

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:

- a. illness (if over two days, the school may require a note from the doctor)
- b. court appearance
- c. death in the family
- d. religious holidays
- e. field trips and school-related activities
- f. extenuating circumstances which are determined by the school administration

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.

High school students may spend a maximum of 180 school days each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in Partnership programs are not counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The superintendent's regulations include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a High School to Work Partnership.

An attendance officer, or a division superintendent or the superintendent's designee when acting as an attendance officer pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-258, may

complete, sign, and file with the intake officer of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, on forms approved by the Supreme Court of Virginia, a petition for a violation of a school attendance order entered by the juvenile and domestic relations district court pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-278.5 in response to the filing of a petition alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228.

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.

Amended: July 25, 2017

Amended: July 14, 2020

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, 46.2-334.01, and 54.1-3900.

8 VAC 20-730-10.

8 VAC 20-730-20.

Cross Refs.: IGAJ
JFC

Driver Education
Student Conduct

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Students attending Wise County Public Schools are subject to the following compulsory school attendance laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia:

Upon the Fifth Unexcused Absence

If a pupil fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year, and there is no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the absence; and 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 compulsory school attendance laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Upon Additional Unexcused Absences

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. 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.

Tardy Unexcused

For compulsory school attendance purposes, three times tardy to school will count as one absence. A checkout will be treated as a tardy; therefore, three checkouts will equal one absence. Tardies and checkouts will be counted as excused or unexcused according to established guidelines for determining excused and unexcused absences.

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

Grades K through 4

1. Students who are absent should bring a parental note on the first day the student returns to school stating the reason for the absence and/or the principal may at his/her discretion accept a verbal explanation of the absence(s). However, students have a limit of three school days after an absence to turn in doctor's excuses or excuses written by parents. Refer to # 5 below. Additionally, doctor's excuses are required after five days of absence each semester. Refer to # 4 below.

2. The only excuses for absence that shall be deemed acceptable are:
 - a. illness (if over two days, the school may require a note from the doctor)
 - b. court appearance
 - c. death in the family
 - d. religious holidays
 - e. field trips and school-related activities
 - f. extenuating circumstances which are determined by the school administration
3. All students will be permitted to make up work missed.
4. Students will be expected to make up all work missed within 5 days after returning to school. Extenuating circumstances, however, may be considered by the principal or his/her designee in extending the time limit for makeup, and extensions shall be liberally granted in order to ensure that a student is allowed to make up missed work. Additionally, extenuating circumstances caused by a chronic or childhood illness may be considered when determining the actual amount of work to be made up. Makeup work for grades K-4 should be commensurate with instructional time.
5. After five excused or unexcused absences or a combination of both equaling to five within any term (90-day period), the student shall be required to provide a doctor's excuse for the remainder of the term in order for any absences to be excused.
6. Students have three school days after an absence to turn in doctor's excuses or excuses written by parents. Excuses from doctors and parents will not be accepted after the three-day limit.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

- a. checking the roll each day in every class;
- b. communicating with a student's parents if poor attendance is affecting the student's progress, and keeping a log of those contacts;
- c. Including participation, which may be affected by attendance, in their student evaluation procedures.

Awards for exemplary attendance will be issued by each individual school. Students may earn an award in one of the following three categories:

Category 1: **Perfect Attendance** – No absences, tardies, or checkouts

Category 2: **Excellent Attendance** – No absences, with all tardies and/or checkouts excused because of medical or emergency situations

Category 3: **Outstanding Attendance** – Maintenance of 97% attendance throughout the school year

Amended: March 10, 2008

Amended: Administrative March, 2009

Amended: Administrative July 14, 2020

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

Grades 5 through 8

1. Students will have 3 school days from the day they return to school to make up missed assignments or tests.
2. Students turning in missed assignments within the required three days will receive full credit for all work.
3. Assignments will be accepted after the three days, but the maximum credit a student will receive for the work will be a grade of 70, and the assignments must be completed by the last day of the nine weeks.
4. After five excused or unexcused absences or a combination of both equaling to five within any term (90-day period), the student shall be required to provide a doctor's excuse for the remainder of the term in order for any absences to be excused.
5. Students have three school days after an absence to turn in doctor's excuses or excuses written by parents. Excuses from doctors and parents will not be accepted after the three-day limit.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

- a. checking the roll each day in every class;
- b. communicating with a student's parents if poor attendance is affecting the student's progress, and keeping a log of those contacts;
- c. Including participation, which may be affected by attendance, in their student evaluation procedures.

Award for exemplary attendance will be issued by each individual school. Students may earn an award in one of the following three categories:

Category 1: **Perfect Attendance** - No absences, tardies, or checkouts

Category 2: **Excellent Attendance** - No absences, with all tardies and/or checkouts excused because of medical or emergency situations

Category 3: **Outstanding Attendance** – Maintenance of 97% attendance throughout the school year

Amended: January 11, 2010

Amended: September 13, 2010

Amended: August 13, 2012

Amended: July 14, 2020

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

Grades - High School

1. Students will have 3 school days from the day they return to school to make up missed assignments or tests.
2. Students turning in missed assignments within the required three days will receive full credit for all work.
3. Assignments will be accepted after the three days, but the maximum credit a student will receive for the work will be a grade of 70, and the assignments must be completed by the last day of the nine weeks.
4. After five excused or unexcused absences or a combination of both equaling to five within any term (90-day period), the student shall be required to provide a doctor's excuse for the remainder of the term in order for any absences to be excused.
5. Students have three school days after an absence to turn in doctor's excuses or excuses written by parents. Excuses from doctors and parents will not be accepted after the three-day limit.

Tardy Unexcused

For compulsory school attendance purposes, three times tardy to school will count as one absence. A checkout will be treated as a tardy; therefore, three checkouts will equal one absence. Tardies and checkouts will be counted as excused or unexcused according to established guidelines for determining excused and unexcused absences.

- All Excused *or* Unexcused Absences count toward the policy.
- All attendance will be based on Block x Block situation.
- A student exempted from nine weeks test, *may* take the test if they wish to improve their grade.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

- a. checking the roll each day in every class;
- b. communicating with a student's parents if poor attendance is affecting the student's progress, and keeping a log of those contacts;
- c. Including participation, which may be affected by attendance, in their student evaluation procedures.

Awards for exemplary attendance will be issued by each individual school. Students may earn an award in one of the following three categories:

- Category 1: **Perfect Attendance** - No absences, tardiest, or checkouts
- Category 2: **Excellent Attendance** - No absences, with all tardiest and/or checkouts excused because of medical or emergency situations
- Category 3: **Outstanding Attendance** – Maintenance of 97% attendance throughout the school year

Amended: January 11, 2010

Amended: September 13, 2010

Amended: August 13, 2012

Amended: July 14, 2020