

August 22, 2025

Dear Menomonee Falls Families,

As we approach the new school year, we want to provide the necessary information regarding our updated attendance procedures and highlight the valuable opportunities available to support your child's academic journey.

The Impact of Attendance on Academic Performance

Research consistently shows a strong correlation between regular school attendance and academic achievement. According to studies from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), students with high attendance rates tend to perform better academically. Consistent attendance helps students:

- **Develop Strong Academic Foundations:** Regular attendance allows students to build upon lessons progressively, leading to a deeper understanding of the material.
- **Enhance Social and Emotional Skills:** Being present in school helps students develop crucial social skills and fosters a sense of belonging and connection with peers and teachers.
- **Improve Academic Outcomes:** Studies show that students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve higher test scores, grades, and graduation rates.

Aside from the importance of attendance for student academic achievement, it is also important to remember that the State of Wisconsin is a compulsory attendance state. Students are expected to attend school during the regular hours and full periods of the school day, except for pre-approved holidays. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring their children are in school or home-schooled. It is also important to remember that State of Wisconsin law only allows parents to excuse their child from school attendance for any reason, up to ten school days per school year. Anything beyond that number of days must be accompanied by legally excusable absence documentation, such as a letter from a doctor to prevent truancy or habitual truancy procedures being initiated against the student and/or families [Wis. Stat. § 118.15(3)(c)]. One recommendation we highly encourage is anytime you remove your student from school for a medical appointment, please remember to ask your practitioner for an excuse to document the visit to provide to the school. This provides a venue for the absence to be excused, without counting towards a parents legally allowed absence amount.

Upcoming Attendance Procedures

Ensuring consistent attendance is essential for student success. To support this, we are continuing to implement changes to our attendance procedures this school year:

1. **Updated Reporting and Input System:** The usage of the PowerSchool Parent Portal for reporting absences to the school piloted last year at the middle and high schools, will be put into operation at all school levels including elementary, beginning the first week of school. This new plug-in through PowerSchool will allow parents to not only view their student's specific attendance but also provide for reporting excused absences into the online PowerSchool portal with your family PowerSchool account. Tutorials and instructions on how to utilize this portal can be found on each school's attendance dropdown on their main menu for their webpage. Here is the link for example, to Ben Franklin's reporting an absence page: [Reporting an Absence](#) that includes instructions and tutorials to follow for entering your student's excused absences through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Although the PowerSchool App does not provide the ability to report an absence for your student, through this link you will find ways to make it easier to utilize the portal through your cellular device or desktop. Contacting your school to report an absence via email or phone is still an option however, we greatly encourage the usage of this time-saving option for families.

2. **Attendance Notifications:** Beginning the first day of school, all families will receive automated messages for student unverified absences, similar to what was put into place last year. During the school day, families will receive automated notifications if their child has been marked unexcused absent, along with reminders of any action that may be needed from the family side. This system aims to keep you informed and engaged in your child's attendance and provide another opportunity to ensure accuracy in their overall attendance rate. Additionally, communication home will be automatically generated for the following benchmarks for annual attendance:

2 Unexcused absences

5 Total Absences

7 Total Absences

10 Days Tardy

Habitual Truancy Procedures Forthcoming

Absence Excused via Medical Excuse Only

With each communication, specific directions and instructions along with information regarding the attendance codes will be provided as appropriate. Again, with the ultimate goal of improving family tracking of student(s) attendance. Additional communication from North Middle School and Menomonee Falls High School pertaining to student attendance may also take place.

3. **Attendance Support Meetings:** For families facing challenges with attendance, we will continue to offer support meetings with school counselors, social workers, and building attendance officers. These meetings are designed to identify and address any barriers to consistent school attendance while working towards possible solutions prior to the truancy referral process and its consequences.

By working together, we can ensure that every student benefits from these positive outcomes. We appreciate your commitment to your child's education and encourage open communication with our school staff to address any questions or concerns. If you have any questions regarding your student's attendance or other school related needs, please do not hesitate to contact your student's school's main office for assistance.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to a successful and engaging school year ahead!

School District of Menomonee Falls