

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy #503: ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR MINNETONKA HIGH SCHOOL

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the attendance guidelines for students in grades 9-12.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the responsibility of the Minnetonka Public Schools to the community that all school members will work to challenge and support students in the pursuit of their highest levels of academic and personal achievement. Recognizing the strong relationship between regular attendance for each class and high academic achievement, the District will establish a clear attendance system. Such a system will promote this relationship and hold students accountable for regular attendance. It is essential that Minnetonka High School students and their families take responsibility for knowing and following the Attendance Policy.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE

- A. Minnetonka High School will establish guidelines for the number of allowed absences (both excused and unexcused) for each semester course. If a student exceeds the number of allowed absences, he/she will receive a loss of credit for the course.
- B. Minnetonka High School expects students and their parent(s)/guardian to take responsibility for knowing and following the Attendance Policy.
- C. All students regardless of age must have absences excused by the parent(s)/guardian if the student lives at home.
- D. Students enrolled in an alternative program should leave campus immediately following their last class. Students in an alternate program will be issued a pass from their program coordinator.
- E. Minnetonka High School is a closed campus. Grades 9-11 may not leave campus during the student's school day. This type of absence will be considered an off-campus violation.
- F. Seniors will be issued a semester off-campus lunch pass upon the return of a signed parent(s)/guardian permission form. A new form must be completed each semester. If the student abuses the pass or is placed on an attendance contract, the pass may be revoked.

IV. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of each student to:

1. Attend all classes on a daily basis.
2. Monitor the total number of absences in each course. Report any errors to the teacher of the course.
3. Monitor the total number of school authorized absences. When more than three class periods of a specific course are missed during a quarter, the student will appeal to the teacher to be out of the class for any subsequent school authorized activities.
4. Attend every class that is considered to be his/her “official” and “current” schedule. Students should not discontinue attendance to a class if he/she anticipates changing or dropping that class. Until the class is officially dropped and the counselor has provided a new “official” schedule, students are expected to attend each of the classes on their schedule. Failure to do so will constitute an unexcused absence.
5. Report, when ill, to the Health Office.
6. Follow all check-in and check-out procedures.
7. Contact teacher to arrange make-up work.
8. Ensure that a teacher changes the absence notation to a tardy (within the first seven (7) ~~10~~ minutes,) if a student is late to class.
9. Complete SBR (detention) hours within the required timeframe for an unexcused absence.

V. PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

A. It is the responsibility of each student’s parent(s)/guardian to:

1. Ensure that the student is attending school.
2. Monitor the total number of absences in each course. Report any errors to the teacher of the course.
3. Inform the Attendance Office via Skyward Family Access or call the Attendance Office prior to a student’s absence when a student will be absent. Minnetonka High School does not accept notes. Parent(s)/guardian must call in excused absences within 24 hours of the student’s return to school. Following 24 hours all absences will stand as unexcused. All students, regardless of age, must have an absence excused by a parent/guardian if the student lives at home.
4. Schedule appointments before or after school.
5. Schedule family vacations during official school breaks and summer vacation.
6. Work cooperatively with the school and the student to resolve any attendance problems that may arise.

7. Communicate and discuss with their student the Minnetonka High School Attendance Policy.
8. Contact the Minnetonka High School Health Office for assistance if the student has any long-term or chronic health conditions that may result in frequent absences from school.

VI. TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

A. It is each teacher's responsibility to:

1. Take accurate, hourly attendance.
2. Be familiar with and responsible for all procedures governing attendance.
3. Provide any student who has been absent with any missed class work/assessments upon request.
4. Communicate procedures for tardies to students and parents/guardian verbally and in writing at the beginning of each semester.
5. Provide homework to Health Office upon request.

VII. ADMINSTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. It is each administrator's responsibility (or administrative designee) to:

1. Require students to attend all classes as stated in Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning and the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction, Law Minn. Stat. 120.101.
2. Be familiar with all procedures governing attendance.
3. Maintain accurate records on student attendance.
4. Prepare a list of the previous day's absences stating the status of each absence.
5. Ensure that parent(s)/guardian receive an automated phone call after each unexcused absence.
6. Ensure that parent(s)/guardian and students receive timely communication of all absences.
7. Communicate to and/or meet with the student when he/she reaches each absence threshold in a semester course.
8. Inform parent(s)/guardian when a student is dropped from a course and a loss of credit is awarded due to excessive absences.
9. Meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian to discuss credit recovery options if so requested.
10. Approve and support teacher procedures for tardies.

VIII. GUIDELINES AND CATEGORIES FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. The following absences will appear on the student's attendance record as an "E." An accumulation of ten excused/unexcused absences in a semester course will result in the loss of credit.
1. College visits (on/off campus)
 2. Driver's license examination (not the permit test)
 3. Family emergency
 4. Illness
 5. Visit to the nurse's office
 6. Pre-arranged excused absences for student participation in non-school competition and performance activities
 7. Pre-arranged family vacations
 8. Professional appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day
 9. Spectators at state/regional competitions: student spectators must have parent(s)/guardian approval and follow all attendance policy procedures.

IX. GUIDELINES AND CATEGORIES FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. The following are examples of absences that will not be excused and will appear on the student's attendance record as "U." An accumulation of five unexcused absences in a semester course will result in the loss of credit.
1. Any absence in which a student and/or parent(s)/guardian fails to comply with Minnetonka High School reporting attendance procedures.
 2. Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
 3. Non-prearranged family vacations
 4. Missed bus
 5. Overslept
 6. Truancy

X. GUIDELINES AND CATEGORIES FOR SCHOOL AUTHORIZED ABSENCES

- A. These absences need to be excused at the time of the absence. The following absences will appear on the student's attendance record as an "SAA." These absences will not count toward the loss of credit in a semester course.

