

JENNINGS COMMUNITY SCHOOL
POLICY 503
STUDENT ATTENDANCE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular school attendance. This policy is intended to be positive and not punitive. Jennings Community School believes regular attendance is directly related to academic success, relationship building, student engagement, and preparation for postsecondary education, careers, and life responsibilities.

This policy recognizes that attendance is a shared responsibility among students, parents/guardians, teachers, advisors, and administrators. Jennings Community School is committed to using restorative, trauma-informed, and student-centered practices to support attendance and remove barriers to school participation.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Student Responsibilities

1. Students are expected to attend all assigned classes, advisory periods, seminars, and educational activities each day school is in session.
2. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared for learning.
3. Students are responsible for communicating with school staff regarding absences, tardiness, or barriers impacting attendance.
4. Students are responsible for requesting and completing missed assignments due to absences.

B. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that the student is attending school.
2. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school regarding student absences or late arrival as soon as reasonably possible.
3. Parents/guardians are encouraged to work collaboratively with school staff to support consistent student attendance.
4. Parents/guardians may be asked to provide verification of absences when appropriate.

C. Teacher's Responsibilities

1. Teachers are responsible for taking daily attendance and maintaining accurate attendance records in each assigned class.
2. Teachers are responsible for being familiar with the procedures governing attendance and to apply the procedures.
3. Teachers are responsible for providing any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request.

4. Teachers are responsible for working cooperatively with the student's parent or guardian and the student to solve attendance problems that may arise.

D. School Responsibilities

1. The School will monitor student attendance and communicate attendance concerns with students and families.
2. It is the School's responsibility to be familiar with the procedures governing attendance and to apply the procedures.
3. The School will utilize practices designed to improve attendance and student engagement and will work cooperatively with the parents and the student to address attendance concerns.
4. The School is responsible for maintaining accurate records on student attendance.
5. The School will comply with all applicable Minnesota compulsory attendance and truancy laws.

III. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES

A. Tardiness

1. The instructional school day begins at 9:00 a.m.
2. Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.
3. Students or parents/guardians are expected to notify the school office if the student will arrive late or be absent.
4. Students arriving late will be admitted to school and provided access to instruction.
5. Students arriving after 10:00 a.m. without communication from a parent/guardian or student may be required to check in with administration, advisory staff, or student support personnel prior to entering class.
6. The purpose of the check-in process is to:
 - a. Ensure student safety and wellness;
 - b. Address barriers impacting attendance;
 - c. Reinforce attendance expectations; and
 - d. Connect students with academic or social-emotional supports as needed.
7. Students who are not in their assigned area at designated times will also be marked as tardy.

B. Attendance Interventions

Repeated tardiness, unexcused absences, class skipping, or failure to communicate may result in interventions including:

1. Parent/guardian contact;
2. Attendance meetings;
3. Restorative conversations;
4. Attendance improvement plans or contracts;

5. Referral to school support staff or community resources;
6. Check-in/check-out systems;
7. Academic interventions and credit recovery planning;
8. Loss of non-academic privileges or extracurricular participation when appropriate and consistent with school policy;
9. Referral to county attendance intervention services or truancy procedures pursuant to Minnesota law.

IV. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

A. Excused absences may include, but are not limited to:

1. Student's illness or medical, dental, orthodontic, or counseling appointments;
2. Physical or mental health prevents attendance;
3. Family emergencies;
4. Death or serious illness or funeral of an immediate family member
5. Religious observances or American Indian cultural practice, observance, or ceremony;
6. Court appearances;
7. Active duty in any military branch of the United States;
8. The child has a condition that requires ongoing treatment for a mental health diagnosis;
9. The student has already completed state and School standards required for graduation from high school;
10. 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.
11. Approved school activities;
12. Circumstances approved by administration.

An application may be made to the School to have a student excused from attendance for the whole or part of the time school is in session during any school year. 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 child cannot attend school is a valid excuse. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate any pupil who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for a religious observance or American Indian cultural practice, observance, or ceremony.

B. Absences without valid communication or approved reason may be considered unexcused.

C. The school reserves the right to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused consistent with federal law, Minnesota law and school policy.

V. TRUANCY

A child may be identified as a continuing truant when the child is absent without valid excuse within a single school year for:

1. Three (3) or more class periods on three (3) days in middle school or high school.

When a child is identified as a continuing truant, Jennings Community School will provide notice to the parent/guardian by first-class mail or other reasonable means consistent with Minnesota statute. The school will also make reasonable efforts to:

1. Identify barriers impacting attendance;
2. Offer intervention and support services;
3. Collaborate with families to improve attendance prior to escalation whenever possible.

VI. ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Jennings Community School will not deny a student access to instruction solely because the student arrives late to school.

Students may only be excluded from school attendance pursuant to lawful disciplinary procedures and applicable school board policies.

Jennings Community School will address disability-related attendance needs in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504").

VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

This policy shall be made available annually to students, parents/guardians, and staff through student handbooks, school communications, and the School's website. Annual notice must be given that reasonable efforts will be made by the School to accommodate any pupil who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for a religious observance or American Indian cultural practice, observance, or ceremony.

VIII. LEGAL REFERENCES

Minn. Stat. § 120A.22 – Compulsory Instruction

Minn. Stat. § 120A.34-.37 – Attendance and Truancy

Minn. Stat. Chapter 260A – Truancy

JCS Policy 506 – Student Discipline

Board Approved – 7.15.26