

STUDENTS

Absences/Truancy School and Class Attendance - Grades K-12

Students are expected to be in school, in class, and ready for instruction. Daily and punctual school attendance is essential to each student's academic development. Absence from school is detrimental to student achievement. A student is counted present for state reporting purposes if present for any portion of the day.

As required under the provisions of law, each parent/guardian is responsible for regular and punctual attendance of any child in his or her charge within the compulsory age for school attendance. Emancipated students are responsible for their own regular and punctual attendance. Parents and emancipated students are expected to work cooperatively with school personnel to correct attendance problems, including meetings with teachers, counselors, or administrators.

When students are in a virtual environment, schools will not follow the prescribed guidelines as noted below as it would not be practical to have these requirements. To take and track attendance in the virtual setting, staff are to adhere to the procedures provided by the VDOE as communicated by the Department of School Leadership.

Each member of a school's faculty is expected to avoid causing a student to be tardy or absent from a colleague's class. If a student is tardy or absent because of being detained by a faculty member, he/she will be considered excused and the absence will not be included in the count for excessive absences.

Students shall not be in an unauthorized area of the school without prior permission, and shall not leave a classroom, building, or assigned area without proper permission. Students who do not comply with this section will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline Guidelines.

A. Absence Defined

At the elementary and middle school level, if a student does not attend school for at least a portion of the day, he/she is counted absent.

At the high school level, absences are computed for each class. At the middle school level, absences are computed for each credit course. A student who misses more than fifteen (15) minutes of any class will be counted absent for that class.

B. Excused Absences

Personal illness, illness or death in the family, exposure to contagious disease, religious holidays, extremely inclement weather, or school-sponsored/related activities will be

considered legitimate excuses for a student's absence. The parent or legal guardian will provide written notice to the school of the reason for the absence or tardiness.

Requests for pre-approved excused absences should be made in writing by the parent or legal guardian and should state the reasons for absence and the time of absence. Such requests must be approved in advance by the principal.

Other verifiable reasons may be deemed excusable at the discretion of the principal. Such requests should be made in writing by the parent or legal guardian and should state the reasons for absence and the time of absence.

C. Unexcused Absences

Absences for reasons other than those listed above, including out-of-school suspension, are unexcused absences.

D. Parental/Guardian Notification of Absences

A documented attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian if a student is absent without administrative approval or knowledge.

E. Recordkeeping for Absences

Each principal is responsible for establishing a school recordkeeping system for all student absences.

Each teacher is responsible for recording as excused or unexcused school or class absence and tardiness. Excused absences for school-sponsored/related activities, authorized visits of students with school personnel, and recognized religious holidays should be noted as such.

All absences require written confirmation from the parent. All absence notes will be preserved until the close of the school term, and the principal will be the judge of the signature validity.

F. Make-up Work

Students who receive excused absences will be allowed to make up all assignments that affect the course grade and will be made aware of these assignments. It is the student's responsibility to make up assignments within a reasonable amount of time.

Students who receive unexcused absences may make up assignments at the discretion of the teacher, subject to the requirements communicated (provided) by the teacher at the beginning of the course. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of established guidelines and to follow those guidelines to make up the assignment. Students who are under the penalty of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will be ~~provided class work and homework material, if requested by the parent and/or student~~ able to access and complete graded work during and after the suspension, so the student may remain current with school instruction as long as enrolled in school.

G. Excessive Absences-Virginia Beach City Public Schools

1. Definition

All excused and unexcused absences will be included in computing excessive absences except as follows:

- School-sponsored/related activities
- Authorized visits of students with school personnel
- Recognized religious holidays

In the high schools, students having more than twelve (12) absences from a class (excused or unexcused) within a given semester will be considered as having excessive absences. This guideline will also apply to credit courses taken at the middle school level.

In high schools with alternate day schedules (i.e. block scheduling), students having more than six (6) class absences from a class (excused or unexcused) within a given semester will be considered as having excessive absences. This guideline will also apply to credit courses at the middle school level.

In elementary and middle schools, students having more than twenty-four (24) absences for the year will be considered as having excessive absences.

