

POLICY 503
STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Adopted: June 22, 2010

Revised: February 8, 2022 (MSBA / District language)

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 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. Student Support Administrator's Responsibility

- a. It is the student support administrator's responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes and study halls. It is also the student support 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 student support 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 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

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 will be asked to verify the reason for the student's absence from school. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the student cannot attend school is a valid excuse.
- 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 or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
 - (4) Medical, dental, orthodontic treatment, or counseling appointment.
 - (5) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
 - (6) Religious activities

- (7) Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
 - (8) Family emergencies.
 - (9) Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
 - (10) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.
- c. Students will be allowed one personal day per semester and the time must be taken in ½ day increments.
- d. 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. Any work not completed shall result in "no credit" for the missed assignment.

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.
 - (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) Personal trips to post-secondary institutions without prior approval (pre-arranged absence form).
 - (6) Hair and tanning appointments, photo sessions, concerts, shopping, going out for lunch.
 - (7) Oversleeping, missing the bus.
 - (8) Improper sign out.
 - (9) Leaving class without permission

- (10) *Vacations with family without prior approval (pre-arranged absence form) **may not** be excused
- (11) 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 student support personnel 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 the discipline procedures developed at the building level. The consequences are available in the Fairmont Junior/Senior High School Student Handbook or the Fairmont Elementary Family Handbook.

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.

C. Tardiness

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

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 for tardiness are developed at the building level and are available in the Fairmont Junior/Senior High School Student Handbook or in the Fairmont Elementary Family Handbook.

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 beyond 12:20 p.m., he or she must present a physician's statement 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.

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. This policy can also be accessed on the school district website: <http://www.fairmont.k12.mn.us>.
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.

IV. 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 Statutes, section 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, 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.

B. Reporting Responsibility

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minnesota Statutes, 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 Statutes, section 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statutes, section 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 Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260;

8. That if a child under the age of 12 continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to a mandated report to Human Services under Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556;
9. 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 Statutes, section 260C.201;
10. 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 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, 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 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 Statutes, Section 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 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 (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 Twp. High Sch. Dist. No. 113*, 66 Ill. App.3d 7, 383 N.E.2d 231 (1978)
- Gutierrez v. Sch. Dist. R-1*, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)
- Knight v. Bd. of Educ.*, 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)

Fairmont Junior-Senior High School



Where Every Day Is A Great Day To Be A Cardinal!

900 Johnson Street - Fairmont, MN 56031

Phone: 507-238-4411 FAX: 507-235-4130

Website: fairmont.k12.mn.us



Pre-Arranged Absence Form

This form must be completed and returned to the Junior/Senior High School Office at least 1 (one) school day prior to departure. Incomplete or late forms may result in the absence being marked as *unexcused*.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian(s) Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Date(s) of Absence: _____

Reason & explanation for absence:

- **Family Vacation:** _____
- **College Visit** (include college name & location): _____
- **Non-School Related Educational Opportunity:** _____

Please note the following:

- *Under no circumstances will students be excused for vacations or college visits occurring on state mandated testing dates. Vacation or college related absences on those dates will be marked as unexcused.*
- *A student that incurs eight (8) excused and/or unexcused absences in a semester will meet with the Dean of Students or attendance counselor to discuss attendance issues and its impact on his/her academic performance. At that time the student may be placed on an attendance contract.*
- *A student who is absent from a class more than ten (10) times during a semester, will be referred for an attendance appeal and may lose credit in that class for the semester. An attendance contract, if successful, may be used in place of an appeal to maintain credit.*

We have read and understand the conditions listed above.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian(s) Signature: _____ Date: _____

The student listed above has made prior arrangements with me regarding his/her upcoming absence(s).

Period 1: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 2: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 3: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 4: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 5: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 6: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 7: Teacher Signature: _____

Period 8: Teacher Signature: _____

Administrator/Counselor Signature: _____

Fairmont High School Make-up Assignments

Student Name: _____

Date(s) of Absence: _____

	Assignments & Due Dates
Period 1	
Period 2	
Period 3	
Period 4	
Period 5	
Period 6	
Period 7	
Period 8	

