

Approved 5/15/2000
Updated 8/15/25

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Philosophy- Blooming Prairie Public Schools believe that providing a quality educational experience every day is essential to the total growth of the student. In order to receive this quality educational experience, the student needs to be present and actively engaged. The attendance policy is designed to emphasize this belief.

Notification of Attendance – Blooming Prairie Public School students are required to attend school every day.

- A. If this is not possible, the parent/guardian must contact the school prior to 9:00 am on the day their son/daughter is absent from school. Contact the
 - a. Intermediate/High School at (507) 583-4426, option 1 or option 0 (zero); or by Emailing **studentabsent@blossoms.k12.mn.us**. If this is not done, the student may be considered unexcused. and truancy policies will be applied.
 - b. Elementary School at (507) 583-6615
- B. The office staff has the responsibility to contact families when we have not heard from you. This practice is very time consuming, and we frequently reach voicemail or unanswered calls. That is when we begin to worry about the safety and whereabouts of students.
- C. For early dismissal or absences that are pre-approved, the parent/guardian must contact the school prior to the absence/dismissal and provide the reason for the absence and the dates the absence will occur. Contact the school by calling, emailing, or sending a note with the student. **Note:** High School students will be required to notify teachers of the absence.
 - a. Early dismissal students
 - I. must report to the office prior to leaving.
 - II. No student will be allowed to leave school without parent/guardian permission.
 - b. Students arriving after the start of the day must report to the office.
 - c. Religious Observance - parents may excuse their student from attending school for a curricular activity for a religious observance by notifying the school, per the appropriate notification of attendance procedures, prior to the date of absence.

Attendance Information

Teachers are responsible for taking accurate attendance throughout the day.

- A. High school
 - a. Attendance is taken every period.
 - b. Teachers are directed to explain the attendance policy for their specific class at the beginning of each semester.
 - c. Three (3) unexcused 1st hour tardies will equal one (1) unexcused absence.
- B. Intermediate/Elementary school attendance is taken at 8:10 am and again after lunch.
 - a. Students are marked tardy if they are not present when attendance is taken, and they arrive later.
- C. Excused versus unexcused.
 - a. Being considered "excused" indicates there is not a truancy issue that needs attention.
 - b. An excused tardy or absence does not remove the tardy/absence from the attendance record.
- D. After 7 excused absences parents/guardians will be contacted or 3 unexcused absences, parents will be contacted.
- E. Tardiness – Being on time is a good habit and classroom interruptions are held to a minimum by regularity and promptness.

Extra-Curricular Events – High School only - If a student is absent any part of the school day.

- A. Due to illness the student will not be allowed to participate in any after-school event or practice.
- B. Due to administration approved reasons the student will be allowed to participate/practice.
- C. In the event of morning practices, if a student attends practice and then misses school, the coach will treat the absence as an unexcused absence at practice.
- D. Students arriving later than 9:00 am, without an administration approved reason will not be allowed to participate/practice.

Excessive Absences & Tardies – Excessive absences from any class are not conducive to learning. More than 7 days absent is considered excessive in regard to filing truancy reports.

- A. High School –
 - a. Absences - when a student has missed class a certain number of times, the student's grade will be affected.
 - b. Students have the right to talk to the teacher and discuss ways to make up work.
 - c. An abnormal number of absences may reduce the grade in that class.
 - d. Unexcused absences will mean an automatic reduction in the participation grade for that class.
 - e. Tardies – The administration will deal with a student who is unexcused tardy first hour; every three (3) tardies equals one unexcused absence.
- B. Intermediate
 - Tardies – The administration will deal with a student who is unexcused tardy first hour; every three (3) tardies equals one unexcused absence.
- C. Elementary
 - Tardies – The administration may contact parents, of students who have seven (7) or more unexcused tardies.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES – Any absence that is unexcused (which means without parent/guardian permission) will initiate the truancy process. Consequences will occur for every unexcused absence.

Students 12 years and older

- A. At Three (3) unexcused absences,
 - a. letter is sent to student and parent/guardian.
 - b. in-school meeting set up with student and/or parent to discuss solutions to student's attendance issues.
- B. At Five (5) unexcused absences:
 - School will contact Pearl Rendon, United Way Youth Support Coordinator and fill out referral form.

