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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 199
Inver Grove Heights Community Schools
2990 80th Street East
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

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.
- 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 excused absence.

In accordance with the regulations of the Minnesota Department of Education and 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the student has already completed state and school district standards required to graduate from high school, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

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 provide the school with the reason for the student's 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. It is also the teacher's responsibility to provide any student who has been absent with a valid excuse 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

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 that may arise.

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 should inform the school attendance office on the day of the absence either by telephone, note, or email and provide the reason for the student's absence. Parental/guardian notification of absence must occur within five days of the initial absence. The district reserves the right to request additional documentation, such as a doctor's note, if necessary to verify an absence.

b. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences and are not counted in the maximum absence rule:

- (1) Illness.
- (2) Chronic illness verified in writing by a physician.
- (3) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- (4) A death or funeral in the student's immediate family.

- (5) Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week.
- (6) Official school field trip or other school sponsored activities or meetings.
- (7) Unique or emergency circumstances which are authorized by a school administrator.
- (8) Medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment or a counseling appointment that cannot be made outside of the school day.
- (9) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- (10) Religious observances.
- (11) Authorized college visits.
- (12) 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.
- (13) Family vacations: Up to five personal days to be approved in advance by administration (consecutive – only one time per school year). Vacation requests must be completed one week in advance of the vacation.
- (14) Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
- (15) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.

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 two days (for each one day absent) from the date of the student's return to school except for school sponsored activities.
- (3) Students are expected to turn in work due on the day of a field trip or school activity if it was assigned in advance by the teacher.
- (4) Any work not completed within these guidelines shall result in "no credit" for the missed assignment(s). However, the building principal or the classroom teacher may extend the time allowed for completion of make-up work in the case of extenuating circumstances.

2. Unexcused Absences

- a. Unexcused absences occur when a student is absent from school without the approval of the school.
- b. 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) Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (3 tardies equal one unexcused absence).
- (6) Oversleeping.
- (7) Leaving the building without following the checkout procedures.
- (8) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy is an unexcused absence.

c. 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) 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.
- (3) The student will not be given credit for work missed due to an unexcused absence.

3. Maximum Absence Rule (High School Only)

- a. Students will not receive credit for a class in which five unexcused absences are accumulated in one trimester.
- b. When a student reaches his or her third unexcused absence in a specific trimester class, written notification of the absences will be mailed to the student's parent/guardian by the attendance office. This notification will also advise the parent/guardian that adverse consequences, which may include loss of credit, may result from excessive absences.
- c. After such notification, the student or his or her parent or guardian may request a conference with school officials regarding the student's unexcused absences and the prescribed consequence. The notification will state that the school strongly urges the student's parent or guardian to request such a conference.
- d. Upon the fifth unexcused absence, the student will receive a grade of "no credit" ("NC") or "fail" ("F"). The building principal will mail a notice to the student's parent or guardian.

The student will have the option of receiving an “NC” if the student remains in class and meets all course requirements. An “NC” will have no effect on the student’s grade point average. Or, the student may receive an “F” if the student withdraws from the class or does not meet all course requirements. An “F” grade will have a negative effect on the student’s grade point average.

- e. Appeals Process. The student and/or parent/guardian have the right to appeal the loss of credit to the grade level administrator when the student exceeds the maximum unexcused absence rule. The student and/or parent/guardian must request an appeal from the appropriate grade-level administrator within five days of receipt of the no credit or failure notice. The school district reserves the authority to develop an alternative option to facilitate learning of the course content and obtain course credit at any point during the appeals process.

If the student and/or parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision of grade-level administrator the student and/or parent/guardian may appeal to Attendance Appeals Committee.

The Attendance Appeals Committee shall meet within five school days of receipt of an application and make a decision on the appeal.

Further steps in the appeals process, including appeal to the principal, can be found in the Simley Student Handbook.

- f. If the result of the 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. Tardiness between periods will be handled by the teacher.
- 3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

- a. Illness.
- b. Chronic illness verified in writing by a physician.
- c. Serious illness in the student’s immediate family.
- d. A death or funeral in the student’s immediate family.
- e. Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week.

- f. Official school field trip or other school sponsored activities or meetings.
- g. Unique or emergency circumstances which are authorized by a school administrator.
- h. Medical, dental, or orthodontic, or mental health treatment or other appointments that cannot be made outside of the school day.
- i. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- j. Religious observances.
- k. Authorized college visits.
- l. 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.
- m. Family vacations: Up to five personal days to be approved in advance by administration (consecutive – only one time per school year). Vacation requests must be completed one week in advance of the vacation.

4. Unexcused Tardiness

- a. An unexcused tardy 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 detention after three (3) unexcused tardies in the middle school and four (4) unexcused tardies in the high school. In addition three unexcused tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence.
- c. At the middle school 10 unexcused tardies may result in Saturday school.
- d. At the high school, up to 10 minutes late to class is an unexcused tardy; 10 to 24 minutes late to class is an unexcused tardy along with an after school makeup (ASM); 25 or more minutes late to class is an unexcused absence.

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 during the period of suspension.
- 5. If a student is absent from school due to medical reasons, 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. 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 different 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 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 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.

Nothing in this section shall prevent a school district from notifying a truant child's parent or legal guardian of the child's truancy or otherwise addressing a child's attendance problems prior to the child becoming a continuing truant.

C. Habitual Truant

1. 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, 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 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.28 - School Boards and Teachers, Duties
Minn. Stat. § 120A.30 - Attendance Officers
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, 383N.E.2d231 (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)

Cross References: Policy 506 - Student Discipline