

**BLUFFVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL
POLICY 503
STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

I. PURPOSE

- A. The school board believes that regular school attendance is directly related to success in academic work, 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 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

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

It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class. 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. 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, Minnesota Statute Section 120A.22, the students of Bluffview Montessori School are REQUIRED to attend all assigned classes and/or study halls every day school is in session, unless the student has been excused by the school board from attendance because the student has already completed state and Bluffview Montessori School standards required to graduate from high school, 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. A parent, guardian, or other person having control of a child may apply to Bluffview Montessori School to have the child excused from attendance for the whole or any part of the time school is in session during any school year. Application may be made to any member of the board, attendance personnel, the Head of School, or the Assistant Head of School. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the child cannot attend school is a valid excuse.

- b. 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. A note from a physician or a licensed mental health professional stating that the student cannot attend school is a valid excuse. Excuses must be received within two (2) business days or they will be recorded as unexcused absences.

- c. Legitimate Exceptions

The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:

- (1) that the child's physical or mental health is such as to prevent attendance at school or application to study for the period required, which includes:
 - (a) child illness, medical, dental, orthodontic, or counseling appointments; including appointments conducted through telehealth;
 - (b) family emergencies;
 - (c) the death or serious illness or funeral of an immediate family member;
 - (d) active duty in any military branch of the United States;
 - (e) the child has a condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis; or
 - (f) court appearances occasioned by family or personal action;
 - (g) physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc;
 - (h) official school field trip, other school-sponsored outing, or extracurricular activity non school related;
 - (i) 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;

- (j) impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe;
 - (k) five (5) days maximum for vacation purposes. (Requests must be in writing and submitted to a school administrator prior to vacation);
 - (l) any and all directed quarantines or isolations in following MDH guidelines;
 - (m) observation of religious holidays.
- (2) that the child has already completed state and Bluffview Montessori School standards required; or
 - (3) that it is the wish of the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child, that the child attend for a period or periods not exceeding in the aggregate three hours in any week, instruction conducted by a Tribal spiritual or cultural advisor, or a school for religious instruction conducted and maintained by a church, or association of churches, or any Sunday school association incorporated under the laws of this state, or any auxiliary thereof. This instruction must be conducted and maintained in a place other than a public school building, and it must not, in whole or in part, be conducted and maintained at public expense. A child may be absent from school on days that the child attends upon instruction according to this clause.

d: 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 shall result in “no credit”

for the missed assignment. However, the Head of School 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 will not be excused:

- (1) Truancy. An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or the school district.
- (2) Any absence in which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school district's attendance procedures.
- (3) Work at home.
- (4) Work at a business, except under a school-sponsored work release program.
- (5) Vacations with family that exceed 5 school days or are not excused by administration before the absences occur.
- (6) Personal trips to schools or colleges.
- (7) Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy. Other absences considered unexcused may include, but are not limited to:

(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 a family member.

b. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- (1) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minnesota Statutes Sections 121A.40-121A.56.

- (2) Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student's total accumulated unexcused absences.
- (3) In cases of recurring unexcused absences, the administration may also request the county attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court, pursuant to Minnesota statutes.
- (4) Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to discipline in the following manner:

Number of Unexcused Absences Within School Year (2 half days will equal 1 full day)	School's Response
3	School Official to contact parent by phone or letter
5	The Attendance Personnel may refer parent/guardian and student to Winona County Restorative Justice Program (grades 7-12)
7	The Attendance Personnel may 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.
- 2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness
 - a. Students tardy at the start of school must report to the school office.

b. At 8:05, a tardy will be recorded as a half day absence.

3. Excused Tardiness

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

- a. Illness.
- b. Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
- c. A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
- d. Medical, dental, orthodontic, or mental health treatment.
- e. Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
- f. Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
- g. 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. Elementary students with unexcused tardies shall be subject to consequences in the following manner:

Number of Unexcused Tardies	School's Response
5 within a month	School Official to contact parent by phone or letter
7 within a month	A parent conference will be held with the Head of School and or/Attendance Personnel
9 within a month	The Attendance Personnel may refer parent/guardian

	and student to Winona County, (507) 457-6500
30 within a school year	The Attendance Personnel may refer parent/guardian and student to Winona County, (507) 457-6500

- c. Middle school and high school students with unexcused tardies shall be subject to consequences in the following manner:

Number of Unexcused Tardies	School's Response
5 within a month	School Official to contact parent by phone or letter
7 within a month	A parent conference will be held with the Head of School and or/Attendance Personnel

D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored On-the-Job Training Programs

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day and any school-sponsored on-the-job training programs.
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 the entire day in order to participate in any extracurricular activity and/or school-sponsored on-the-job training program, unless excused per medical or court reason, he/she must present a written statement clearing the

student for participation that day.

III. RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL OBSERVANCE ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable efforts will be made by the school district to accommodate any student who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for a religious or cultural observance as provided under Policy 609. Requests for accommodations should be directed to the Head of School.

IV. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

- A. 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 in the Head of School's office.
- B. Bluffview Montessori School will provide annual notice to parents of the school district's policy relating to a student's absence from school for religious observance.

V. REQUIRED REPORTING

A. Continuing Truant

Minnesota Statutes Section 260A.02 provides that a continuing truant is a student who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minnesota Statutes Section 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, Minnesota Statutes Section 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 Minnesota Statutes Section 120A.22 and parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution under Minnesota Statutes Section 120A.34;
4. That this notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statutes Section 120A.34;
5. That alternative educational programs and services may be available in the child's enrolling or resident 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 Minnesota Statutes chapter 260;
8. That if the child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, the child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 260C.201; and

C. Habitual Truant

1. A habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days per school year if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school, or a child who is 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days per school year 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 Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260A.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.05 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.24 (Reporting)

Minn. Stat. § 120A.26 (Enforcement and Prosecution)
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 a Continuing Truant)
Minn. Stat. § 260C.007, Subd. 19 (Habitual Truant Defined)
Minn. Stat. § 260C.201 (Dispositions; Children in Need of Protection or Services or Neglected and in Foster Care)
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)
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, 383 N.E.2d 231 (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)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)