

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

I. Student Attendance Policy

Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the School Board involves parents and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/guardian or person having control or 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.

Parents of students who are absent must inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than upon the student's return to school. Absences are excused for the following reasons: funeral, illness (including mental health and substance abuse illnesses), injury, legal obligations, medical procedures, suspensions, expulsions, religious observances, and military obligation.

The superintendent, by regulation, establishes 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.

The superintendent's regulations include procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations 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.

Students shall attend school for a full day unless excused by the principal or principal's designee.

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 school 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 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 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 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 pupil's parent within 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 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 attendance officer 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 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 addresses 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: September 10, 2018

Amended by School Board: September 10, 2018

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1-254, 22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323 and 46.2-334.001.

8 VAC 20-730-10.

8 VAC 20-730-20.

Cross Refs.:	IGAJ	Driver Education
	JFC	Student Conduct
	JFC-R	Standards of Student Conduct

STUDENTS

Absences/Tardiness/TruancyA. Absences

All students are expected to be in regular attendance. Students who are absent from school must submit, the day following an absence, a doctor's excuse or a written excuse signed by a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the absence. Excuses are to be kept on file for the entire school year.

1. Pre-excused Absences

Absences that are known in advance and are approved by the principal or a designee are pre-excused absences. The student must take the initiative in getting and completing necessary assignments and work from teachers. All assignments and work must be completed upon the date of return unless otherwise approved by the principal or a designee.

2. Excused Absences

The student must take the initiative in getting and completing necessary assignments and work from teachers. Upon return to school all assignments and work must be completed within the same number of days as the excused absence(s).

3. Unexcused Absences

It is assumed that an unexcused absence represents a deliberate attempt by the student or his/her parents or guardian to avoid the duty of attending school. Students will be required to complete work or assignments missed due to the unexcused absence(s). An unexcused absence will result in the student being assigned to after school detention.

4. Suspensions

Absences due to a suspension are to be treated as unexcused absences and will result in the student receiving no credit for work or assignments missed. EXCEPTION: Students who meet the eligibility requirements for alternative placement and who take the initiative to attend an alternative education program provided by Tazewell County Public Schools will receive credit for completed work and assignments.

5. Excessive Absences

Regular school attendance is essential for maintaining satisfactory academic progress and to establish, at an early age, work habits required for successful employment. Credit for assignments or work missed for absences exceeding 7 days per semester or 14 days per year will not be permitted unless the absence is for medical reasons (requires a medical excuse), death in the immediate family, or natural disaster. Building principals shall establish procedures and guidelines to monitor and control attendance prior to students' recording 7 absences per semester or 14 absences per year.

B. Tardiness/Check-ins/Check-outs

Procedures and regulations designed to control student tardiness, check-ins, and checkouts shall be established by each building principal.

Absences/Tardiness/Truancy (Continued)

C. Truancy

A child is considered truant after five (5) unsupported or unexcused absences or is not enrolled in school. The school principal shall immediately report all cases of truancy to the attendance officer.

D. Homebound Instruction

In the event a student develops a medical condition which could result in prolonged absences from school, that student may be a candidate for Homebound Instruction. Students approved for Homebound Instruction are considered present.

Code of Va., §22.1-254

Code of Va., §22.1-258

Code of Va., §22.1-261

Code of Va., §22.1-262

Code of Va., §22.1-263

Code of Va., §22.1-265

Code of Va., §22/1-280.1 amended

Adopted by School Board: August 12, 1996

Amended by School Board: July 9, 2001

Amended by School Board: May 29, 2002

Amended by School Board: January 8, 2007

Amended by School Board: August 11, 2008

STUDENTS

Attendance Records

A. Generally

It is important that the teacher fulfill the policies and procedures of individual schools associated with recording student attendance. Student attendance data is used for proper student accounting in the instructional program, for school administration, and for the distribution of major State school funds.

It is the responsibility of instructional personnel to verify the accuracy of student attendance data.

B. Retention

Student attendance data is to be maintained in accordance with the regulations established by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Regulatory Authority: (1980)

Virginia State Board of Education, Regulations, "Pupil Accounting Records" (September, 1980) PP. 75-76.