

Bigfork School District #38

STUDENTS

3122

Page 1 of 3

ATTENDANCE POLICY

General Provisions

Regular attendance is essential in order for students to receive maximum educational benefit from instructional activities. Parents are encouraged to limit their child's absences to those that are absolutely necessary. Excused absences are defined by statute and identified in this policy. All other absences are to be considered unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences or an excessive accumulation of excused and unexcused absences may result in a loss of course credit. Chronic absenteeism is disruptive to the classroom and may result in disciplinary action or reassignment from a current class. The Superintendent is authorized to establish procedures for the implementation of this policy.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are those permitted by statute or identified as appropriate by the Board of Trustees. Students are eligible to receive credit as earned for school work missed during the period of absence. The Building Principal is authorized to determine the validity of excused absences as defined in this section as follows:

- Illness
- Bereavement
- Family emergencies
- Medical appointments
- Participation in school activities
- Any other reason prescribed by policy adopted by the Board of Trustees

Truancy/Unexcused Absences

Absences which do not fall within the categories listed above are to be considered unexcused and constitute truancy. Truancy is also defined as any absence from school without prior knowledge or approval of the parent or Building Principal. Students are not eligible to receive credit for work missed during the period of unexcused absence unless prior arrangements are made and approved by the Building Principal.

In addition, truancy is further defined as any absence from school of a non-enrolled child subject to compulsory attendance under §20-5-102, MCA, Compulsory Enrollment and Excuses. Chronic truants will be reported to legal authorities as prescribed by law.

The Board will, upon recommendation from the Superintendent, consider an expulsion for chronic truants. The Building Principal is the designated attendance officer and authorized to enforce compulsory attendance requirements under the provisions of §20-5-104, MCA Attendance Officer; §20-5-105, MCA, Attendance Officer – Power and Duties; and §20-5-106, MCA, Truancy.

Parent (or Guardian) Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to assure their student attends school. When a student must be absent for illness or other unforeseeable emergencies, parents must inform the school during the morning of the absence that their student will not be in attendance. If a student is not present and the parent has not notified the school of the absence, the school will attempt to call the parent during that school day. If the school is not notified within twenty-four (24) hours of the last absent day, the absence will be considered truancy. The principal may excuse the absence, after consideration of the circumstances related to the failure to notify and to the frequency of the student's absence. In all cases where the validity of an excuse is in question, the administration may require verification from other sources.

Limit on Total Absences K-6

When a student is absent from any class for more than five (5) days per trimester the principal or designee will send a letter to the parent. The letter will call to the parent's attention the importance of good school attendance on student achievement. After seven (7) days per trimester the principal or designee will send a second letter to the parent expressing concern with the student's poor attendance and may request a meeting with the parent. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss with the parent the student's poor attendance, and if the absenteeism is unavoidable, to develop a plan to make sure the absenteeism has minimal effect on the student's academic success. Excessive absenteeism or chronic truancy may subject the student to disciplinary action or grade retention. Chronic truants will be reported to legal authorities as prescribed by law.

After seven (7) absences in the trimester and again after each additional 5 absences the Principal may call CPS and report educational neglect.

The seven (7) day per trimester total includes both excused and unexcused absences; absences due to school activities and medically excused absences with a doctor's note are not counted.

Limit on Total Absences 7-12

When a student is absent from any class for more than seven (7) days in a semester, the principal or designee will send a letter to the parent. The letter will call to the parent's attention the importance of good school attendance on student achievement. When a student is absent for more than ten (10) days in a semester, the principal will send a second letter to the parent expressing concern with the student's poor

attendance and may request a meeting with the parent. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss with the parent the student's poor attendance, and if the absenteeism is unavoidable, to develop a plan to make sure the absenteeism has minimal effect on the student's academic success. Excessive absenteeism or chronic truancy may subject the student to disciplinary action or grade retention. Chronic truants will be reported to legal authorities as prescribed by law.

A part of a student's grade in each class will be based on attendance and participation. Each excused or unexcused absence after ten days per semester will result in a 2% deduction in the student's attendance and participation grade and up to 20% of their final grade. Students missing 0-5 periods per class will receive a 2% increase to their final grade. 6-10 periods per class will result in a 1% increase.

After 10 absences in the semester a student will not be eligible to attend non-academic field trips and will be expected to remain at school to complete an alternate assignment.

After 10 unexcused absences if a student is not in good standing, the student may be put on academic probation. If the student does not make academic progress in the following quarter, they may be brought to the board for expulsion based on academic non-progress, attendance and or behavior issues.

The ten (10) day per semester total includes both excused and unexcused absences. However, absences due to school activities, bereavement, and medically excused absences with a doctor's note are not counted.

Checking Out of School

When a student finds it necessary to leave after the start of the school day, the student shall follow the office procedures for checking out of school. Failure to follow this procedure may be considered truancy and subjects the student to disciplinary action.

<u>Legal Reference:</u>	§20-5-102, MCA	Compulsory Enrollment and Excuses
	§20-5-103(2), MCA	Compulsory Attendance and Excuses
	§20-5-105, MCA	Attendance Officer – Powers and Duties
	§20-5-106, MCA	Truancy
	§20-5-107, MCA	Incapacitated and Indigent Child Attendance
	§20-1-308, MCA	Religious Instruction Released Time Program

Policy History:

First Reading on: June 10, 2026

Second Reading/Approved on: July 8, 2026