

Virginia Law and Attendance

Attendance on a daily basis is a mandatory requirement of all students. The compulsory attendance law in the Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-254, requires that all children who have reached their fifth birthday on or before September 30 and who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday must attend school. This requirement does not apply to any child who has obtained a high school diploma, its equivalent, or a certificate of completion, or who is exempted pursuant to the provisions of the law.

Virginia law requires the local School Board to enforce the attendance provisions stated in the code by appointing attendance officers to maintain accurate school attendance. Hampton City Schools will enforce the Commonwealth's laws on attendance in the following way:

Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to attend school daily and on time. To be considered present for the day, preK-8 students must be in school at least two (2) hours on regular attendance days. High school students, and middle school students taking high school credit courses, will be expected to maintain attendance in a class in order to receive credit. Each student will be limited to five (5) absences (excused or unexcused), or the block-scheduling equivalent, per semester in order to receive credit for the class. NOTE: These absences are cumulative in nature within a given class. The number of days refers to class days or the block-scheduling equivalent.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are limited to illness, chronic/extended illness, pre-arranged appointments with Principal approval, family death or emergencies, religious observances, and exceptional circumstances. For the safety of all, students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school after an illness. Students with serious medical and/or psychological concerns may be eligible for homebound instruction. (See eligibility requirements for homebound instruction below.)

Unexcused Absences

Absences are classified as unexcused whenever a student fails to report to school and no verification of that absence is provided by the parent that supports the student's absence. Absences due to suspensions are also classified as unexcused. Repeated absences due to minor illnesses without medical documentation may be considered unexcused. After five written notes from parents, additional absences may be considered unexcused without written excuses from physicians, court, etc.

Absence Verification

Parents must notify the school of the student's absence on the day of the absence. If the parent fails to do this, a reasonable effort will be made by the school to verify the absence by phone on the day of the absence.

When an absence occurs, even if previously verified by phone, the parent within 24 hours of the student's return to school must provide the school written verification noting the reason for the absence. Notes must be signed by the parent and should be accompanied by a note from a physician for illness when possible. If the absence is not verified in writing, or if the written verification is not approved by the Principal/designee, the absence is unexcused.

Excessive Absences

The accrual of excessive absences having an effect on the academic performance of a student may result in failure. Six or more absences in a school year exceed the limit by the state of Virginia and therefore are considered excessive. Every effort will be made to determine the reason for excessive absenteeism and recommendations given for improving the absenteeism.

Exceptional/Extenuating Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to, prearranged absences approved by the Principal, natural disasters, death in immediate family, and personal or family illness. The Principal may approve up to five prearranged absences for situations in which an exemption from attendance appears to be in the best interests of a student and family. Requests for more than five (5) days must be endorsed and approved by the Pupil Accountability Officer. Under exceptional circumstances parents can request administrative review of a student's attendance.

Tardies/Early Dismissals

Students are expected to be on time to school, to all classes, and attend all classes in full. A student is considered tardy if not in class when the class is scheduled to begin. HCS discourages early dismissal except for required medical needs. Appointments should be made on student holidays, half days, or after school whenever possible. However, when this is not possible, written verification is required upon the student's return to school. Written notification from the parent must accompany all non-medical related tardies and/or early dismissals and may not qualify as excused. After five (5) written notes from parents, additional tardies/early dismissals may be considered unexcused without written excuses from physicians, court, etc.

For safety reasons, students may not be dismissed from school during the last twenty (20) minutes of the school day except in an emergency. Parents are requested to notify the school the morning of the day an early dismissal will be needed.

Make-Up Work

Students must make up work missed due to absences. Make-up work can be requested while the student is out, if more than two (2) days, or must be requested from the teacher as soon as the student returns. The class work must be made up within a specific time period equaling one-day make-up per one-day absence. In case of a prearranged absence the class work is due on the day of return. Students are encouraged to make up work before returning to school. Students missing one (1) or two (2) days may do so by getting work from a classmate. Students missing three (3) or more days can contact the office to request make-up work. Please allow at least 24 hours notice to the teacher. Extenuating circumstances may be considered in extending the time for make-up. If work is not completed, it will result in a lower grade, failing grade, or denial of high school credits.

Homebound Instruction

Homebound instructional services are available to students whose medical/psychological conditions cause them to miss ten (10) or more consecutive days of school. A licensed physician or clinical psychologist must certify that a student will miss ten (10) or more days of school before an application can be submitted. Applications are available in the school office. Intermittent homebound instruction is available for students with a chronic illness documented by a physician. A student is eligible for intermittent homebound services when absent due to the documented illness for three (3) or more consecutive days.

Multidisciplinary Team Approach to Truancy

The truancy reduction efforts of Hampton City Schools are a team approach. Services will be provided by Hampton City Schools and its community partners. These include the Youth, Parent Empowerment Program (YPEP), the Hampton Department of Human Services (HDSS), Healthy Families Partnership, and other appropriate community services. The Community Assessment Team (CAT) or the Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) may also be used as a resource.

Parent Notification

Parents will be informed of student's attendance as outlined below.

