

STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, EXCUSES, AND TRUANCY

Need, Question, Issue

What are the District's expectations regarding attendance?

POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with Minnesota Department of Education regulations and the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minnesota Statute §120A.22, the students of Centennial School District No. 12 are **REQUIRED** to attend all assigned classes, homerooms, and/or study halls in which a grade/credit is earned every day school is in session.

PURPOSE

The School Board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, benefits 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.

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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Student's Responsibility**

- It is the student's responsibility to attend all assigned classes, homerooms, and/or study halls in which a grade/credit is earned every day school is in session.
- It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class, homeroom, or study hall.
- It is the student's responsibility to request and complete any missed assignments due to an absence.

2. Parent/Guardian's Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to ensure the student is attending school.
- It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to inform the school in the event of a student absence.
- It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian 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 attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class.
- It is the teacher's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly.
- It is the teacher's responsibility to provide any student who has been absent with assignments and assistance upon request of student or parent/guardian.
- It is the teacher's responsibility to work cooperatively with the student's parent/guardian and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

4. Administrator's Responsibility

- It is the administrator's or his/her designee's responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes, homerooms, and/or study halls.
- It is the administrator's or his/her designee's responsibility to be familiar with all procedures governing student attendance.
- It is the administrator's or his/her designee's responsibility to distribute the building's attendance procedure through the student handbook.
- It is the administrator's or his/her designee's responsibility to determine excused or unexcused absences in accordance with elementary and secondary school procedures.
- It is the administrator's or his/her designee's responsibility to inform the student's parent/guardian of the student's attendance and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.
- It is the administrator's or his/her designee's responsibility to inform the student's parent/guardian of truancy.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Guidelines

A. Excused Absences

The following reasons may be sufficient to constitute excused absences:

- (1) Illness
- (2) Serious family emergency
- (3) Medical or dental treatment

- (4) Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week
- (5) State required court appearances.
- (6) 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.
- (7) Pre-approved vacation

B. Unexcused Absences

The following are examples of absences which will not be excused:

- (1) Truancy: an absence which was not approved by the school district.
- (2) Any absence in which the student/parent/guardian failed to comply with any reporting requirements of Centennial School District No. 12's attendance procedures.
- (3) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy.

C. Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness in accordance with elementary and secondary school procedures.

D. Excessive Absences

Students are considered to have excessive absences when absences are greater than 10%.

E. Continuing Truant

Students are considered continuing truant under Minnesota Statute §260A.02, if absent from instruction in a school without valid excuse within a single school year for:

- (1) Three (3) days if a child is in elementary school; or
- (2) Three (3) or more class periods on three (3) different days if the child is in middle school or high school.

F. Habitually Truant

Students are considered habitually truant under Minnesota Statute §260C.007, if a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven (7) school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven (7) school days if the child is in middle school or high school, or a child who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven (7) school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school.

2. Attendance

A. All students shall be enrolled in a full-time schedule of classes on the elementary, middle and senior high school level, and/or an approved program of work-study on the senior high school level. Exception may be made for students with special needs, which might include home-bound and medical services.

B. Absences from Any and All Classes of the School Day

(1) Elementary, Middle, and High School

(a) General procedures

- 1) Parents/guardians are asked to notify the school office of the reason for student absences. If no such notice is received, school office personnel will attempt to determine the reason for the absence.
- 2) The parent or guardian shall be responsible for providing reason for the student's absence from school. The administrator or his/her designee may require a written excuse from the parent/guardian or medical personnel when the student returns to school. The required excuse shall describe the reasons for the absence and indicate the dates of absence.
- 3) Absences due to reasons other than illness or emergency may be unexcused unless approved by the administrator or his/her designee.
- 4) The administrator or his/her designee may require a conference with the parent or guardian and student following repeated absences so that all parties can be properly acquainted with the consequences of repeated absenteeism, and so that a solution to the problem can be discussed. The administrator or his/her designee may ask the teacher or other professional support personnel to be present during the conference.

2. Consequences

A. Consequences of Absences

- (1) Students who are absent are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the teacher.
- (2) Students who do not make up an assignment in accordance with elementary and secondary school procedures will not receive credit for that assignment.
- (3) If a student is determined to have excessive absences, the letter provided in Appendix A will be mailed to the parent or guardian.

B. Consequences of Continuing Truancy

- (1) If a student is determined to have at least three (3) unexcused absences, the letter provided in Appendix B will be mailed to the parent or guardian, indicating continued truancy.

C. Consequences of Habitual Truancy

- (1) If a student is determined to have at least seven (7) or more recurring unexcused absences, the administrator or his/her designee may file a Truancy Offense Report with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes and in accordance with district, county, state and federal requirements.

Adopted: 11-10-77

Revised: 10-14-82, 2-27-89, 6-25-01, 7-14-08

Reviewed: 6-16-08

Appendix A

**LETTER FROM
CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 12
REQUESTING DOCTOR'S NOTE**

[Date]

[Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
Address
City, State Zip]

Dear [Parent(s)/Guardian(s) name]:

[Name of School] records indicate [student's name] has missed [number of days] days of school this year. Health issues apparently account for some or all of [student's name]'s absences.

I am concerned about [student's name]'s health, but I am also concerned about [his/her] education. For this reason, I ask that [student's name]'s absences due to illness be confirmed by a note from [his/her] doctor. Without such a note, future absences will be considered truancy. Students with excessive truancy are referred to the Juvenile Corrections Department.

I hope to see [student's name]'s health and school attendance improve. I appreciate your concern and interest in [student's name]'s success here at [Name of School].

Sincerely,

[Principal]
[Name of School] Principal

Appendix B

**LETTER FROM
CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 12
REGARDING 3 OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

[Date]

[Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
Address
City State Zip]

Dear [Parent(s)/Guardian(s) name]:

This letter is being sent to make you aware that your child, [student's name], has missed [number of days] days of school this year.

It is certainly understood that health problems will prevent attendance on some days and a certain number of absences are to be expected. Obviously, we want to keep this number to a minimum. A doctor's statement is requested if your child has a significant number of absences due to a health problem.

Unexcused absences and patterns of continual absences without a significant health problem border on truancy. Parents and school officials have the duty (Minnesota Statute 120A.32 and 120A.34) to see to it that a child attends school.

Minnesota Statute 260C.007, Subd. 4(14), declares a youth who is habitually truant is a child in need of protection or services. As an administrator, I have the duty to file a Truancy Offense Report to the County if a child has been truant seven (7) or more days.

As a result of this Truancy Offense Report and to provide additional support, you and your child can expect to receive information about a Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) from the County.

Please give this notice your most serious consideration. If you have questions, please feel free to call me at 763-792-[secretary's ext.].

Sincerely,

[Principal's name]
[Building] Principal