

### COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Under state law, full-time school attendance is required of all children from their 7<sup>th</sup> to their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday except:

- A. A person who graduates from high school before their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday;
- B. A person who has:
  - 1. Reached the age of 15 years or completed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade;
  - 2. Permission to leave school from that person's parent/guardian;
  - 3. Been approved by the principal for a suitable program of work and study or training;
  - 4. Permission to leave school from the Board or its designee; and
  - 5. Agreed in writing with that person's parent/guardian and the Board or its designee to meet annually until that person's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday to review that person's educational needs. When the request to be excused from school has been denied pursuant to this paragraph, the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner;
- C. A person who has matriculated and is attending an accredited, post-secondary, degree-granting institution as a full-time student. An exception to the attendance in public school under this paragraph must be approved by the Commissioner.

### Alternatives to Attendance at Public Day School

- A. Equivalent instruction alternatives are as follows:
  - 1. A person shall be excused from attending a public day school if the person obtains equivalent instruction in:
    - a. A private school approved for attendance purposes pursuant to 20-A MRS 2901;
    - b. A private school recognized by the department as providing equivalent instruction;

- c. A home instruction program that complies with the requirements of 20-A MRSA 5001-A(3)(A)(4); or
  - d. Any other manner arranged for by the Board and approved by the Commissioner.
- 2. A student shall be credited with attendance at a private school only if a certificate showing the name, residence and attendance of the person at the school, signed by the person or persons in charge of the school, has been filed with the school officials of the administrative unit in which the student resides.
- 3. The following provisions apply to home instruction program;
  - a. The student's parent/guardian must provide a written notice of intent to provide home instruction that meets the requirements of 20-A MRSA 5001-A(3)(A)(4)(a) simultaneously to the school officials of the administrative unit in which the student resides and to the Commissioner within 10 calendar days of the beginning of home instruction.
  - b. On or before September 1 of each subsequent year of home instruction, the student's parent/guardian must file a letter with school officials of the administrative unit in which the student resides and the Commissioner stating the intention to continue providing home instruction and enclose a copy of one of the forms of annual assessment of the student's academic progress described in 20-A MRSA 5001-A(3)(A)(4)(b).
  - c. Dissemination of any information filed under 20-A MRSA 5001-A(3)(A) is governed by the provisions of 20-A MRSA 6001 (dissemination of information); the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 USC 1232g (2002); and the federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, 20 USC 1401-1487 (2002), except that "directory information" as defined by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is confidential and is not subject to public disclosure unless the parent/guardian specifically permits disclosure in writing or a judge orders otherwise. Copies of any information filed under 20-A MRSA 5001-A(3)(A) must be maintained by the student's parent/guardian until the home instruction program concludes. The records must be made available to the Commissioner upon request.
  - d. If the home instruction program is discontinued, students of compulsory school age must be enrolled in a public school or an

equivalent instruction alternative as provided for by law. The receiving school shall determine the placement of the student. At the secondary level, the principal of the receiving school shall determine the value of the prior educational experience toward meeting the standards of Maine's system of Learning Results.

- B. A person may be excused from attendance at a public day school pursuant to 20-A MRSA 5104-A or 8605 (other public or private alternative programs).

### **Excusable Absence**

A person's absence is excused when the absence is for the following reasons (please note conditions of reporting to school found in bullets under each heading):

- A. Personal Illness;
- A note signed by parent/guardian must be provided to the school before the student is allowed to return to school.
  - 4 total absences due to personal illness within a 20 school day period may result in a mandatory meeting between parent/guardian of student and Administration for the purpose of discussing how these absences are impacting academic performance.
- B. An appointment with a health care professional that must be made during the regular school day;
- absence should have prior approval by Principal if at all possible.
- C. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day;
- D. A family emergency; or
- E. A planned absence for a personal or educational purpose.
- absence must have prior approval by Principal

A student who has accumulated 10 absences within one semester may be asked to appear before the MSAD 12 School Board as recommended by the principal. This meeting could result in consequences for absenteeism that may range from the creation of an attendance contract to actual loss of course credit at the High School level or recommendation for retention in grades K-8. The severity of consequences will be determined by the School Board, with recommendations by administration on a case-by-case basis.

The overall objective will be that attendance is directly tied to positive learning experiences and academic success. Students who do not attend school can be negatively impacted when instruction is missed. The MSAD 12 School Board wishes to offer the

best academic programming to its students and understands the need for students to be present in order to succeed in their educational endeavors.

### **Tardiness to School**

Tardiness is defined as lateness to school after the scheduled time that a class begins. The School Committee will require that any student who accumulates 4 tardies within 20 school days will result in a mandatory meeting between parent/guardian of student and Administration for the purpose of discussing how being tardy may be impacting academic performance.

### **Other**

Parents are responsible for the attendance of students who are under 17 years of age. The Board shall work with families in an effort to ensure compliance.

Secondary school students 20 years of age or more will only be admitted to the school unit with prior Board approval.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA 5001-A; 5003; 5201  
Ch. 125 8.06 (Maine Department of Education Rules)

Cross Reference: IHBG – Home Schooling  
JFC – Student Withdrawal from School/Dropout Prevention  
Committee  
JHB – Truancy

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