



Student Attendance Policy

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I. Purpose

A. Three Rivers Montessori School (TRM) 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/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 every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to an absence.

2. Parent or Guardian's Responsibilities. 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 issues that may arise.

3. Teacher's Responsibilities. It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily 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 issues that may arise.

4. Executive Director's Responsibilities.

It is the Executive Director, or designee's, responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes. It is also Executive Director'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 previous day's absences stating the status of each. Finally, it is the Executive Director, or designee'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.

In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, the students of TRM are REQUIRED to attend all assigned classes every day school is in session, unless the student has been excused by the TRM School Board from attendance because the student has already completed state and school district standards required to graduate from high school, has withdrawn, or has a valid excuse for absence.

B. Attendance Procedures

1. Definitions
2. Excused: Any absence, tardiness or early departure for which the student has a valid school-approved excuse. These include: personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics or other medical visits, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, absences approved by the Executive Director, and other reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.
3. Unexcused: Any absence, tardiness or early departure for which the student has no valid school-approved excuse. These include: shopping, oversleeping, truancy, hunting, fishing, babysitting, hair cut, tanning, and any other absence that is not excused.
4. Tardy: The student arrives later than the starting time of the scheduled instruction or supervised activity.
5. Early departure: The student leaves prior to the end of the scheduled instruction or supervised activity.
6. Educational Neglect: Children ages 11 and under. It is presumed that the cause for a child missing school of this age is the parent's, guardian's, or custodian's failure to comply with the compulsory instruction laws, and the school has made appropriate efforts to resolve the child's attendance problems. Any student that has missed 7 or more days of unexcused absences.
7. Truancy: Children ages 12 and up. It is presumed that the cause of the absence is due to the child's intent to be absent from school. Any student that has missed one or more periods that are unexcused by the school for seven days.
8. Register of attendance: Any written or electronic record maintained for the purpose of recording a student's attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure.

1. Excused Absences.

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. The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:

- **Health Care Appointments** Whenever possible, please schedule doctor and dentist appointments before and after school. If you must schedule an appointment during school, the appointment will be excused only upon receiving a written note from the doctor or dentist.
- **Illness** Students are allowed up to 8 total absences a year, or 3 days in a row, due to illness. A doctor's note must be provided if your child is gone from school more than 8 total days over the school year, or 3 days in a row.
- **School Bus Problems** If your child misses school because the bus was late or did not show up at the bus stop, you must report this to the school that morning.

- **Religious Holidays/Cultural Observances** If your child will be gone due to a religious holiday or cultural observance, you must notify the school in advance.
- **Funeral** Students may be gone up to 4 days a year because of a funeral. If your child will be gone more than 4 days, you must get written approval for additional excused time from the Executive Director.
- **Family Emergency** Students may be gone up to 3 days a year because of a family emergency. If your child will be gone more than 3 days, you must get written approval for additional excused time from the Executive Director.
- **Family Activity** A student may be gone up to 5 days from school for a pre-approved family activity such as a vacation. To get pre-approval from the school, you must do the following:
 1. At least 10 days before leaving, request permission from the school for your child to be gone by submitting a Family Activity Form.

Located on the TRM Website under Polices - Forms

<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/2d6f3dba-b4ae-4e46-87be-83d480aa7eef/downloads/Family%20Activity%20Form%202022.02.14.pdf?ver=1646839656984>

2. Before leaving, get your child's homework and agree that your child will finish the homework.
3. Make sure that your child will not be gone for important tests like the MCA, Fastbridge or Executive Functioning.
4. Agree in writing that your child will miss no more than 5 consecutive days of school.
 - Before leaving, get written approval from the Executive Director.

All days of vacation after 5 days will be considered unexcused.

Once a student has reached 5 days of vacation, additional days of vacation will be considered unexcused absences.

- 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.

2. Consequences of Excused Absences.

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. Days during which a student is suspended from school shall not be counted in a student's total accumulated unexcused absences.

