

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

I. Student Attendance Policy

School attendance is directly related to academic achievement and the development of good habits, which are important in the world of work. Optimum student attendance is a cooperative effort, and the School Board involves parents and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

- A. Each parent/guardian having charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for such child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required under provisions of the law.
- B. Parents of students who are absent must inform the school of the reason for absence no later than upon the student's return to school. Absences are excused for the following reasons:
 - Funeral
 - Illness
 - Injury
 - Legal obligations
 - Medical procedure
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion
 - Religious observances
 - Military obligations
 - Other reasons preapproved by the principal or principal's designee
- C. The superintendent, by regulation, established procedures for appropriate interventions when a student engages in a pattern of absences for less than a full day, the explanation of which, if it were a full day absence, would not be an excused absence.
- D. Students shall attend school for a full day unless excused by the principal or principal's designee. Students working off the school site in established and approved community – or work-based learning experiences are considered present at school. Attendance tracking procedures for such an experience shall be established prior to its commencement.
- E. The superintendent's regulations will include procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations will ensure that a student is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which the student missed by reason of such absence, if the absence

is verified in an acceptable manner.

- F. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in High School to Work Partnership programs are not counted as absent for the purpose of calculating average daily membership. The regulations include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a High School to Work Partnership.
- G. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the division superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory attendance law.

II. Compulsory Attendance Procedures

Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information has been received by school personnel that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent by phone, email, or other electronic means to obtain an explanation. School staff records the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused". Early intervention with the student and parent or parents takes place for repeated unexcused absences.

A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

If (1) a pupil fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year, and (2) there is no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the absence; and (3) reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the absences have failed, then the principal or principal's designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of other communication devices to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or principal's designee, the pupil, and the pupil's parent shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the pupil's nonattendance. Such plan shall include documentation of the reasons for the pupil's nonattendance.

B. Upon Additional Absences Without Parental Awareness and Support

If the pupil is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent and school personnel have received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the school principal or principal's designee shall schedule a conference with the pupil, the pupil's parent and school personnel. Such conference may include other community service providers to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. The conference shall be held no later than 10 school days after the tenth absence of the pupil, regardless of whether his parent approves of the conference. The conference team shall monitor the pupil's attendance and may meet again as

necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In circumstances in which the parent is intentionally noncompliant with the compulsory attendance requirements or the pupil is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee shall schedule a conference with the pupil and pupil's parent within 10 school days and may (i) file a complaint against the student with the juvenile and domestic relations district court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code §16.1-228 or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent pursuant to Va. Code § 18.2-371 or 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the principal or principal's designee shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this policy. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint custody pursuant to Va. Code § 20.124-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known address of the parents.

III. Report for Suspension of Driver's License

In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, if a student who is under 18 years of age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days, the principal may notify the juvenile and domestic relations court, which may take action to suspend the student's driver's license.

IV. Attendance Reporting

Student attendance is monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At the end of each school year, each public school principal reports to the Superintendent the number of pupils by grade level for whom a conference was scheduled pursuant to Part II (B) above. The Superintendent compiles this information and provides it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

V. Dismissal Precautions

Principals do not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the student's parent/guardian to assume responsibility for the pupil. Students are released only on request and authorization of parent or guardian. The superintendent establishes procedures for release of pupils who are not residing with or under the supervision of a parent/guardian. The burden of proof on the authority of the person to receive the student is on the requesting party. A formal check-out system is maintained in each school.

Adopted: July 1, 1993
 Amended: January 26, 1998; November 20, 2003; November 8, 2012; August 8, 2013;
 September 11, 2014; October 12, 2017; September 18, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-254, 22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323 and 46.2-334.001.

8 VAC 20-230-20

8 VAC 20-730-10

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALSAbsences

- A. A student will be expected to make up work for all classes missed within five (5) days of return to school. Extenuating circumstances may be considered in extending the time limit.
- B. The principal has the discretion to deny promotion to a student who misses more than sixteen (16) days during the school year.
- C. The principal has the discretion to deny credit for a course to a student who misses more than eight (8) single class days during the school year, or the equivalent.
- D. Any decision to deny credit or promotion may be appealed to the Superintendent or his/her Designee for final disposition.

General Provisions

Each principal will ensure that teachers are accountable for the following:

- A. offering engaging and relevant instruction each day which necessitates and encourages student attendance;
- B. checking the roll each day in every class;
- C. communicating with a student's parents if poor attendance is affecting the student's progress and keeping a log of those contacts;
- D. including participation in their student evaluation procedures; and

Dismissal

- A. A student will not be released in the custody of anyone other than the student's legal parent or guardian unless the school has received permission from the student's legal parent or guardian for such a release. In cases where recognition is not certain, definite identification shall be established.
- B. Any student who needs to be released during the school day prior to dismissal shall bring a written request for such dismissal. This request must be signed by the student's legal parent or guardian and should be presented to the principal's office at least one day in advance of the dismissal if possible. By exception, the principal can grant this type of request without a formal written request. In cases where the validity of the request is questionable, verification shall be obtained.

- C. Agencies that take students from the school during the school day, such as the public health department, shall present the school with a statement signed by the student's legal parent or guardian granting permission for the student to be released to the agency periodically during the school year. This statement shall be presented to the school prior to the agency's initial request to take the student from school. Exceptions to this requirement will be in accordance with policies of the School Board and state law.

- D. Each school shall maintain a log that shows the name of the student signing out; the name of the person signing the student out; and the date, time, and reason for sign-out.

Adopted: July 1, 1993

Amended: January 26, 1998; November 8, 2012; September 11, 2014

Reviewed: November 20, 2003; October 12, 2017; September 18, 2018