1. Ceremonies in which the student is being honored or presented with an award (i.e. Rotary)
2. Chronic Illness
3. Court-ordered appearances
4. Death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend relative
5. Field trips
6. Illness in student's immediate family (documentation required by medical personnel)
7. Interscholastic meets and event
8. Musical sectionals
9. Religious holidays and/or instruction
10. Student government and related activities
11. Suspension
12. Verified meeting conducted with school personnel

XI. CONSEQUENCES AND NOTIFICATIONS FOR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

A. The following steps will be taken with students with unexcused absences:

1. First unexcused for a semester course:
 - a. Student will receive written notification from the school of the unexcused absence and the required detention.
 - b. Parent(s)/guardian will receive an automated phone call/email informing them of the unexcused absence.
2. Second unexcused absence for a semester course:
 - a. Student will receive notification from the school of the unexcused absence and the required detention. There will be a conversation with staff regarding the consequences of unexcused absences.
 - b. Parent(s)/guardian will receive an automated phone call/email informing them of the unexcused absence.
 - c. A letter will be sent to the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian informing them of the number of absences from the course and the school policy.
3. Third unexcused absence for a semester course:
 - a. Student will receive notification from school of the unexcused absence and the required detention.
 - b. Parent(s)/guardian will receive an automated phone call/email informing them of the unexcused absence.
 - c. A letter will be sent to the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian informing them of the number of absences from the course and the school policy.
 - d. A conference will take place with a principal or administrative designee and the student resulting in a signed contract expressing full understanding that student will be dropped from the course upon the next unexcused absence and receive a loss of credit.

4. Fourth unexcused absence for a semester course:
 - a. Student will be dropped from the course and will receive a loss of credit. The student has the right to appeal the decision within 5 days.
 - b. Parent(s)/guardian will receive a letter informing them of the loss of credit. If requested by the student, parent(s)/guardian, and/or a staff member, a conference to explore alternative ways to receive credit for that course.
 - c. The student's official transcript for the dropped course will reflect a "W" (withdrawal from course.)
5. The administration will determine the number of detention hours to be assigned per unexcused absence.

XII. CONSEQUENCES AND NOTIFICATIONS FOR EXCUSED/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. The following steps will be taken with students with a combination of excused/unexcused absences:
 1. Seventh absence for a semester course:
 - a. Student and parent(s)/guardian will receive a letter/and/or email informing them of the number of absences from the course and the school policy.
 2. Ninth absence for a semester course:
 - a. Student and parent(s)/guardian will receive a letter/and/or email informing them of the number of absences from the course and the school policy.
 - b. A conference will take place with a principal or administrative designee and the student resulting in a signed contract expressing full understanding that student will be dropped from the course upon the next excused or unexcused absence and receive a loss of credit. A copy of the contract will be sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian.
 3. Tenth absence for a semester course:
 - a. Students will be dropped from the course and receive a loss of credit. The student has the right to appeal the decision within 5 days.
 - b. Parent(s)/guardian will receive a letter informing them of the loss of credit. If requested by the student, parent(s)/guardian, and/or a staff member, a conference to explore alternative ways to receive credit for that course.
 - c. The student's official transcript for the dropped course will reflect a "W" (withdrawal from course.)

XIII. EXPECTATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AUTHORIZED ABSENCES

- A. The student may miss three (3) periods from the same course during a quarter due to a school authorized absence (SAA.) This only applies to following types of SAA:
 1. Field trips
 2. Interscholastic meets and events
 3. Student government and related activities
 4. Verified meeting conducted with school personnel

- B. After the third SAA, the student will need to appeal to the teacher in order to be out of the class for one of the aforementioned activities.

XIV. GUIDELINES FOR MAKE-UP WORK DUE TO ABSENCES

- A. The student is responsible for requesting make-up work regardless of absence classification.
- B. Upon the student's return to school, a maximum of four total days is allowed for make-up work. Additional days for make-up work are at the discretion of each teacher.
- C. Previously announced projects and/or assessments must be turned in or taken on the day of the student's return to school. If extenuating circumstances exist, the teacher may grant additional make-up time.
- D. An administrative conference will be held with students who exhibit a pattern of unexcused absences on assessments days.

XV. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR TARDIES.

- A. Students are expected to be in their assigned areas at designated times. Students who arrive to class after the second tone sounds are considered tardy. However, students arriving after seven (7) minutes will be considered absent (unexcused.)
- B. School wide procedures will be developed for tardies.

XVI. PROCESS FOR APPEALING LOSS OF CREDIT

- A. An Administrative Appeals Committee will review the appeal and make a decision. A student wishing to appeal must download an attendance appeal form from the District's website and complete and return it with supporting documentation to the main office no later than five school days following the notification of a loss of credit from a course. The student should continue in the course until the outcome of the appeal is determined.

XVII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

- A. Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students and parent(s)/guardian at the commencement of each school year. This policy shall also be available upon request in the principal's office.

XVIII. 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 120.101 and is absent from instruction in a school. As defined in Minn. Stat. 120.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for three or more class periods on three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school or high school.
- B. Habitual Truant: 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.

1. A school district attendance officer shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parent(s) or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures, under Minnesota Statute Chapter 260A.

Cross Referencing:

Policy #626: Secondary Grading and Reporting Pupil Achievement

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