

2023-24 MNPS Attendance Expectations Letter Template

Purpose - communicate clear school-level expectations to your students and their families regarding attendance at the start of school and throughout the school year as needed. The letter template on the following page can be modified; however, we do ask that the letter cover the following information and is documented in Campus Support and Intervention.

- School Policies and State Laws
 - Compulsory Attendance Law
 - Overview of Daily Attendance
 - Overview of Excused Absences
 - Consequences for Late Arrivals & Early Dismissals
 - *Consequences cannot* result in further loss of instructional time
 - Revocation Process (if applicable)
- Guidelines for Parents on What to Do When Their Child is Absent
- General Information on the Impact of Chronic Absence
- Student Incentives & Recognition for Positive Attendance

Once the school specific information is added to the letter, you can request that the letter be translated into other languages by contacting translation@mnps.org

The COVID protocols stated in this letter reflect the updates for the 2023-2024 school year.



C.A.R.E.

Connecting Attendance to Results in Education

"All Day. Every Day."

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year. This letter is meant to share some important information regarding the expectations for attendance.

When students attend school daily, they will have a better opportunity for higher student achievement and feel confident about their work at school and the community. Our goal is for every student to have **Satisfactory Attendance**, meaning that they have **8 or fewer total absences** during the school year.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

If your student is going to be absent, please contact the school's attendance secretary, **Veronica Crockett**, at **615-291-6600**. Handwritten notes from the parent/guardian of students or those provided by a medical professional, should be turned in at the front office of the school. Excuse notes may also be emailed to nsa.mnps.org or faxed to 615- 271-1767. Students are permitted 5 parent absence notes per semester. Physician notes will be required for students after reaching this number of absences. Please keep your contact information current.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

- Track attendance daily
- Notify you when your student is missing from class
- Talk with you to understand why they were absent
- Listen when you identify barriers or challenges causing your student to miss school and tell you about supports and resources that could help your student attend school.

There are many people in our building who can help if you or your student face challenges getting to school regularly or on time. Classroom teachers are your first line of contact, followed by Veronica Crockett (the school's attendance secretary) and school counselors Ms. Alli Riebel (9th & 11th grades) and Mrs. Kendall Knox (10th & 12th grades). Our school administrators, Dr. Justin Thomas (Executive Principal), Dr. Randi Staggs (9th & 11th grades), and Dr. Iris Barbour (10th & 12th grades), are the contacts for individualized attendance plans if regular attendance becomes a problem for your child.

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

A student who does not feel well should stay at home. Students who test positive for COVID are in isolation at home for 5 days. They are allowed to return to school on day 6 if symptom-free and when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. CDC recommends that a mask be worn in public and school through day 10. If symptoms have not resolved and/or fever persists after 5 days, contact the school nurse. Students will be required to stay home for an additional 5 days.

Remote learning options are **not** available. If a student has tested POSITIVE for COVID the student can be provided opportunities to learn (e.g., via Schoology), and the student will be marked with an excused absence as they would be with any other illness (e.g., flu, strep throat).

ABSENCES THAT CAN BE COUNTED AS EXCUSED

- Student's personal illness (up to three days)
- Family member's illness that requires the student's temporary help
- Death in the family (up to three days)
- Deployment of a parent or guardian serving in the military (one day for deployment, one day for return and up to 10 days when the service member is on temporary leave at home)
- Head lice (up to three days per infestation)
- Recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child's faith
- Court appearance or legally mandated meetings
- Documented college visitations (up to three days per year for juniors and seniors)
- A principal may allow the following reasons to be considered an excused absence if the parent or guardian submits a written request:
 - Unexpected emergencies such as car problems
 - Job interview or conference
 - Doctor or dental appointments
 - Other circumstances requested in writing by the parent or guardian that the principal considers to require a child's absence

LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DISMISSALS?

All instructional time is important. Students should arrive on time and stay all day. Late arrivals and early dismissals are both treated as tardies and are subject to the same penalties, including office referrals and lunch detentions.

Students arriving within **the first ten minutes** of the school start time will report directly to class. Students arriving after this time frame will report to **the front office of the school** to sign in and receive an admit slip. To request an early dismissal, a parent/guardian or adult whose name is listed on the student's school file must report to the office and show their picture ID for a student to be released from school.

Parents/Guardians must notify **Veronica Crockett** by phone at 615-291-6600, email at nsa@mnps.org, or in person if their child needs to arrive late or leave early.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY STUDENT HAS TOO MANY LATE ARRIVALS AND/OR EARLY DISMISSALS?

Late Arrival or Early Dismissal	Consequences
3 rd Tardy	Students are reminded of expectations and receive warnings on the first and second occurrences. Parents are notified on the 3 rd
4 th –6 th Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals	4 th tardy/early dismissal per 9 weeks (both late arrival to school and tardy per class period) receives lunch detention
7 th & Subsequent Tardies/Early Dismissals	7 th & ongoing tardies/early dismissals per 9 weeks receive an office referral and extended lunch detention with required restorative plan

HOW DO WE CELEBRATE POSITIVE ATTENDANCE?

We celebrate regular school attendance in a variety of ways: whole school, grade level, classroom and individual. Students who meet these individual attendance goals will be recognized each quarter.

Recognition	Criteria	Reward
Satisfactory Attendance	Missing 8 or less days in a school year	Participation in 9-week celebration
Improved Attendance	Improvement in student attendance	Participation in 9-week celebration

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for attending school if something comes up. Contact family members, friends, or other parents for help.
- Keep track of your student's attendance through the **Campus Parent Portal**. Call the school to get details from your student's counselor.
- Talk to your students' teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Tennessee's Compulsory Attendance Law says that children ages 6-17 must attend school and parents are responsible
- Students must be in school at least half of the day to be counted present.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) of the school year increases the chance that your student will not read or understand math at the same level as their peers.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just one or two days every few weeks.
- Late arrivals and early dismissals contribute to loss of instructional time.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
- Your child learns valuable social skills and can develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff while developing positive lifelong habits
- A student is considered truant after he or she has more than four unexcused absences in a school year. When a student has excessive unexcused absences, the principal may make a referral to juvenile court so the court can review the student's attendance if school-level actions have failed. For more information on district attendance policies, please review our district's Student-Parent Handbook available on the MNPS website at www.mnps.org.

We miss your student when they are absent, and we value their contributions to our school.

Portions of this letter are attributable to Attendance Works <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>