Work missed because of absence must be made up by the due date assigned by the child's primary teacher. Any work not completed within this period shall result in "no credit" for the missed assignment. However, 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.

3. Unexcused Absences.

The following are examples of absences which will not be excused:

- An absence by a student which was not approved by the parent and/or TRM.
- Any student absence in which the parent/guardian failed to comply with any reporting requirements of TRM's attendance procedures.
- Excessive vacation time during the school year. This will be addressed at the discretion of the Executive Director on a case by case basis.
- Absences resulting from accumulated unexcused tardies. Three (6) tardies equal one (1) unexcused absence.
- Any other absence not included under the attendance procedures set out in this policy.
- Babysitting, shopping, hair appointments, working at home, oversleeping, missing the bus, running late, and other incidents as determined by administration.

4. Consequences of Unexcused Absences.

Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. § 121A.40-121A.56.

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's statutes.

Students with unexcused absences shall be subject to being handled in the following manner:

- Work missed because of unexcused absence must be made up within the assigned time frame as provided by the child's primary teacher.
- After the third cumulated unexcused absence, TRM will notify the parent/guardian by email or phone and may refer the student to the appropriate Human Services Agency.
- After such notification, the student or his/her parent or guardian may, within five (5) business days, request a conference with school officials regarding the student's absences and the prescribed consequences. The notification will state that the school strongly urges the student's parent/guardian to request such a conference.

5. Tardiness

It is vital that students arrive at school on time. Some of the most important information and community building take place the first 20 minutes of class. By 8:00am, instruction in core curriculum begins. Students need to be present every day for this valuable time. Six tardies will count as an unexcused absence.

1. Definition.

Students are expected to be in their assigned classroom at designated times. Failures to do so constitute tardiness.

2. Procedures for Reporting Tardiness.

- A student is considered tardy if they arrive after 8:00 am until 10:15 a.m.
- A student is considered absent for half a day if they arrive at school any time after 10:15 a.m. or if they leave school before 1:15 p.m.
- A student is considered absent for a full day if they miss three or more hours of the school day.

6. Excused Tardiness.

Valid excuses for tardiness are:

- **Health Care Appointments** Whenever possible, please schedule doctor and dentist appointments before and after school. If you must schedule an appointment during school, the appointment will be excused only upon receiving a written note from the doctor or dentist.
- **Illness**
- **School Bus Problems**
- **Religious Holidays/Cultural Observances**
- **Funeral**
- **Family Emergency**

7. Unexcused Tardiness.

Unexcused tardiness is failing to be in an assigned classroom at the designated time the class commences without a valid excuse. Six (6) unexcused tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence. TRM will send a letter/email home to the parents/guardians indicating three unexcused tardies have turned into one unexcused absence.

III. Dissemination of Policy

Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students and parents at the commencement of each school year via the TRM website at www.threeriversmontessori.org. This policy shall also be available upon request.

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.05 and is absent from instruction in a school, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 120.05, without valid excuse within a single school year for three days if the child is in elementary school.

(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.

Nothing in this section shall prevent a school district or charter school from notifying a truant child's parent or legal guardian of the child's truancy or otherwise addressing a child's attendance problems prior to the child becoming a continuing truant.

B. Reporting Responsibility.

When a student is initially classified as a continuing truant, Minn. Stat. §260A.03 provides that the school official shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian, by first class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:

1. The child is truant;
2. That the parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absence;
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/guardian has the right to meet with appropriate TRM 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. Ch. 260;
8. That it is recommended that the parent/guardian accompany the child to school and attend classes with the child for one day.

C. Habitual Truant.

A habitual truant is a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven (7) school days if the child is in elementary school. TRM shall refer a habitual truant child and the child's parents or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures as stated under Minn. Ch. 260A.

NOTE: The Executive Director reserves the right to address student attendance at any time for any reason. Any attendance issues/concerns that arise and do not fit within the policy guidelines as stated above will be dealt with on a case by case basis, if deemed necessary by the Director.