

## **CREEKSTONE MONTESSORI SCHOOL POLICY #503**

*Adopted: January 16, 2023 Creekstone Montessori School Policy #503 Revised: February 26, 2024*

### **503 STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

#### **PURPOSE**

The School Board believes regular attendance is directly related to academic, social, and emotional success. The purpose of this policy is to encourage regular and on time attendance. It is intended to be positive, not punitive.

#### **GENERAL STATEMENT**

In accordance with Minnesota Compulsory Instruction Law, 120A.22 , students are required to attend school every day school is in session. The student may have excused absences .

We urge families to make every effort possible to schedule all appointments outside of school hours. If your child will be late or absent, please notify the school office by 9:00am.

The following are excused reasons for a child to be absent:

- Illness
- Serious illness in the child's immediate family
- Death of the child's immediate family member, close friend, or relative
- Other family emergencies
- Religious and cultural traditions and services
- Medical, dental, orthodontic, or counseling/mental health appointments
- Court appearances
- Natural disasters such as fire, flood, or severe storm
- Official school outings
- School suspension
- *Pre-approved* family vacations that include school work expectations

The following are examples of unexcused absences:

- Missing school for no particular reason (truancy)

- oversleeping the alarm
- If the child is babysitting or caring for family members

Absences resulting from official suspension will be counted as excused absences in accordance with

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the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, Minnesota Statute 121A.40-121A.56.

If Child Protection has a child within their observation, the school is required to report when a child has been absent from school.

A habitual truant is a child under the age of 17 missing more than 7 days of school *as unexcused* within the school year. This includes children enrolled in Kindergarten.

Minnesota statutes indicate that the Head of School is to ask the County Attorney to file a petition with the juvenile court if a child enrolled at Creekstone has an excessive number of unexcused absences during a school year. This is following Minnesota Law Statutes 120A.22 and 260 A.02. The statute indicates that three or more *UNEXCUSED* absences identify the child as a Continuing Truant, and the school is to notify the child's parent by First Class mail. The Letter is to advise the family of the number of days missed and to provide notice of the school's concern. If the attendance of *UNEXCUSED* days persists without improvement and cooperation with the family and school, the school is to take further action with the county authorities. This would not happen without regular and frequent communication with the family prior to this action.

If a child is reported to have continuing illness the school may require a doctor's statement that the child is under continued medical care and unable to attend school.

Creekstone expects that students will not miss more than 10% of the school days each year (approximately 17 days per year). Families will be notified when absences approach 5 % of the school days that have already taken place.

Being on time to school is an important part of attendance. If a child misses just 5 minutes of school each day, they will have missed 3 full days by the end of the year. If a child misses 30 minutes of school each day, they will have missed the equivalent of 21 days by the end of the year.

Studies show that 59% of children who miss 18 or more days of school in either kindergarten or 1st grade can't read at grade level by the time they're in 3rd grade.

Meanwhile, 83% of children who missed 18 (or more) days of school in both kindergarten and 1st grade can't read at grade level by the time they're in 3rd grade. It takes only two absences per month to miss 18 days of school. Creekstone encourages families to support their child to be on time arriving and attending school each day it is in session. Parents do have a responsibility to ensure that this happens and to inform the school in the event of an absence. Creekstone agrees to collaborate with the student and family to solve any attendance problems that may arise. Making up lost instruction time will be a discussion between the teacher, the student, parent, and Administration.