referral to Dakota County
10 or more Cumulative Excused Absences (medical documentation may be required)	A meeting with administration, classroom teacher and school social worker may be required.

Secondary Schools	
Each Unexcused Absences	Automated phone call and email to parents/guardians
3 Unexcused Absences	Automated phone call, email, and letter mailed home to parents/guardians
7 Unexcused Absences	Referral to Dakota County
10 Excused Absences (without medical documentation)	Letter mailed home requiring medical documentation or checked by school nurse. A meeting with administration may be required.

IV. Suspension from School

Make-up work is required and will receive full credit.

V. Tardiness

- A. At the Elementary, tardiness is late arrival to school, not to exceed one hour. Any student arriving later than one hour will be marked as a half day absence.
- B. At the Secondary schools, tardiness is late arrival to school or to a class, not to exceed 20 minutes. Tardiness will be handled by the teacher.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular student attendance is expected. If a student is not prompt and regular in attendance, proper measures shall be taken to encourage regular attendance. If such encouragement is not successful in improving the situation, a review of assessment of student learning shall be conducted and a range of interventions up to and including retention shall be instituted. The final intervention plan or decision to retain rests with the school principal.

1. Anytime a student is not in school it is considered an absence. The school has the right to excuse or unexcuse the reason for an absence within their attendance policy. Schools are required to notify parents when a child has had three unexcused absences.
2. The school should be notified of a student absence by a parent/guardian through a phone call, parent/guardian note, doctor note, and/or court documentation.
3. The homeroom teacher is responsible to take daily attendance with the district-wide student information system.
4. The school administrative assistant will track attendance regularly and contact parent/guardian for each absence by telephone or by the automated telephone system.
5. The school administrative assistant shall send written notification of total absences to parents/guardians in the student's primary language beginning at three absences, and then again at five, and seven unexcused absences.
6. Any student with 5 unexcused absences may require school contact with parent/guardian for problem solving. A letter may be mailed home requiring medical documentation to excuse an absence if applicable.
7. Any student with ten (10) or more cumulative excused absences may require a parent/guardian meeting where a plan to improve student attendance is formulated. At the discretion of the site principal a meeting may be required prior to 10 cumulative excused absences. Medical documentation may be required after the 10th day of illness in any school year.
8. If the attendance does not improve, the school may seek further assistance through the school nurse, social worker or Dakota County Child and Family Services.
9. When a child has reached seven unexcused absences, the school sends an Educational Neglect Reporting Form to Dakota County Children and Family Services. A meeting with the child, parent, school staff and County social worker will be scheduled to discuss the school attendance.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular student attendance is expected. If a student is not prompt and regular in attendance, proper measures shall be taken to encourage regular attendance. If such encouragement is not successful in improving the situation, a review of assessment of student learning shall be conducted and a range of interventions implemented.

1. The classroom/homeroom/advisory teacher is responsible to take daily attendance with the district-wide student information database.
2. The school administrative assistants will contact parent/guardian of daily unexcused absences through the automated telephone system, email, and/or text message.
3. The school administrative assistants will provide written notification to parents at three (3) unexcused absences. On the seventh (7th) unexcused absence, student may be referred to Dakota County for truancy.
4. The school should be notified of a student absence by a parent/guardian through a phone call, parent/guardian note, doctor note, and/or court documentation.
5. Medical documentation may be required after the 10th day of illness in any school year.
6. Administration or their designee shall track attendance regularly.
7. Continued absences may also be reported to Dakota County Child Protection Services as educational neglect if the circumstances warrant it.
8. If interventions are unsuccessful and academic progress is affected, students may be referred to summer school or a credit recovery program.
9. Excessive tardiness or unexcused absence may result in detention being issued.