

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 503

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 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 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 by notifying the school office on the day of student absence, or by the following academic day 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, 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, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Attendance Procedures

NOTE: For Online students, please refer to [Addendum A](#) titled "Goals to Guide 2020-21 School Year Planning" for attendance procedures during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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.

To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent or legal guardian will need to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. Student absence from school should be limited to those instances in which an absence is genuinely unavoidable

1. Excused Absences that do NOT count towards Maximum Absence Rule.

The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences

exempt from Maximum Absence Rule:

- (1) Illness/appointment as excused by a physician, (dental, orthodontic treatment, counseling appointment with a licensed mental health professional, etc) stating that the student cannot attend school.
- (2) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- (3) Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
- (4) 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.
- (5) School or college visits for admission purposes with school and parent approval. Junior grade students will be allocated (1) excused day per school year for visits, while seniors will receive (2) excused visit days per school year.
- (6) Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
- (7) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.
- (8) A death in the student's immediate family (Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, Grandparents).

2. Excused Absences that count towards Maximum Absence Rule

The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences, but will still count towards Maximum Absence Rule.

- (1) Illness as excused by a parent. Not to exceed **(5)** days per semester. Days exceeding **(5)** days not accompanied by a physician statement will be considered unexcused and truancy will be filed accordingly.
- (2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- (3) Religious instruction not to exceed **(3)** hours in any week.
- (4) Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- (5) **Vacation with family for a period not to exceed (5) days,**

when requests are made in advance by parents and combined with a plan to provide for the student's educational needs during their absence.

- (6) Work at home when requested by a parent, with prior notice provided to the school, and necessitated by extenuating circumstances.

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 (2) days from the date of the student's return to school.** 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.
- (3) **Maximum Absence Rule applies to 7th - 12th grade students.**

3. Unexcused Absences

- a. Truancy. An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.

"Continuing truant" means a child who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of section [120A.22](#) and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in 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 on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

The following are examples of absences which **will not be excused and will be counted towards the Maximum Absence Rule** as well as possibly meet mandated reporting requirements for referral to the appropriate county agency for truancy filing.

- (1) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
- (2) Work at home not approved in advance.
- (3) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
- (4) Vacations with family, except as outlined.
- (5) Personal trips to schools or colleges.
- (6) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (4 tardies equal one unexcused absence).
- (7) Leaving school grounds without prior approval.
- (8) Failure to attend class/skipping.
- (9) 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 accumulated 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 subject to discipline in the following manner:
 - a.) ISD # 2364 reserves the right to use all disciplinary measures available to assist students with regular school attendance.
 - b.) **Maximum Absence Rule** - High School/Middle

School - *Philosophy* A significant correlation exists between student attendance and achievement. Since absences adversely affect student performance, students have the responsibility to maintain punctual, regular attendance. Participation in well-planned instructional activities under the direction of a competent educator is necessary to maximize student learning. Assignments can be made up; time missed in class cannot. A grade for the course and course credit is earned after the completion of the coursework and attendance requirement has been met.

Attendance Procedures

c.) **Maximum Absence Rule** – Students in grade 7-12 who are absent, excused or unexcused, over **6** times in a **single semester**, will be required to make up hours missed through (seat time, detentions, academic assignment/project, etc), before they will receive credit for the course missed. Quarter/ Semester grades will be held until all make-up hours have been completed. Students will be given an incomplete grade for the course. **If a student fails to make up the hours within ten days from the end of the date grades are posted, the student's progress in that particular course will be noted and the incomplete grade will be posted incomplete until such time that the student completes the coursework for credit.**

d.) All absences will be counted in the accumulation of the maximum number (**excused + unexcused + truancy = Maximum Absence Number**), except those excused absences as outlined as exempt in the Attendance Policy. Refer to district attendance policy for examples of excused and unexcused/truant absences. Study Hall is a required class for students to attend.

e.) The Maximum Attendance Rule does apply and diplomacy consequences will be enforced. This could also result in the removal of the student from the graduation ceremony.

d.) If unexpected illnesses or emergencies occur during the school day, students must be excused from the nurse's office or the principal's office only. Do not leave the building without being excused! This will be considered truancy.

4. Truant/Unexcused Absences

a.) Truancy. An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district. This includes all absences not school authorized and not verified by parents are considered truanancies.

b.) These absences are counted in the Maximum Absence Rule. Make-up hours will be assigned (seat time, detentions, etc), participation credit will not be granted, and make-up assignments are at the discretion of the instructor. The administration has the sole right to determine if an absence is excused or unexcused.

5. Tardiness

a.) Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness. A student is considered absent 11 minutes into the class period.

b.) Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office for an admission slip.

c.) Tardies are tabulated by semester. Tardies will start over at the beginning of a new semester.

(1). If the result of a grade reduction or loss of credit has the effect of an expulsion, the school district will follow the procedures set forth in the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56.

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.

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. Work at home that falls under excused absence guidelines.

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.) Students are expected to be on time for class. (4) unexcused tardies will result in detention being assigned.
- c.) **If (4) unexcused tardies are accumulated for the same class period, they will be counted as (1) unexcused absence towards the maximum absence rule.**
- d.) ISD # 2364 reserves the right to use all disciplinary measures available to assist students with regular school attendance.

6. Perfect or Exemplary Attendance Incentive 7-12th

Perfect attendance shall be defined as a student being in attendance at school for the entire school day for the entire school year. Exemplary attendance is defined as no more than three days missed during the school year. School business, such as field trips, contests, or counselor approved college visitations will not affect perfect or exemplary attendance.

A student with perfect or exemplary attendance for the school year will be eligible for various incentives at the discretion of school administration.

A student must be in attendance for 40 minutes out of 50 minutes in a class period in order to be considered in attendance for any period. (4) tardies constitute a period of absence for purposes of computing exemplary attendance. Any unexcused absence and/or suspension will nullify perfect or exemplary attendance incentives regardless of the amount of time absent.

A list of students eligible for the incentive will be prepared and published at the appropriate time notifying parents, students, and staff of their eligibility.

Note: special consideration will be given for absences due to a funeral or for church sponsored trips or retreats. Church trips and events will be considered under the attendance incentive, only if the event cannot be planned on a non-school day. Administration will determine this with input from the pastor or youth pastor. The event must be approved in advance, through a fax or letter (include list of students involved) by the

school administration in order to qualify for perfect/exemplary attendance consideration. Discretionary powers will be given to the building administration to deal with special situations.

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 suspended from any class, he or she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
5. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, he or she must present a physician's statement or a statement from the student's parent or guardian clearing the student for participation that day. The note must be presented to the coach or advisor before the student participates in the activity or program.
6. A student must be in attendance at school by 11:00 a.m. in order to practice or participate that day. Prior arrangements must be made with school administration for any exceptions.

III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

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.

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 child's enrolling or resident 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 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 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 Minn. Stat. Ch. 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. §§ 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, 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, 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, 38 Ill. App. 3d 603, 348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)
Dorsey v. Bale, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)