

Subject: Important Update: New City Ordinance Related to Student Attendance

AASD High School Families,

The Appleton Area School District believes that school attendance is critical to the success of all students, and is a responsibility shared by students, parents, schools, and our community. The AASD is committed to partnering with our families and community to support student attendance.

The AASD is concerned about excessive absences, especially for students who miss 18 or more days, because they can lead to lost learning, failed classes, and even prevent graduation. As a result, the District and the City of Appleton recently worked together to reinstate an attendance/truancy ordinance. The Common Council adopted the [ordinance](#) on October 15, 2025, and it takes effect on November 1, 2025. This ordinance will enforce the state law requiring all children under 18 to attend school regularly. For AASD high school students who are habitually truant (5+ unexcused absences in a semester) and have excessive absences, this ordinance could result in a ticket.

Who will this impact?

Even with strong supports and caring staff in place, we know that some of our students—especially at the high school level—are still missing far too many days of school to be successful. Across our high schools, 93 students have already missed more than 20 days this year.

We also know that life happens—students get sick, cars break down, and Wisconsin winters can interfere with routines. We recognize that truancy is complex and often linked to challenges that extend well beyond the classroom. Our commitment is to keep working with families and community partners to help every student show up, feel supported, and find success. The new ordinance simply gives us one more way to reach students who are struggling with attendance and to strengthen our partnership with families when absences start to get in the way of learning.

What does this mean for my student?

Please understand that tickets aren't automatically given out. A truancy citation would be considered only as a very last step—after we've attempted every possible school and community support, such as creating an individualized attendance plan, connecting the student with a mentor, or conducting more focused family outreach.

Our goal is to make sure students and families get the guidance and support they need before anything like a citation is even discussed. We will also make sure to recognize and celebrate any progress along the way—even small steps forward, such as improved attendance, matter, and will be honored.

An example of an added support that will be used if your student has reached five or more unexcused absences in a semester is for them to take part in an attendance education lesson at their school during the regular day. This lesson is designed to help students understand why regular attendance is important and to give them tips and support for getting back on track.

Our approach will always focus on support first. We'll prioritize multiple layers of intervention—both at the school and, when needed, within the community—long before a citation or any formal action is even considered.

We're also recommending that students have the chance to clear a citation by taking positive steps forward, such as joining a mentorship program, engaging in community service, or showing consistent improvement in attendance.

We encourage you to take a look at the new ordinance. If you have questions or need support around attendance, please contact our District Secondary Attendance Coordinator, Stephanie Marta, via email (martastephanie@aasd.k12.wi.us).

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and commitment to helping every student show up, grow, and succeed.

Sincerely,
Appleton Area School District