



White Bear Lake Area Schools

Independent School District #624

4855 Bloom Avenue, White Bear Lake, MN 55110

January 17, 2011

Re: New Student Attendance Policy

Dear Parent/Guardian:

At the December 13th meeting of the White Bear Lake School Board, a new policy for student attendance was adopted. This was the final step in a several month process of reviewing our current policy and making recommendations for improvements and clarification. During this process, the policy committee gathered input from students, parents, staff and members of the School Board to make sure the final policy included all statutory requirements, but also represented the needs and interests of our School District.

When the School Board approved this policy, the implementation date was set for January 31, 2011. During this month, school administrators are informing staff, students, and parents about key changes in this policy. Any attendance-related decisions made prior to January 31st that are in conflict with the new policy will be grandfathered in. During the implementation of this new policy, school administrators will work with parents to reduce any confusion or issues resulting from a change in policy. Any issues that occur during the remainder of this school year due to a lack of knowledge about the change will result in a decision that falls back to the previous attendance policy. Starting next fall parents will be expected to know and follow the new attendance policy.

There are several changes in policy that parents and students need to understand:

- The School District expects parent to call in or submit a note in writing for every absence.
- After excessive absences, students absent more than ten percent of student contact days in any grading period, the school may request a doctor's note for additional illness related absences.
- Vacations, trips, and college visits are considered unexcused unless they have prior administrative approval.
- A detailed list of excused and unexcused absences and tardies has been provided.*
- Elementary students with three unexcused tardies will be counted as a one half-day unexcused absence.
- Early removals from school will be handled in a similar manner as late arrivals.
- Students are provided two additional days to complete work for each day absent, assuming the work was assigned during the absence.
- The current practice of lowering grades after an absence as a result of policy has been stopped. Students still might receive a lower grade for turning in lesser quality or late work but not simply because it is "district policy."
- Schools are encouraged to work with parents to resolve any issues related to unexcused or excessive absences.
- Regarding extracurricular activities, students are expected to be in school the day of the activity or have any partial absence be excused in order to participate in the activities. Students are also expected to be in school the day after an event or risk participation in the next contest.

The complete student attendance policy is available online at http://www.whitebear.k12.mn.us/policy_docs/policy503.pdf

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact your building principal.

Robert McDowell, Principal
Sunrise, 653-2743

Don Bosch, Principal
North Campus, 653-2915

Noel Schmidt, Principal
Central, 653-2886

Julia Jilek, Director
ALC, 773-6401

Tim Wald, Principal
South Campus, 773-6205

Excused Absences

- Illness/Serious Illness of a family member.
- Death or funeral of an immediate family member or close friend.
- Medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment, or a counseling appointment/ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis.
- Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- Religious instruction not to exceed three hours in any week.
- Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- School field trip or other school-sponsored outing.
- Suspensions are to be handled as excused absences and students will be permitted to complete make-up work.
- Family emergencies.
- Individual needs as approved by school principal

Excused Tardies

- Illness/serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- Medical, or dental, orthodontic, or counseling appointment treatment.
- Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- Any tardiness for which the student has been excused in writing by an administrator or faculty member.
- Family emergencies
- Individual needs as approved by school principal.

Unexcused Absences

- Truancy - An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent/guardian and/or the school district.
- Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
- Work at home/at a business.
- Vacations with family, personal trips to schools or colleges (If the student and parent/guardian have been warned of an attendance issue or the absence has not been pre-approved by a school administrator).
- Absences resulting from cumulated unexcused tardies (3 tardies equals one-half day unexcused absence).
- Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy.

Unexcused Tardies

- Not approved by parent/guardian.
- Failure to comply with reporting requirements of the school district attendance procedures.
- Work at home or business
- Missed bus
- **Overslept**
- Car trouble
- Doing homework