Consequences Of Unsatisfactory Attendance

a) When a student is absent and the parent has not contacted the school offering an approved explanation for the absence, the designated school Attendance Officer will contact the parent to determine the explanation for the absence.

b) On the third (3rd) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence the designated school Attendance Officer will:

- Contact the parent to determine the reason for the absence;
- If appropriate refer the family to the School Social Worker, the Student Intervention Team (SIT), or to the Youth, Parent Empowerment Program (YPEP) with the Community Services Board (CSB);
- If appropriate refer the family to the School Resource Officer (SRO);
- Notify the Department of Human Services for consideration of those families receiving Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TANF) grants.

c) On the fifth (5th) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence the designated school Attendance Officer will schedule the family to complete a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Both the student and parent must be present for this meeting.

d) On the sixth (6th) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence, within two (2) days the school will refer the family to the School Administrative Center Attendance Officer for a conference.

e) On the seventh (7th) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence the Attendance Officer will file an Affidavit of Compliance for a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition or request a warrant for Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor against the parent(s). The Department of Human Services will be notified for consideration of those families receiving Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TANF) grants.

f) Fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences in a school year may result in retention.

g) Fifteen (15) consecutive days of unverified absences in a school year will result in the student being withdrawn from the attendance roll in accordance with state regulations.

Action	Consequence
Student is absent and the parent does not contact the school with an approved explanation for the absence	The designated school Attendance Officer will contact the parent to determine the explanation for the absence
Third (3rd) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence	<p>The designated school Attendance Officer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the parent to determine the explanation for the absence • If appropriate, refer the family to the School Social Worker, the Student Intervention Team (SIT), or to the Youth, Parent Empowerment Program (YPEP) with the Community Services Board (CSB) • If appropriate refer the family to the School Resource Officer (SRO) • Notify the Department of Human Services for consideration of those families receiving Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TANF) grants
Fifth (5th) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence	The designated school Attendance Officer will schedule the family to complete a Corrective Action Plan (CAP)
Sixth (6th) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence	The school will refer the family to the School Administration Center Attendance Officer for a conference
Seventh (7th) absence when the parent has not contacted the school with an approved explanation for the absence	The Attendance Officer will file an Affidavit of Compliance for a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition or request a warrant for Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor against the parent(s)
Fifteen (15) unexcused absences	May result in retention
Fifteen (15) consecutive unverified absences	Student withdrawn from attendance roll

Tardies/Early Dismissals

The school is responsible for maintaining accurate records of tardies and/or early dismissals. Appointments should be arranged before or after school when possible. However, when that is not possible written verification is required upon the student's return to school. Written notification from the parent must accompany all non-medical related tardies and/or early dismissals and may not qualify as excused. Written notification from parents is limited to five (5) per year.

For safety reasons, students may not be dismissed from school during the last twenty (20) minutes of the school day except in an emergency.

a) On the third (3rd) unexcused tardy/early dismissal, the Principal/designee will give written notice to the parent.

b) On the fifth (5th) unexcused tardy/early dismissal, the Principal/designee will notify the parent in writing requesting a conference to complete a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). If attempts are unsuccessful in contacting the parent or if contacts with the family indicate unverified or non-medical related tardies/early dismissals, the School Social Worker will be notified for follow-up with the family (to review the attendance policy, to ascertain explanations for tardies and to offer appropriate services). In addition, the School Social Worker may be contacted at any point between the fifth (5th) and tenth (10th) occurrence if tardies/early dismissals continue. The Principal may grant exceptions for documented medical conditions verified by a physician.

Consequences of Unexcused Tardies and Early Dismissals

Action	Consequences
Three (3) unexcused tardies/early dismissals	Written notification sent to the parent
Five (5) unexcused tardies/early dismissals	1) Conference for a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) 2) Possible referral to the School Social Worker

Middle School Attendance Policy - Appeals Procedure

1. An "Attendance Appeals Request Form" for waiver of the attendance policy must be submitted to the Principal/designee during the final ten (10) days of the school year. No appeal request will be accepted after the last day of the school year. The parent may obtain a form from the main office and complete the parent section.

2. If the student exceeds the attendance maximum (15th unexcused absence) within the last ten (10) days of the school year, the request for the waiver must be submitted to the Principal/designee as soon as possible after the student returns to school.
3. The Principal/designee will meet with the student and parent to consider all the evidence and documentation of extenuating circumstances. The student and parent will be notified of the Principal/designee's decision within five (5) school/work days.
4. Within five (5) school/work days, the parent may appeal the Principal/designee's decision by completing the appropriate section of the appeals form and returning the form with the required documentation to the Principal/designee.
5. Within five (5) school/work days, the Principal/designee shall forward all information to the School Court Liaison's office at the School Administrative Center.
6. Within five (5) school/work days of receipt of the appeals form, the School Court Liaison/Pupil Accountability Officer will review the record and render a decision regarding the appeal. The School Court Liaison will notify the parents and the Principal/designee of the decision.
7. The decision of the School Court Liaison will be final.

Adopted:
5/5/2010

Revised:
11/3/10

LEGAL REFS.:

Code of Virginia, as amended, §§ [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.

This Policy was formerly JED - High School Attendance Policy.

Hampton City Schools, Hampton, Virginia