

Attendance

The Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law M.S. 120.10, requires that every child between seven and sixteen years of age shall attend a public or private school during every day that the school is in session any school year.

Regardless of the nature of the class, attendance is necessary if the student is to benefit and achieve at his/her highest level of ability. Students should be encouraged to attend school every day unless there is an acceptable clause for absenteeism.

DEFINITION OF TRUANCY:

1. An habitual truant is a child under the age of 16 who is absent from 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, junior high, or high school. If a child has three (3) days in the elementary or one or more class periods on three (3) school days in the middle school in which he/she has been absent without lawful excuse, a letter should be sent to the parent/s restating the attendance policy for Mary of Lourdes School.
2. The 1993 legislature amended the Minnesota Statute 626.556, the mandatory child abuse reporting law. "Neglect" now includes failure by a parent or guardian to ensure that a child is educated according to state law. (This may include children under age seven (7) who are on an I.E.P.) This means school personnel must report educational neglect to the social service agency. The law presumes a child's absence from school is due to the parents' failure to comply with the law if the child is under twelve (12) years of age. If the child is twelve (12) or older, the absence is presumed due the child's intent.

The State Department of Education states what shall be considered as an excused absence. The following information is taken from the Manual of Instructions, uniform Child Accounting for Minnesota School Districts.

Absences that are generally considered to be excused:

1. Sickness of a child
2. Sickness or death in the family
3. Impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe
4. Observance of religious holidays
5. Quarantine
6. Required to be in court
7. Emergency work at home
8. Emergency medical or dental treatment
9. Attendance at funeral of close friend or relative
10. Excuses for other absences would be granted at the discretion of the administration.

Since it is the primary responsibility of parents that students attend school, it is expected that all absences be documented with verbal or written communication between parents and school. Following the seventh (7th) day a student has been absent due to illness, a letter will be sent to parents notifying them that a written, signed medical explanation from a physician must be sent

to the school general office. If this explanation is not received at the school office within three (3) school days of the absence, a truancy report will be filed with Morrison County Social Services.

TRUANCY PROCEDURES

For children under age 12:

1. The principal, counselor, or teachers, file a report of educational neglect with Morrison County Social Services. (See attached Truancy Report Form.)
2. An intake worker will assess the report by contacting the parents, student, and school officials. If educational neglect is found, Morrison County will provide Social Services on a voluntary basis or will refer the matter to the County Attorney's Office for a CHIPS (Child in Need of Protection and Services Petition.)
3. When necessary, the truancy petition will be filed with the Court and a hearing scheduled. If the child and/or parents deny the allegation, school personnel may be called to testify.
4. If the child is determined to be a truant, a service plan will be established. The Court's order may include family or individual counseling, supervision by a probation agent or social worker, placement of the child outside the home, a fine or community work service, or other appropriate alternatives.

For children 12 years of age or older:

1. The truancy report will be sent directly to the Morrison County Attorneys Office.
2. If the truancy report contains adequate information to believe the child is truant, a petition will be filed and Steps 3 and 4 above will be followed.

TARDINESS

Students are expected to be on time to every class. Every three unexcused tardies will result in a 60-minute detention after school. After nine unexcused tardies, a letter will be sent home and the students will serve a 1/2 day in-school suspension. After fifteen unexcused tardies, a truancy letter will be filed with the County Attorney. Students may also be subject to other disciplinary actions.

Students will be encouraged to stray from habitual tardiness (which often occur at the beginning of a school day and between classes). If students come to school habitually late, missing a class/or classes three times or more (due to an illness, etc.) the school requires that the student and his/her parents bring a doctor's note explaining the illness or injury that is causing the student to miss that particular class/or classes.

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Mary of Lourdes School Board