

Attendance Policies

Regular school attendance is required. By law, responsibility for the care and safety of the student is transferred from the parents to the school as the student arrives on school grounds.

In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Attendance Law, Minn Stat. 120.101, subd. 9., students are required to attend all assigned classes and/or school-sponsored programs every day school is in session unless:

1. The student has already completed the prescribed course of studies and/or requirements.
2. The student's bodily or mental condition is such as to prevent attendance at school or application to study.
3. The parent requests an excused absence for the student—see below.

In order for the student to leave campus during regular school hours, written or telephone notification from the parents must be given to the school office. If students need to leave during the school day, they must sign out on the checkout sheet in the school office. Students who fail to sign out are considered absent from any classes they miss, and may face disciplinary action. If they return the same day, they must sign in.

Taking Attendance

Teachers are expected to take attendance in each class period (secondary).

Excused Absences

The following reasons constitute excused absences:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious illness in the immediate family
3. Death in the immediate family or a close friend or relative
4. Medical or dental appointments
5. Court appearances
6. Physical emergency conditions such as a fire, flood or storm
7. Official school field trips or other school-sponsored activities
8. Removal of a student pursuant to a suspension
9. Pre-approved family vacations (5 days a quarter, not to exceed a total of 7 days per school year.) Any days that exceed the allowable maximum may be counted as excused at the principal's discretion.

Procedure to Follow for Excused Absences

1. Any anticipated absence from school requires written notice from the parent/guardian prior to the absence. Elementary students present the note to their teacher, secondary students to the school office.
2. An unanticipated absence from school requires a phone call from the parent/guardian to the school office (451-3495) on the day of the absence. When

leaving a phone message, give the student's name, the name of the person calling, and the reason for the absence.

3. A student will be released from school during the day only after the parent/guardian has been contacted, or has contacted the school office.
4. After an absence, a student must bring in a written excuse from the parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence if the parent/guardian has not already called the office by phone.
5. Regarding missed work:
 - Elementary: Parents of elementary students should call the office and request the missed daily work. They may pick it up in the office, or it may be sent home with the returned student, or possibly with a sibling.
 - Secondary: It is the responsibility of the secondary student to get the missed assignments from the teachers. Parents may request the assignments in the case of extended absence.
6. In the case of excuses for non-participation in Physical Education, a note must be sent by the parent/guardian stating the student's inability to participate. On the 3rd day of non-participation, the student must bring in a doctor's excuse.

Vacation Policy

Parents must weigh the value of a vacation during regularly scheduled school days against the loss of instruction that occurs in the classroom. Much of the classroom instruction cannot be duplicated and will not be covered in homework assignments.

1. Elementary: Parents must notify the teacher before the vacation. The notification should include the dates of the vacation and the date of the return to school. The packet of work will be presented to the student upon return to school.
2. Secondary: It is the responsibility of the secondary student to notify the teachers before the vacation. The notification should include the dates of the vacation and the date of the return to school. The packet of work will be presented to the student upon the return to class.

Unexcused Absences

The following situations are unexcused absences under state regulations:

1. Truancy—an absence without prior school approval or parental notification
2. Any absence for which the student failed to comply with any reporting requirements of the school
3. Leaving the building at any time without verbal and/or written approval from the school
4. Working at home during school hours
5. Working at a business during school hours
6. Family vacations that exceed the allowable maximum without prior approval from the principal
7. Shopping trips during school hours
8. Non-medical appointments during school hours

Tardiness

1. Students are considered tardy if they are not in their classroom at the beginning of each class period.
2. Students who arrive at class without normal supplies (textbooks, writing utensils, homework assignment, etc.) will be considered tardy.
3. Three tardies will equal one (1) unexcused absence.
4. After every 3rd tardy each semester, secondary students will be given a detention. Continued tardiness will result in a parent/principal conference, possibly leading to revocation of student privileges and/or suspension.

Excessive Absences

1. Elementary: Students who are absent for 10 or more class days per semester whether for excused or unexcused absences will receive an automatic failure for that grade unless written authorization is obtained from the principal. Extra class-work will be required for students who exceed the absence limit and they will be placed on probation.
2. Secondary: Secondary students who miss 10 or more class periods in any one class per semester whether for excused or unexcused absences will receive an automatic failure for that class unless written authorization is obtained from the principal. Extra class-work will be required of students who exceed the absence limit and they will be placed on probation.

Truancy

1. 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. 120.101 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 or more class periods on three days if the child is in the middle school, junior high school, or high school.
2. Habitual Truant: A habitual truant is a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school or high school.

A school administrator shall refer a habitual truant and the child's parent(s) or legal guardian to appropriate services and procedures under Minnesota Statute Chapter 260A.

Morning Arrival

School starts at 8:15 a.m. Students should not arrive at school prior to 7:45 a.m. Since the school does not provide supervision of students prior to this time and personal safety is of utmost importance, students should not arrive prior to 7:45 a.m.

1. All students should use the doors to the elementary wing (Door #5) and go to the gymnasium. They will be admitted to their classrooms at 8:05 a.m.
2. No student is allowed to use the upper level east door or go through the auditorium when entering.

Once students have arrived on campus, they may not leave without obtaining permission and signing out.

Afternoon Dismissal Time

1. The school day ends at 2:50 p.m. each day.
2. Elementary students will be ready for pickup at 2:55 p.m.
3. All students are to be out of the building by 3:05 p.m. unless they are staying for a designated after-school activity or have obtained permission from the principal to stay later.
4. After 3:05 p.m. all students in the building must be with a teacher, parent, or coach, or in the after-school study hall.
5. Students staying for after-school activities are to stay in the designated area for that activity and are not to be in any other part of the building. Students may not stay after school in the building or on the school grounds in order to attend an evening ball game or other activity. Parents must pick up students after school and return them for the evening event. An adult must be present with elementary students, grades 1st – 4th, at all games and activities.
6. Elementary students who are not going home in the regular manner (i.e. walking, riding with a designated car pool/driver or riding their regular bus) must bring a signed note stating the change in driver or destination. In the case of last-minute change of plans, parents must call the school office otherwise the student will be sent home by his regular means of transportation.
7. OCS reserves the right to establish a late pick-up charge if necessary.

Closing of School

OCS follows the Owatonna Public School System in closing for inclement weather. All closings will be announced on Owatonna's KRFO (1390 AM) and Minneapolis's WCCO (830 AM) radio. Closings will also scroll on the bottom of TV news channels such as WCCO (4), KSTP (5), KAAL (6). If school closes early due to inclement weather, students should be picked up as soon as possible.