



HEARTLAND LAKES COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL EXISTS TO EMPOWER  
SCHOLARS TO:  
BRAVELY LIVE THEIR TRUTH,  
TO BECOME WISE STEWARDS OF  
THE LAND AND RESOURCES  
AND TO IGNITE LASTING  
CURIOSITY THAT LEADS TO  
POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR  
SCHOOL, THEIR COMMUNITIES,  
AND THEMSELVES.

## Policy 503 Student Attendance

<b>Adoption:</b>	March 24, 2025
<b>Revision History</b>	
<b>Last Board Review:</b> March 24, 2025 <b>Next Board Review:</b> March 2028 <b>Review Frequency:</b> Every 3 Years (per Policy 208)	

### I. PURPOSE

- A. 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 or 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 and study halls every day that school is in session and to be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class or study hall. Finally, it is the student's responsibility to request any missed assignments due to an absence.

##### 2. Caregiver's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student's caregivers 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 problems that may arise. It is the caregiver's responsibility to make reasonable efforts to schedule appointments, vacations or other avoidable absences during non-school time.

**Caregivers are required to report student tardiness and absences using one of the following methods by 9:00am:**

1. E-mail message to [attendance@heartlandlakescs.org](mailto:attendance@heartlandlakescs.org).

OR

2. Call the school at 218-237-3903.

### **3. Teacher's Responsibility**

It is the teacher's responsibility to take daily attendance and to maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class ~~and study hall~~. 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 caregiver and the student to solve any attendance problems that may arise.

**Teachers are required to report AM & PM student tardiness and absences using one of the following methods, by 9:00am & 1:00pm:**

1. Send a note to the main office.

OR

2. Enter the absence/tardy into JMC.

### **4. The Director's Responsibility**

- a) It is the Director's, or designee, responsibility to require students to attend all assigned classes and study halls. It is also the Director's, or designee, 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 the previous day's absences stating the status of each. Finally, it is the Director's, or designee, responsibility to inform the student's caregiver of the student's attendance and to work cooperatively with them and the student to solve attendance problems.

- b) In accordance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law (Minn. Stat. § 120A.22), all HLCS students under the age of 16 are REQUIRED to attend school every day that school is in session, unless they have a valid excuse for absence.

## **B. Attendance Procedures**

Attendance procedures shall be presented to the HLCS Board of Directors for review and approval. When approved by the school board, the attendance procedures will be included as an addendum to this policy.

### **1. Excused Absences**

It is the responsibility of the student's caregiver to contact the school in order to excuse an absence. If no contact is made by the caregiver, by the end of the school day it is an unexcused absence.

- a) If a student has excessive absences due to illness, the school may request a physician's note or written verification.
- b) If a student is absent for three (3) consecutive days due to illness, a written explanation from a caregiver may be required.
- c) The following reasons shall be sufficient to constitute excused absences:
  - (1) Illness
  - (2) Serious illness in the student's immediate family.
  - (3) A death or funeral in the student's immediate family or of a close friend or relative.
  - (4) Medical, dental, or orthodontic treatment, or a counseling appointment. (Caregivers are strongly encouraged to make every effort to schedule these appointments during non-instructional times if at all possible.)
  - (5) Court appearances occasioned by family or personal action.
  - (6) Religious instruction (up to three hours per week) or observance of religious holidays.
  - (7) Physical emergency conditions such as fire, flood, storm, etc.
  - (8) Official school field trip or other school-sponsored outing.

- (9) Vacation with family up to ten (10) days in a school year.
- (10) Family emergencies
- (11) A student's condition that requires ongoing treatment for a health diagnosis (with verification if requested).

## **2. Unexcused Absences**

- a) The following are examples of absences which will not be excused:
  - (1) An absence by a student which was not excused by the caregiver.
  - (2) An absence not properly reported by a caregiver.
  - (3) Family vacations exceeding ten (10) days in a school year.
  - (4) Oversleeping, missing the bus, running late, babysitting, shopping, hair appointments, or working at home, and other incidents as determined by administration.
  - (5) Absences resulting from cumulative unexcused tardies (three (3) tardies equal one (1) unexcused absence)

## **3. Consequences of Absences**

- a) Absences resulting from official suspension will be handled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minn. Stat. §121A.40-121A.56.
- b) Students are required to make up all assignments missed or to complete alternative assignments as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher.
- c) Students may lose the privilege or opportunity to attend class trips or other activities, depending on how much work may be missing.

## **4. Procedures for ongoing unexcused absences**

- a) After the third cumulated unexcused absence in a trimester, HLCS will notify the caregiver by a letter or phone call. The notification will state that the school strongly urges the student's caregiver to request a conference with school officials.
- b) The student or their caregiver may, within five business days, request a conference with school officials regarding the student's absences and the prescribed discipline.
- c) After the third cumulated unexcused absence in a trimester, HLCS may refer the student to the appropriate Human Services Agency.

### **C. Tardiness**

1. A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives after the start of the school day (See #4 below).
2. A student is considered absent for half a day if they miss more than 90 minutes at the start or end of the school day.
3. A student is considered absent for a full day if he/she misses four or more hours of the school day. A student is also considered absent for a full day if he/she arrives at school but is picked up within 90 minutes.
4. Excused and Unexcused Tardiness
  - a) Excused tardiness is when a caregiver signs their student in if they arrive at school after 8:45 AM.
  - b) Unexcused tardiness is failing to be in an assigned classroom after 9:00 AM without a valid excuse or without being signed in by a caregiver.

### **D. Participation in Extracurricular Activities**

1. This policy applies to all students involved in any extracurricular activity scheduled either during or outside the school day.
2. A student may not participate in any activity or program if he/she has an unexcused absence from any class during the day.
3. If a student is suspended from any class, he/she may not participate in any activity or program that day.
4. If a student is absent due to medical reasons, they must provide a physician's note or a signed caregiver statement before participating.

## **III. TRUANCY PROCEDURES**

### **A. Continuing Truant (Minn. Stat. §260A.02)**

A continuing truant is a student who is absent without valid excuse:

1. Three (3) days if the child is in elementary school; or
2. Three or more class periods in three (3) days for middle school students

## **B. Habitual Truant (Minn. Stat. §260A.07)**

A habitual truant is a child under 16 years old who is absent **without lawful excuse for:**

1. Seven (7) school days (elementary students)
2. One or more class periods on seven (7) school days (middle school students)

## **C. Reporting Responsibility (Minn. Stat. §260A.03)**

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. That child is truant;
2. That the caregiver should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absences;
3. That the caregiver 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 caregiver has the right to meet with appropriate HLCS personnel to discuss solutions to the child's truancy;
7. That if the child continues to be truant, the caregiver and child may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the child's driving privilege pursuant to Minn. Stat. §260C.201.

## **IV. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY**

Copies of this policy shall be made available to all students and caregivers via the HLCS website.

*Note: The applicability and enforceability of this policy 503 is limited to, and qualified by, Minnesota or Federal law that, at the time any such circumstance within the scope of the policy arise, may be contrary to some aspect or all of the policy.*