

# De Smet Middel/School Attendance Policy

## General Attendance Expectations

In accordance with South Dakota law, the responsibility for regular school attendance rests with the student and their parents or guardians. Attendance records become a part of the student's permanent academic file.

Parents/guardians are expected to notify the school of their child's absence by 9:00 AM. The school office will determine if the absence is classified as exempt, excused, or unexcused.

## Checking In and Out

Any student arriving late or leaving during the school day must report to the office, present their Student ID, and sign in/out. Failure to do so will result in detention. Students without their Student ID will receive a SWIS referral.

Students feeling ill must report to the office, where staff will contact a parent/guardian. Students may not call or text parents from personal devices during class time or passing periods.

## Participation in Activities

To participate in or attend school-sponsored activities (e.g., practice, games, rehearsals), students must be in school by 10:30 AM. Students missing more than half a day are ineligible to participate that day, unless the absence is due to a verified appointment, funeral, religious activity, or pre-approved exception. Verification may be required if abuse is suspected.

Students may not miss school in the morning (e.g., for hunting) and attend an activity later that same day unless they have a doctor's note.

## Illnesses (Not Known in Advance)

- Parents/guardians must call the school before 9:00 AM.
- Students should check Google Classroom, teacher websites, or email teachers for assignments as soon as possible—before returning to school.
- Students leaving due to illness during lunch must have the school contact a parent beforehand. Calls from home after lunch will not excuse the absence.
- Students must check out if not returning after lunch. Parents must speak directly with office personnel to excuse the absence.
- Upon returning, students must talk to teachers to collect missed assignments and will have **twice the number of days absent** to complete the work.

## Planned Absences (Appointments, Vacations, etc.)

- Parents must notify the school in advance; students, siblings, or relatives may not excuse absences.
- No makeup slips will be issued. Students are responsible for collecting and completing assignments before the absence.
- For school-sponsored events, the coach/advisor will notify the office. Students must still get their assignments ahead of time.

## Types of Absences

### **Exempt** (*Do not count against attendance*)

- School-sponsored activities
- Funerals or religious observances
- Verified court appearances
- Up to 2 verified college visits (juniors/seniors only)

### **Excused** (*Count against attendance; students have 2x the number of days absent to make up work*)

- Verified medical/dental appointments
- Parent-reported illness
- Family-requested time off
- Weather-related absence
- Additional verified college visits

- In-school or out-of-school suspension
- Attendance at a state event in which the student participated (with prior approval)

### Unexcused

- Skipping class or school
- No verification for medical appointments
- Oversleeping
- Hair or photo appointments
- Leaving without permission
- Attending a school event after missing school
- Working for someone other than a parent
- Not signing out properly or parent not notifying the office
- Attendance at a state event without prior participation

Any unexcused absence on the day of an activity results in ineligibility to participate.

### Excessive Absences

- **5 days missed (per semester):** Notification letter sent to parents/guardians.
- **7 days missed:** Second notification sent.
- **10 days missed:** Third letter sent with attendance record attached. The principal may notify law enforcement or the state's attorney for potential truancy.
- If more than 10 absences occur in a class, the student may be removed and receive an "F". The student may have the opportunity to make up missed time to avoid being dropped.

### Tardiness Policy

- Students must be in class when the second bell rings.
- Students arriving late for first period or after lunch must sign in using their Student ID and receive a pass.
- More than 5 minutes late = unexcused absence and detention.
- Tardies reset at the end of each semester.

#### Excused tardies include:

- Late bus
- Being held by a teacher (with a pass)
- Returning from verified appointments

#### Consequences:

- **3 tardies:** 1 detention + parent contact
- **6 tardies:** 2 detentions + parent contact
- **9 tardies:** In-school suspension (ISS) + parent contact
- **Every 3 additional tardies:** Further ISS + parent meetings

### Truancy

Students must attend school until age 18 as required by SD law (13-27-1). Truancy occurs when there is no legal reason for an absence. After 10 total absences, students may be referred to law enforcement.

*Note: Turning 18 does not automatically grant students authority over academic/medical records. Students must request and complete the Student Record Access & Authorization Form through the school counselor and principal.*

### Make-Up Work Policy

- Students have **twice the number of days absent** to make up missed work.
- Missed work must be completed or it will be marked incomplete.
- Students missing school for activities must get assignments **before leaving**.
- Missed tests must be scheduled during non-class time (study hall, before/after school).
- Previously announced assignments are still due as scheduled, regardless of absences.
- Extensions may be granted at the administration's discretion.