

Admission Requirements

1. Preschool children must be 33 months of age to enroll in the Children's House and must also be toilet trained.
2. Preschool children should have language development sufficient to meet their needs in a classroom environment.
3. Children must be age 5 by September 1st of the current school year in order to enter Kindergarten.
4. The following forms must be on file prior to admission:
 - Enrollment form (for new students)
 - Health form including immunization records
 - Emergency Information
 - Contract form and deposit (Children's House Preschool)
 - Early Childhood Screening records (Kindergarten only)
 - Previous school records, or a signed *Release of Information Form* allowing Bluffview to obtain a copy of these records (for transfer students)
 - Information regarding Individual Education Plans (IEP) if applicable

After School Programs

After school programs are available at Bluffview Montessori School from 2:10 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Two programs are offered; one for preschool students and a second for elementary students. The hourly cost of both after school programs is \$4.00 per hour.

Parents and guardians are required to sign their children out of after school programs in order to assure the safety of children and to enable accurate billing of fees. In addition, parents or guardians must designate specific persons who will be authorized to pick up their children from after school programs.

Acceptable Use Policy

Bluffview has an acceptable use policy that applies to internet use at our school. Please see appendix E for the complete policy. The statement is included on yearly student information forms which must be submitted prior to each school year.

Attendance

We desire for all of our students to have the best educational experience possible. One essential component for a successful educational experience (adequate academic progress, the creation of a positive classroom experience, and active participation in the classroom community) is regular attendance at school. Therefore, it is important that children arrive at school on time and attend school every day.

The school day begins promptly at 7:45 a.m. Parents or guardians, please accompany Children's House students into the school if it is prior to 7:30. After 7:30, Children's House students may be dropped off at the door to go directly to their classroom. Elementary and Erdkinder students should not arrive at school earlier than 7:00. The school day ends at 2:10 p.m. Any student not picked up by 2:30 p.m. will be sent to After School Care and parents/guardians will be billed accordingly.

Reporting Absences

When a child is absent from school, please call the school office (507-452-2807) between 7:00-8:00 a.m. and state the reason for the absence. Parents or guardians may also leave a message on the school's voice mail to report a child's absence. If the school is not notified, attendance personnel will contact the parent/guardian at home or at work to confirm the whereabouts of the child and inquire about the reason for the absence.

Excused Absences

To be considered an excused absence, the student's parent must verify, in writing, the reason for the student's absence from school. Excuses must be received within two school days or they will be recorded as unexcused absences.

An excused absence is an occurrence which meets the following criteria for non-attendance. Excused Absences include:

- 1) **Illness:** extended illness-related absences may result in a request for a written excuse from a physician
- 2) **Sickness or death in the family**
- 3) **Impassable road:** Normally the school will be closed on a snow day; however there may be good cause for absence if a child lives in an isolated area where roads have not been properly cleared of snow or other debris.
- 4) **Observance of religious holidays not recognized by public schools:** This refers to legitimate religious holidays recognized by major religions which are sacred to the adherents of the religion and which require non-attendance by the student on days that are not public holidays.
- 5) **Quarantine:** This refers to school or doctor ordered exclusion of the child from school due to contagious disease or other legitimate medical reason.
- 6) **The student is required to be in court**
- 7) **Suspension, Exclusion, or Expulsion from school:** This refers to students who have been removed from school following 121A.40 Minnesota Fair Pupil Dismissal Law.
- 8) **The student needs emergency medical or dental treatment**
- 9) **Other Absences:** This refers to special cases of family travel or other special circumstances where the absence from school is agreed upon by the parents, teachers, and the administration prior to the absence.

