

503.1L STUDENT ATTENDANCE; GRADES K-6

I. PHILOSOPHY

Attendance is a major concern of everyone at New York Mills School. Absences affect student performance. Data collected by our staff indicates a significant correlation between student absences and achievement.

The compulsory attendance provisions cited in M.S.120.101 must be enforced through keeping daily attendance records. A child may be counted as in attendance only when the student is physically present in the school on a given day. School cannot be considered in session when only teachers are present.

It is well for students and parents to realize the increasing importance that employers and college officials attach to a student's records of absenteeism, tardiness, conduct and personal ratings. Jobs and college entrance are often determined by these factors.

Perfect Attendance Certificates will be given to students who have not missed or been tardy from school at any time during the year.

II. POLICY

A. Maximum Unexcused Absence Rule

A student will not receive credit for any class in which UNEXCUSED AND OR TRUANT absences exceed six for one semester. ALL ABSENCES WILL BE COUNTED in the accumulation of the maximum number, except as otherwise provided herein. (Refer to Section IV, B)

B. Attendance Participation Grade

A daily participation grade based upon attendance is part of each course offered at the New York Mills School. Students who have an unexcused absence will lose their daily participation credit for each unexcused absence.

C. Make-up Policy

All work for absences must be made up. A student shall receive no participation credit and will receive partial credit for the work made up for any unexcused absence. The work will be critically graded.

D. Classification of Absences

1. Situations not counted in the maximum absence formula.

- a. **School Authorized Absences.** These need to be verified at the time of the absence and are not counted in the six maximum absence rule. Make up

work is required. Examples of, but not limited to, school authorized absences are: Attendance at school events, during the normal school day, in school activities like Student Senate, Knowledge Bowl, and music events, are not considered absence from school.

- b. Excused Absences. These need to be verified at the time of, before or upon returning to school and are not counted in the maximum absence rule. Make-up work is required. Examples would be illness, funeral attendance, family emergencies, prearranged absences with parental permission, a death in the immediate family, and reasons listed as grounds for an excused absence.
 - c. Suspensions from School. Suspensions are not counted in the maximum absence rule and make-up work is required.
2. Situations counted toward the maximum absence formula.
 - a. Unexcused Absences. All absences are not otherwise excused are unexcused. These absences are counted in the six maximum absence rule.
 - b. Tardies. Three unexcused tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence in the class and are counted toward the maximum absence rule. After losing two days to the maximum absence rule for tardies (six tardies) student will be referred to the appropriate principal for further disciplinary action.
 3. Record keeping of absence; If a child is absent from school/school activity, during all of a morning or all of an afternoon, the student will be marked absent for that morning and or afternoon.
 4. Truancy: As defined by current statute.

E. Notification

Parents and students will be notified in writing of the decision of loss of credit for violating the maximum absence rule by the building principal or designee. Parents will be notified during the year any time a student has accumulated four of six absences. Notification will be made through principal's office.

F. The Appeal Process

An appeal process for students and parents to present and discuss extenuating circumstances is available.

1. Any request for appeal of loss of credit shall be made in writing within five days of notification of loss of credit.
2. The student appeal will be heard by the building principal, his/her counselor and a committee of classroom teachers.

G. Excused absences will be granted for the following reasons:

1. Illness of the student.
 - a. In case of illness for four (4) days or more, consecutive or non-consecutive during a semester of school, a statement from a local health officer, nurse, or attending physician will be required or the days over three (3) will be considered unexcused absences.
2. Sickness or death in the family necessitating the help or presence of the student at home.
3. Because of conditions beyond the student's control such as weather or bad roads while riding district buses.
4. Required to be in court to testify; appearing for a violation is unexcused.
5. Medical, dental and other professional (not haircuts) appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.
6. Any absence that in the principal's opinion indicated educational value to the student and if there is prior notice and the work is made up prior to the absence.
7. Religious holidays and special functions.
8. Special family trips when the student is traveling with parent(s) up to a maximum of five days in one semester. For absences longer than five days, the school may grant an excused absence if the facts of the situation justify additional days.
9. A student is excused for work at home only when essential to the family's welfare. No more than five days will be allowed as excused absences for work during a school term unless a conference between the administration and parents justify additional days.
10. An excused absence may be granted in extreme situations where the principal has not been notified in advance, if the absence can be justified and verified.
11. Attendance at a course of religious instruction for up to three hours each week as provided by Minn. Stat. § 120.101, subd. 9(3). Before attending such a program, the parent(s) must first receive the permission of the School Board.

H. Unauthorized absence and other violations:

1. Any absence (skipping and truancy) not excused under the above regulations becomes an unexcused absence and will be dealt with as follows; an infraction is one or more violations of the District's Attendance Policy that occur on a single day. Students will begin every semester with zero infractions.
 - a. Step 1 (first infraction). The student will make up double the time missed. He/she may start making up the time as scheduled by the Principal. If the make up schedule is not followed, the next step is automatically imposed.

- b. Step 2 (second infraction). The student may be suspended for a period up to two school days subject to the procedures of the District's Student Discipline Policy and the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. He/she will also make up double the time missed from school.
- c. Step 3 (third infraction). A committee of the superintendent, principal and member of the school board will meet with the student and his parents. The student will also make up double time after school and may in addition be suspended for a period not to exceed ten days subject to the provisions of the District's Student Discipline Policy and the Minnesota Student Fair Dismissal Act. Contact will be made by the school district to the County Child Protection Team.
- d. Step 4 (fourth infraction). An in-school suspension of up to ten days will be imposed. The student will be under the supervision of a special teacher in a separate room (an alternate educational experience required by law). A meeting will be held between the parent, student, court services, if on probation, social services, and school personnel. At this meeting, a plan of correction will be established. Possible services might be; parenting classes, Lutheran Social Services mediation, peaceful solution, individual counseling referral, evaluation, tutoring or alternative learning center. The parents and students will be informed of the consequences of a C.H.I.P.S. petition or delinquency proceeding, delay of a students driver license, community service, placement with parental reimbursement.
- e. Step 5 (fifth infraction). Expulsion will be recommended to the board of education. Expulsion will be considered by the Board subject to the provisions of the District's discipline policy and the Minnesota Student Fair Dismissal Act. Referral may be made to social services or court services for court action.

I. False Excuses for Absences

Presenting a false excuse is grounds for suspension.