

2024-25 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 when mailed to parents/guardians.

- School Policies and State Laws
 - Compulsory Attendance Law
 - Overview of Daily Attendance
 - Overview of Excused and Unexcused 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



C.A.R.E.

Connecting Attendance to Results in Education

"All Day. Every Day."

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year. This letter is meant to share some important information regarding the expectations for attendance.

When students attend school daily, they 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 **Mrs. Kathryn Forrest** (Kathryn.forrest@mnps.org) at Kathryn.forrest@mnps.org. Please submit a handwritten note or email explaining your child's absence. You can email absence notes to Kathryn.forrest@mnps.org. Parent or guardian absence notes will not be accepted after **eight** absences. Doctor 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. **Please contact your child's grade-level counselor.**

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
 - Circumstances requested in writing by the parent/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.

Students arriving within **10** minutes of the school start time will report directly to class. Students arriving after this time frame will report to **Ms. Kathryn Forrest in the main office with a parent/guardian** 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 **Mrs. Kathryn Forrest** by phone, email, 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
4 Late Arrivals	Parent phone call; conference
4 Early Dismissals	Parent phone call; conference

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 regularly throughout the year.

Recognition	Criteria	Reward
Satisfactory Attendance	Missing 8 or less days in a school year	Grade level Award Day
Improved Attendance	Improvement in student attendance	Grade level Award Day

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; finish homework, lay out clothes, and get 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 Portal**. Email Ms. Melanie Claybrooks at melanie.claybrooks@mnps.org to get details.
 - You can also sign up online by going to www.MNPS.org,
 - Click on Students & Families and choose Campus Portal.
- Talk to your student's 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.
 - Five-year-olds who are already in Kindergarten must maintain regular attendance.
- Missing 10 percent (about 18 days or 2 days a month) 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 fall behind academically even if they miss just 1 or 2 days every few weeks.
- Late arrivals and early dismissals contribute to the loss of instructional time.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher must 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 4 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.
- Students within MNPS can attend schools outside of their school zone. To maintain enrollment at the out-of-zone school, students must maintain satisfactory attendance (attending 95 percent or more of their days enrolled).
 - If a student has 10 or more unexcused absences during a school year, they may forfeit their enrollment at their chosen out-of-zone school and be re-enrolled in their school of zone. If revocation occurs, families will be notified in writing by their out-of-zone school and the School Options Department at the Support Hub.

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