

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 expects parents and students to take an active role in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

- A. Each parent/guardian having charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age shall be responsible for such child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required under provisions of the law.
- B. ~~Every reasonable effort will be made to contact a parent/guardian of each absent student every day, and a log will be kept of call attempts and reasons for absences~~A reasonable effort shall be made to contact a parent/guardian of each student every day, and to obtain an explanation for the student's absence, where there is no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence. A log will be kept of call attempts.
- C. ~~Students who are absent must bring a valid note stating the reason for absence upon returning to school~~Students who are absent must bring a valid note stating the reason for absence upon returning to school. Unexcused absences shall be handled according to regulations issued by the superintendent.
- D. Students shall attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused. Secondary students shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work-study program. All other exceptions to a full day schedule must be approved on an individual basis by the Superintendent or designee.
- 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 he/she missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner.
- F. 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

A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

If (1) a student 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 student'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 his designee or the attendance officer shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, either in person or through telephone conversation, to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or his designee or the attendance officer, 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 Sixth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

If the pupil is absent an additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent and the attendance officer has received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, either the school principal or his designee or the attendance officer shall schedule a conference within ten school days, which must take place no later than the fifteenth school day after the sixth absence. At the conference, the pupil, his parent, and school personnel, shall meet to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. Other community service providers may also be included in the conference.

C. Upon Additional Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

Upon the next absence after the conference without indication to the attendance officer that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the Principal or designee shall notify the attendance officer or Superintendent or his designee who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules by either or both of the following: (i) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in § 16.1-228 or (ii) instituting proceedings against the parent pursuant to § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts already undertaken to resolve the pupil's absence. If the student's parents have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody arrangement, then both parents shall be notified at their last known addresses.

D. Parental Cooperation in Remedying Excessive Unexcused Absences

It is expected that parents will cooperate with the attendance officer and other school officials to remedy the student's attendance problem. Where direct contact with a parent cannot be made, despite reasonable efforts, or where parents otherwise fail to cooperate in remedying the student's attendance problem, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee may seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance laws. The attendance officer, with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent, shall institute proceedings against any parent who fails to comply with the requirements of the compulsory attendance laws. Where the complaint arises out of the parent's failure to comply with the requirements of § 22.1-258, the attendance officer

shall document the school division's compliance with this Code section.

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

V. Dismissal Precautions

Principals shall 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 shall be released only on request and authorization of parent or guardian. The superintendent shall provide 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 shall be maintained in each school.

Adopted: July 1, 1993

Amended: January 26, 1998; November 20, 2003; November 8, 2012

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, Sections 22.1-254, 22.1-258 through 22.1-269, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323 and 46.2-334.001.

8 VAC 20-110-10 et seq.

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Absences

- 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 four (4) single class days during a semester.
- 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.

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