

Absences and Excuses

M.S.A.D. #59, following the guidelines of Maine Law, provides for an education for persons ages five (5) through eighteen (18) for all its residents. Maine Law requires regular attendance in a normal school setting unless special provisions are dictated by circumstances or needs. These special provisions are approved on an individual basis by the Board of Directors of M.S.A.D. #59.

Recognizing that regular school attendance is necessary if a student is to receive maximum benefit from his/her educational opportunity, the Board of Directors of M.S.A.D. #59 reinforces Maine Law which is: "An adult having a person of compulsory school age under that adult's control shall cause the person to attend school as provided in Title 20A - § 5003."

Excusable Absence - A person's absence is excused when the absence is for the following reasons:

- A. Personal Illness - An extended or continued illness must be confirmed in writing by a physician;
- B. An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day;
- C. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance of that holiday is required during the regular school day;
- D. A family emergency; or
- E. A planned absence for a personal or educational purpose which has been approved in advance by the principal or assistant principal.

Unexcused Absences - Absences are determined to be unexcused when they are not approved by the appropriate school official and also when these absences do not conform to Maine Law for excusable absences. Students who have an unexcused absence will not be allowed to make up the work that has been missed during the absence.

To determine excused absences, the following procedures will be followed:

- A. A note from the parent/guardian is brought to the principal's office by the student prior to the absence.
- B. A telephone call is made by the parent/guardian to the principal's office between 7:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M. only on the day of the absence.

C. The parent/guardian comes to the principal's office with the student on his/her return to school after the absence.

D. Written notice signed by parent/guardian may be brought in by the student after the absence, however, office staff may verify the notice.

E. Any other manner of excusing a student's absence must be approved in advance by the principal/assistant principal.

F. The principal/assistant principal will judge the validity of the reason for a student's absence based upon guidelines set by Maine Law.

Excessive Absenteeism - At Madison Area Memorial High School students may not miss more than ten (10) days in a semester. If a student violates this policy, the student will receive failing grades. In the case of high school students, a loss of credit will result. At the junior high level, attendance is determined quarterly. A student may not miss more than five (5) days of an excused variety or more than one (1) day unexcused.

Procedures to implement this policy may vary from school to school dependent upon individual circumstances. In the situation of unexcused absences, the second unexcused absence in the quarter will result in a failing grade. At M.A.M.H.S., the second quarter this happens a loss of credit will result. Exceptions from the policy can occur for the following reasons: a planned family trip (the parents must contact the school in advance and students see teacher for homework to be done on a timely basis); a mandatory court appearance, an appointment with a health professional (dependent upon verification); an absence due to chronic illness or a prolonged period of illness substantiated by a health professional and hospitalization, or an exception determined by the principal.

Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the Student Assistance Team. The principal will determine action through the SAT recommendation. Appeal of this decision will go through the following order: 1) School Principal, 2) Superintendent of Schools, and 3) the Board of Directors.

Rules Adopted: 5/87

Reviewed: 9/1/88

Revised: 9/6/94

Regular school attendance helps assure that students achieve maximum educational benefits and insures continuity of learning experiences.

Under this policy all absences are treated in the same manner with the burden of responsibility for attendance resting with the parents and students.

Students absent for any reason in excess of 5 days in any semester (1/2 year) of school can be subject to having:

- (a) credits withheld, denied, or delayed
- (b) to the next higher grade withheld, denied, or delayed
- (c) graduation denied or delayed

All students are to report directly to the office following any absence whenever arriving tardy and whenever leaving school before the close of the regular school day.

Students absent for any reason are responsible for making up all work and assignments missed within 5 school days of the date of absence. Any students absent in excess of 5 days are personally responsible for making up all the time, work, and assignments missed to the satisfaction of both the office and the teachers concerned within 5 days of the date of absence.

Special provisions may be arranged for making up time, work, and assignments for:

- 1. extenuating circumstances
- 2. prolonged illnesses verified by doctors or the school nurse

Cases of tardiness and leaving school prior to the close of the school day will count as absences in the following manner:

Tardiness or leaving school prior to dismissal time for periods of 1/2 hour or more:

Each occurrence equals 1/2 day absence.

For periods of 1/2 hour or less:

Total of 5 occurrences equals ½ day absence.

Total of 10 occurrences equals 1 day absence.

Total of 15 occurrences equals 2 days absence.

Total of 20 occurrences equals 3 days absence.

Total of 25 occurrences equals 4 days absence.

Each additional 5 occurrences beyond 25 equals 1 additional day of absence.

Students who satisfactorily make up all of the time, work, and assignments misses by absence can help assure that credits will not be denied, delayed, or withheld and that they may be promoted and graduated on schedule.

Students failing to comply with this attendance policy and have credits denied, delayed, or withheld and thereby fail to promote and/or to graduate on schedule may be granted administrative approval to make up time and work in approved tutored subjects, summer school, and/or correspondence courses to be paid for by the individual students concerned. Students who don't have the required number of credits to graduate, will not be allowed to participate in any graduation exercises to include marching.

Students and parents may appeal decisions and judgements rendered under this policy by appealing through the following individuals in the order listed:

1. School Principal - P.A.C.
2. Superintendent of Schools
3. Board of Directors

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