 - If the student continues to have unexcused absences or tardies, the school is required to notify law enforcement and Steele County Human Services. The Steele County Attorney's Office will determine what action should be taken.
- C. At Fifteen (15) Total absences (Unexcused and/or Excused)
 - School will contact Pearl Rendon, United Way Youth Support Coordinator and fill out referral form.

Students 11 years and under

Steele County Attendance Review Board

Information regarding Steele County residents is below. Information for Dodge, Freeborn and Mower County residents is similar.

The family, school and community are all partners in working toward the goal of school attendance and educational success. Minnesota law requiring school attendance is "designed to provide a continuum of intervention and services to support families and children in school combating truancy and educational neglect."

- A. **At Three (3) unexcused absences,**
 - a. letter is sent to student and parent/guardian.
 - b. In-school meeting set up with student and/or parent to discuss solutions to student's attendance issues.
- B. **At Five (5) unexcused absences:**
 - a. School will contact Stacey Zabel (SCAO) and/or Esther Sherman to schedule **Attendance Review Board (ARB)** hearing time and date.
 - b. School will send letter with ARB time/date to student/family.
 - The school will send out a notice that the parent/guardian and the student are expected to attend the Attendance Review Board led by the Steele County Attorney's Office. This meeting will include school officials, school and county social workers, and other service provider representatives as needed. At the meeting, participants will review the laws regarding school attendance and the diversion process. A contract with the student and family will be established and the student will be placed under supervision to attend school.
 - If the student continues to have unexcused absences or tardies, the school is required to notify law enforcement and Steele County Human Services. The Steele County Attorney's Office will determine what action should be taken.
 - c. School will email Stacey Zabel at least **5 business days** before ARB copies of the following:
 - i. Referral form
 - ii. **All** attendance letters sent to families.
 - iii. Current attendance record.
- C. **ARB**

- a. School to call family to remind of ARB date day before
- b. School to arrange for interpreter if needed.
- c. School to bring Action Plan to ARB with updated attendance record.
- d. School Principal, Social Worker/Counselor, Truancy Court Coordinator and Assistant County Attorney to attend ARB.
- e. Stacey Zabel to send copy of completed Action Plan to school, Truancy Court Coordinator, and family. The Steel County Attorney's Office will keep the original.

D. Cancelling ARB

- a. No ARB on Snow Days
- b. School to call Stacey Zabel to reschedule ARB hearing time/date.

E. 7 unexcused absences after ARB:

- a. If a student is 12 years of age or older the school is to make a report to Minnesota Prairie County Alliance after the child has 7 unexcused absences, full or partial days. The school may also make a Truancy Court referral in addition to this report.
- b. Notify Minnesota Prairie County Alliance Intake at
 - i. Phone: 507-431-5725
 - ii. Fax: 507-837-5330
 - iii. Email: Childprotection@MNPrairie.org
- c. The student may be referred to the Steel County Truancy Court Program by the school after 7 unexcused absences, full or partial days. Send the Truancy Court referral form, updated attendance, and credit summary to Stacey Zabel. Done in addition to notifying Minnesota Prairie County Alliance
 - i. Stacey Zabel will provide the Truancy Court referral form, ARB Action Plan, and updated attendance to the members of the Truancy Court Team, who meets every Wednesday.
 - ii. The Steele County Attorney's Office will notify the school of the team's decision and any future court dates.
- d. If the student is not accepted into Truancy Court, considerations will also be made for issuing a citation to the parents, filing an Educational Neglect CHIPS-Truancy Petition, or filing a probation violation if the student currently has conditions of probation which include attending school daily. Please report any continued concerns to the School Liaison Officer, the Steele County Attorney's Office and/or Minnesota Prairie County Alliance.

F. Steele County Attorney's Office Contact Information:

- a. Stacey Zabel, Legal Assistant
 - i. Phone: 507-444-7782
 - ii. Email: Stacey.Zabel@co.steele.mn.us
- b. Esther Sherman, Assistant County Attorney (ARB Lead Attorney)
 - i. Phone: 507-444-7784
 - ii. Email : Esther.Sherman@SteeleCountyMN.gov