

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Regular school attendance is necessary for students to receive the full benefit of public education. In addition, state compulsory attendance laws mandate school attendance until age eighteen. As such, all parents and students must accept responsibility for regular student attendance in school.

When a student is absent from school, parents or guardians should contact the school to report the student's absence by 10:00 am. If no contact is made, then upon the student's return to school, the parent or guardian must send a written note stating the reason for the student's absence. Parents or guardians will be notified whenever a student does not attend school and the school is not aware of the reason for the absence.

Absences are excused for the following reasons:

1. Medical/dental appointments or personal illness (medical documentation required)
2. Illness, death, or funeral in the family or household (verification may be required)
3. Students sent home by the school nurse
4. Recognized religious holidays
5. Lawyer/court official meeting (court documentation required)
6. Pre-arranged absences with prior approval of the building administrator
7. State mandated testing or other school/division testing programs
8. School-sponsored field trips or activities, including all VHSL activities
9. Late bus or buses which fail to run
10. Conference with school counselor, administrator, or other related staff members
11. Involuntary court appearance (copy of court order or subpoena required)

Attendance letters will be sent home to parents or guardians notifying them when a student has been absent a total of five and ten days during a school year. Upon accumulation of fifteen days of school absences, the principal will send a summary of absences and reasons given for the absences to the superintendent. Juvenile court officials will be notified of excessive student absences; court intervention will be sought after other strategies have proven ineffective.

A daily record will be maintained for absences, tardies and early dismissals, noting the time and reason given by the parent/guardian. Parents or guardians will be notified in writing when absences reach five (5), ten (10) and fifteen (15) days and when tardies and early dismissals become excessive.

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 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, principal's 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 Additional Absence 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 the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. The conference shall be held no later than ten (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 where the parent is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the pupil is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the pupil and the pupil's parent within ten (10) school days and may (i) file a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations district court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined by 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 attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of policy JED. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va. Code §20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known address of the parents.

Makeup work for absences will be due three days after the student returns to school (Example: If a student is absent on Monday, and returns on Tuesday, then makeup work is due on Friday). For absences of more than one day, students will be given an extra day (up to a maximum of five days) to complete makeup work for each additional day of absence. Grades for work turned in after that time will be reduced ten points for each day beyond the 'grace period.' The building administrator may make exceptions for extenuating circumstances (Example: hospitalization).

The following is used to define perfect and outstanding attendance.

Perfect Attendance*

Attending school all day constitutes perfect attendance. This includes no absences, no tardies, and no daily early departures during the school year.

Outstanding Attendance*

Students that miss three or less days during the school year have outstanding attendance. This may include full days missed and/or tardies or early departures.

Adopted: May 3, 2000

Revised: May 23, 2000; August 6, 2013, September 4, 2018

*Modifications Adopted: August 2, 2005