



15 Day Drop Rule - Minnesota School Attendance Law

Attendance and MN's 15 Day-Drop Rule

The goal of Minnesota education law is to make sure every student:

- gets a quality education,
- gets support for academic achievement, and
- is respectfully taught the rich culture and history of Indigenous people.

Under Minnesota law, children ages 7-17 must go to school. But a child may be excused from going to school if they have a good reason. A good reason might be:

- a doctor appointment,
- the child is sick, or
- there is a family emergency



What counts as an 'excused absence' can be different in different school districts. But if a student misses 15 days in a row, the school district has to remove or drop the student. They have to do this even when a student has a valid reason for missing school.

There are some very limited exceptions. See next section.

Exceptions to the Drop Rule

A school can't remove a student if they miss 15 days of school because they:

- are at home with an injury or illness, or
- in a medical facility

In these cases, schools must give the student education services in their home or at the facility where the student is getting treatment or care.

There are other times when a school district may keep a student enrolled after being absent for 15 days in a row. They might be things like an epidemic, a disaster, weather, or fuel shortage.

Special Protections for Students who are homeless

If a student identifies as homeless, federal law says that schools must help them get past the challenges that make it hard to go to school. Before a homeless student can be removed from school, the district must try hard to find out why they've been absent and work to fix those issues. They must also keep a record of what they did.

Re-Enrollment

When a school district removes a student for missing 15 days in a row, the student can still re-enroll at the school. The school district and county social services may work with the student and family to create a plan for their return. Policies and procedures for re-enrollment may differ by school.

For example, Minnesota law says it is ok for schools to re-enroll students in the same semester, but not all schools have this policy. Check with your school to learn about their rules.

Special Education

If a student with a disability is removed by the district, the district is still responsible for making sure that student has a free and appropriate public education.

Districts are also responsible for "child find." This means that schools have the responsibility to identify, find, and evaluate children with disabilities who may need special education services.



Developed in collaboration with the SMRLS' Education Law Advocacy Project (ELAP).

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