

# St Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran School

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

*[Note: The provisions of this policy substantially reflect statutory requirements.]*

### I. PURPOSE

- A. St. Matthew's Lutheran School Board of Education believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, provides for regular religious instruction as directed by our Mission Statement, 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 blessings of a daily Christian education are best utilized when a student is regular in his attendance. 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

Students are in school to develop their God-given talents to the fullest under the guidance of their teachers. 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

In the setting of the Christian school, it is the teacher's responsibility to assist students in the use and development of their God-given abilities and talents. 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. Administrator's Responsibility

- a. 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.
- b. In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, the students of the school district are **REQUIRED** to attend all assigned classes and study halls every day that school is in session, unless the student 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 may be asked to verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. Excuses must be received within two (2) business days, or they will be recorded as unexcused absences.
- b. A parent or guardian may clear three (3) days per month that school is in session. Subsequent clearances for illnesses require verification by a doctor or other valid health care professionals. Student attendance will be monitored to detect patterns of excessive excused absences so that appropriate intervention action takes place.
- c. A school reserves the right to accept or deny any request for an excused absence.
- d. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:
  - (1) Illness.
  - (2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.

- (3) A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- (4) Medical, dental or orthodontic treatment, or counseling appointment.
- (5) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- (6) Religious instruction.
- (7) Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- (8) Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
- (9) 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.
- (10) Active duty in any military branch of the United States.
- (11) Impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe.
- (12) Five (5) days maximum for vacation purposes. (Requests must be in writing and submitted to a school administrator prior to vacation.)

e. 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) Upon returning to school, work missed because of absence must be made up within a time frame deemed acceptable by the teacher. Any work not completed within this period may result in "no credit" for the missed assignment. However, the principal or the classroom teacher may extend the time allowed for completion of make-up work in the case of an extended illness or other extenuating circumstances.

2. Unexcused Absences

a. The following are examples of absences which may not be excused:

- (1) visiting relatives/friends;
- (2) overslept;
- (3) hunting;
- (4) child is not immunized;

- (5) helping at home;
- (6) work;
- (7) too tired;
- (8) missed the bus;
- (9) cold weather;
- (10) shopping;
- (11) staying home to care for family member;
- (12) inadequate and/or inappropriate clothing;

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 unexcused absences meeting the statutory criteria, the administration may refer the matter to the county for juvenile court action pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
- (4) Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to discipline in the following manner:

<b>Number of Unexcused Absences Within School Year</b>	<b>School's Response</b>
3	Principal to contact parent by phone or letter
5	The Principal will refer parent/guardian and student to Liaison
7	The Principal will file educational neglect or truancy charges against the parent/guardian and juvenile

## C. Tardiness

1. Definition: Students are expected to be in their assigned area at designated times. Failure to do so constitutes tardiness. A student who is within 15 minutes late for school will be marked tardy. Otherwise anything over 15 minutes will be marked as an absence.
2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness
  - a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to their classrooms. The homeroom teacher will note the tardy in the attendance book.
  - b. Tardiness throughout the day will be handled by the teacher at the teacher's discretion.
3. Excused Tardiness
  - a. Valid excuses for tardiness are:
  - b. Illness.
  - c. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
  - d. A death in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
  - e. Medical or dental treatment.
  - f. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
  - g. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
  - h. 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. Students with unexcused tardies shall be subject to consequences in the following manner:

Number of Tardies Within School Year	School's Response
5	Principal to send a letter to a parent/guardian
7	A parent conference will be held with the Principal
9	The Principal will refer parent/guardian and student to liaison

c. Discipline for tardiness may include detention for middle school students.

**D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities**

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day.
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. A student must be present in school for at least 50% of the school day in order to participate in any extracurricular activity.

**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 from the 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 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 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 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; and
8. That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

***[Where services and procedures under Minn. Stat. Ch. 260A are available within the school district, the following provisions should also be included in the policy.]***

## 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, junior high 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.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)  
*Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565,95 S.Ct. 729 (1975)  
*Slocum v. Holton Board of Education*, 429 N.W.2d 607 (Mich. App. Ct. 1988)  
503-10  
*Campbell v. Board of Education 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 (1978)  
*Gutierrez v. School District R-1*, 585 P.2d 935 (Co. Ct. App. 1978)  
*Knight v. Board of Education*, 38 Ill. App. 3d 603,348 N.E.2d 299 (1976)  
*Dorsey v. Bale*, 521 S.W.2d 76 (Ky. 1975)