

Policy 503: Student Attendance

Adopted: October 10, 2013

Revised: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cannon River STEM School believes that excessive student absenteeism and tardiness, whether caused by excused or unexcused absences, may be an early warning sign of poor academic achievement and may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The Board desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the State of Minnesota's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the CRSS.

For background, as defined in Minnesota State Statute, students must attend school until age 16. Students are considered "continuing truant" if they are absent three or more days in the school year with a valid reason (in elementary school) or are absent one or more class periods on at least three or more days without a valid reason (in Middle School.) Students are considered "habitually truant" if they are absent for seven or more days without a valid excuse (in elementary school) or are absent one or more class periods on seven or more days without a valid excuse (in Middle School.) When a student becomes habitually truant, the parents may be charged with educational neglect, and they may face a Child in Need of Protection Services (CHIPS) petition. Parents may also be found guilty of a misdemeanor. If the student is over the age of 12, the student may have to go to Juvenile Court.

Cannon River STEM School believes that all absences affect learning, whether considered a valid reason by Minnesota State statute or not. Therefore, the CRSS Board believes that efforts should be made to communicate the importance of attendance and the vital partnership the CRSS has with parents to ensure student success. To encourage school attendance, the Executive Director or designee shall develop strategies that focus on prevention and early intervention of attendance problems. Preventive strategies may include efforts to provide a safe and positive school environment, relevant and engaging learning experiences, and school activities that help develop students' feelings of connectedness with the schools. The Executive Director or designee also may provide incentives and rewards to recognize students who achieve excellent attendance or demonstrate significant improvement in attendance.

The Executive Director or designee shall establish a system to accurately track and monitor student attendance, including methods to identify students classified as truants, as defined in law and administrative regulation. The Executive Director or designee shall work with students and parents/guardians to identify factors contributing to truancy. Based on this needs assessment, he/she shall collaborate with community agencies, including, but not limited to, Rice County Family Services Collaborative, other regional schools, Rice County Social Services, Faribault and Rice County law enforcement, Rice County Attorney/Courts, and/or Rice County Public Health, to ensure that alternative educational programs and nutrition, health care, and other support services are available for students and families and

to intervene as necessary when students have serious attendance problems.

As required by law, if Cannon River STEM School intervention is unsuccessful, habitually truant students shall be referred to Rice County Social Services or the Rice County Attorney's office.

The Executive Director or designee shall regularly analyze data on student absence to identify patterns of absence school-wide and by school, grade level, and student population. Such data shall be used to identify common barriers to attendance, prioritize resources for intervention, and monitor progress over time. The Executive Director or designee shall periodically report this information to the Board for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of strategies implemented to reduce chronic absence and truancy and making changes as needed. As appropriate, the Executive Director or designee also shall provide this information to key school staff and community agency partners to engage them in program evaluation and improvement.

AR 5113.1(h)