Conditions for Other Excused Absences

- The time limits for the approved absence may range from a single day to a week or more and applies only in those cases where prior permission has been given.
- Prior permission will be granted by the Head of School only after a planning meeting with parents, teachers, and the Head of School. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the teacher and Head of School at least two weeks in advance of the event in order to allow sufficient time for planning.
- During this meeting, the parents must provide a legitimate educational rationale for missing school. Teachers, the Head of School, and parents will collaborate and create a plan that will allow the student to keep up with assigned studies.
- The school reserves the right to deny approval in cases where the absence is not determined to have a legitimate educational purpose. Teachers and administrators determine legitimate educational purpose.
- An approved absence may be refused if the student is so far behind in his/her studies that, in the judgment of teachers and administrators, an absence from school might have a detrimental effect on the student's education.

Unexcused Absences

The school recognizes unexcused absences as non-legitimate reasons for non-attendance. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- 1) missed the bus
- 2) visiting relatives/friends
- 3) overslept/too tired
- 4) shopping
- 5) helping at home
- 6) staying home to care for a family member
- 7) hunting
- 8) deliberate non-attendance - "skipping"
- 9) staying home- being punished/grounded

This is not a complete list. There may be any number of other reasons for an unexcused absence.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as absence from school with no legitimate purpose. Truancy laws apply to students who attend grades Kindergarten through Middle School at Bluffview Montessori School. Two degrees of truancy are recognized by Minnesota statute: "continuing truant" and "habitual truant."

Continuing Truant

According to MN Statute 260A.02 Sub.3, a "continuing truant" means a child who is subject to the compulsory instruction requirements of MN Statute 120A.22 and is absent from instruction in a school without valid excuse within a single school year for:

1. Three days if the child is in elementary school
2. Three or more class periods in three days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school.

Habitual Truant

According to Minnesota Statute 260.015 Sub19, a "habitual truant" is a child under the age of 16 years who is absent from school without a lawful excuse for seven days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods of seven school days if the child is in middle school..."

Procedures for Truancy

The **third unexcused absence** will result in the implementation of MN Statute 260A.03 "Notice to parent or guardian when child is a continuing truant." The Head of School will inform the parent that:

- The child is truant.
- The parent or guardian should notify the school if there is a valid excuse for the child's absence.
- The parent or guardian is obligated to require the attendance of the child at school. Parents who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution.
- This notification serves as the notification required by Minnesota Statute 260A.03.
- Alternative educational programs and services may be available through District 861.
- The parent or guardian has the right to meet with the school administration to discuss a solution to the child's truancy.
- If the child continues to be truant, the parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings.
- It may be required that a parent or guardian accompany the child to school and attend class with the child for a period of one day.

The **third unexcused absence** will also result in a referral to the Winona County Restorative Justice Truancy Intervention Program. If truanancies continue after meeting with the Restorative Justice Truancy Liaison, the Committee will initiate further action.

After **seven truanancies**, the child will be designated a habitual truant and a truancy petition will be filed with the court administrator and a Child Protection Report will be made to the Department of Human Services.

Excessive Absences

A parent or guardian may clear three absences per month that school is in session. Subsequent clearances for illnesses require verification by a doctor or other valid health care professional. Student attendance will be monitored to detect patterns of excessive excused absences so that appropriate intervention action takes place.

- Written doctor's excuse:
- On valid doctor's medical slip
- Specific dates of illness or injury and date doctor was seen
- Doctor's belief that due to an illness or injury (state injury or illness), the student is restricted from participating in or attending school. Restrictions need to be listed with a final date.

Recurring Absences

The following charts reflect guidelines for schools to follow in working with parents of students with recurring absences. (Guidelines are suggested by the Winona County Truancy Task Force.)

Number of Unexcused Absences	School's Response
3	Attendance personnel/Head of School will contact parent by phone or letter and initiate referral to Winona County Restorative Justice Truancy Intervention Program
5	Attendance personnel will contact parent to notify of students continued truancy
7	Attendance personnel will file educational neglect or truancy charges.

Number of Excused Absences during the School Year	School's Response
3/month	Parent contact by attendance personnel or Head of School requesting a valid doctor's excuse for future absence.
15	Attendance personnel will verify doctor's excuse with the doctor. Parents will be notified if further action is warranted.