2. Resulting Actions

- a. When a student's absences equal two-thirds of the number for excessive absences, the school will notify the parent in writing of the number of absences and will be responsible for working with the student and the parent in developing a plan of corrective action as appropriate. Such intervention may include, but is not limited to, the following: parent conference; scheduled contact with parent; referral to the guidance counselor or school social worker; loss of privileges and/or restricted participation in school activities; referral to alternative learning program; and recommendation to the administration for other consequences.
- b. When a student's absences are excessive, the teacher will notify the principal. The principal or his designee will advise the parent by United States mail of the appropriate following action:

In the elementary and middle schools (grades K-8), students having excessive absences will participate in a corrective action plan with intervention strategies to improve attendance. At the end of the year, on the authority of the principal, the student could be denied promotion as appropriate.

In high schools, students having excessive absences within a given semester will receive a failing grade (63/N) for that semester or the actual class grade, whichever is lower. At the middle school level, this guideline will also apply to credit courses.

3. Waiver of Grade Reduction/Retention

A parent may request a waiver of the attendance regulation for extenuating circumstances beyond the parent's and/or student's control. Each school shall have available in the main office and/or guidance office the Virginia Beach Attendance Waiver Request Form.

A parent may submit a waiver request to the principal prior to the close of a semester or nine-week course, but no later than ten (10) days after the close of a semester or nine-week course. Teachers will provide attendance records and documentation of absences to the principal for review with the waiver request. A parent may provide additional documentation in conjunction with the waiver request.

Each waiver request will be considered on an individual basis taking into consideration documentation provided and extenuating circumstances beyond the parent's and/or student's control. The principal may request additional documentation from a medical professional when absences due to illness are excessive and/or a pattern appears to exist.

The principal shall act upon a waiver request within ten (10) administrative days after receiving it. The parent or guardian shall be notified of the decision in writing within five (5) administrative days after the administrative decision has been made.

4. Appeal of Waiver Decision

A parent may appeal the decision of the principal by submitting to the Coordinator of Student Services a written appeal within three (3) days of receipt of the decision from the principal. A parent may appeal the decision of the Coordinator of Student Services to the appropriate Senior Executive Director in the Department of School Leadership. The decision of the appropriate Senior Executive Director is final.

5. Parent/Guardian Notification Procedures

a. **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

For all absences, the school will contact the home each day of the child's absence from school using the automatic dialing system.

b. **Unexcused Absences (excluding suspensions)**

- 1) Each unexcused absence - the principal, or his/her designee, will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent of the pupil's absence and to obtain an explanation for the absence.
- 2) Fifth unexcused absence - the principal, or his/her designee, shall:
 - a) Make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/guardian by the principal or his/her designee, to obtain an explanation for the absences, and to explain to the parent/guardian the consequences of non-attendance.
 - b) The principal, or his/her designee, and the student's parent/guardian are required to jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's non-attendance.
- 3) Sixth unexcused absence
 - a) Within ten school days, the principal, or his/her designee, shall schedule a conference with the Student Support Team (SST), the student, his/her parent/guardian, and school personnel. The conference may include other community service providers to resolve issues related to non-attendance.
 - b) The conference shall be held no later than 15 school days after the sixth absence.
 - c) The SST may appoint a case manager to follow the case.
 - d) The SST can make recommendations, for intervention within the classroom or for services within the school.
 - e) The case manager will provide regular contact with the parent/guardian and student.
- 4) Seventh Unexcused Absence
 - a) The principal, or his/her designee, shall refer the student to Juvenile Intake for an interview.
 - b) A copy of the letter sent to the parent/guardian will be faxed to Court Services, along with written documentation of the efforts made to resolve the non-attendance.
 - c) If the truancy continues, the Social Worker or principal, or his/her designee, shall file a CHINS Petition.

- d) If the parent refuses to cooperate with the school system, the case manager, with the knowledge and support of School Administration and in consultation with Court Services, should institute proceedings against the parent/guardian pursuant to § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to § 20-124.2, and the school has received such notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known address of the parents. (Please note that should a CHINS petition be filed, the court is obligated to notify both parents of the court hearing, regardless of the custody status of a child).

- e) In filing a complaint against the student, the principal, or his/her designee, shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of § 22.1-258.

Legal Reference

Code of Virginia § 22.1-258, as amended. Appointment of attendance officers; notification when pupil fails to report to school.

Approved by Superintendent: July 16, 1991

Revised by Superintendent: August 18, 1992

Revised by Superintendent: June 20, 1995

Revised by Superintendent: December 19, 1995 (effective January 29, 1996)

Revised by Superintendent: August 6, 1996

Revised by Superintendent: October 8, 1998

Revised by Superintendent: July 31, 2001

Revised by Superintendent: March 17, 2006

Approved by School Board: April 20, 2010

Approved by School Board: August 27, 2018