

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Absences/Truancy School and Class Attendance -Grades K-12

The Patrick County School Board is committed to affording its youth a high quality education. To reinforce this commitment, standards for student attendance are developed to encourage punctuality, self-discipline, responsibility, and overall student success in school.

Students are expected to be in school, in class, and ready for instruction. Daily and punctual school attendance is essential to each student's academic development. Absence from school is detrimental to student achievement. The following guidelines will be used for awarding perfect attendance for the school year: The student must be in a classroom setting for a minimum of two hours to be considered "present". The two hours do not have to be consecutive, nor at the beginning of the school day. Tardies and/or early dismissals that exceed six (6) for the year will result in the student not being eligible for perfect attendance.

As required under the provisions of law, each parent/guardian is responsible for regular and punctual attendance of any child in his or her charge within the compulsory age for school attendance. Emancipated students are responsible for their own regular and punctual attendance. Parents and emancipated students are expected to work cooperatively with school personnel to correct attendance problems, including meetings with teachers, counselors, or administrators.

Each member of a school's faculty is expected to avoid causing a student to be tardy or absent from a colleague's class. If a student is tardy or absent because of being detained by a faculty member, then he/she will be considered excused and the absence will not be included in the count for excessive absences.

Students shall not be in an unauthorized area of the school without prior permission, and shall not leave a classroom, building, or assigned area without proper permission. Students who do not comply with this section will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline Guidelines.

A. Absence Defined

Students of school age shall attend their assigned schools during school hours in accordance with state law. The Superintendent, through the principals, shall be responsible for maintaining accurate records of student attendance and for closely monitoring the reasons for students' absences.

Parents shall furnish a reason for absences from school upon the child's return to school.

Students who are absent with a prior written notice from a parent for observance of a religious holiday may not be 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 missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner by the principal or his/her designee.

At the elementary school level, if a student does not attend school for at least two hours, he/she is counted absent.

At the high school level, absences are computed for each class. A student who misses more than half of the class period or forty-five (45) minutes of any class will be counted absent for that class.

B. Excused Absences

On the first day after returning to school, documentation from doctor appointment, etc. should be submitted. -Students will be allowed six (6) parent notes during the year for excused absences at the elementary level. High school students are allowed three (3) parent notes per semester for excused absences.

Excuses for absences that shall be deemed acceptable and excusable include the following:

- Student illness or injury
- Quarantine
- Medical or dental appointments
- Student court appearance
- Death in the immediate family (parents/guardians, grandparents, brothers, sisters, foster parents)
- Religious observances
- Pre-arranged college visits (2 per year)
- Extenuating circumstances, which are determined appropriate and arranged in advance by the school administration

Note: The principal or designee may consider circumstances beyond the control of the students and/or parent and excuse the student from school for reasons other than those listed above.

Classes missed due to school sponsored activities, e.g., field trips and athletics, are excused since students are considered present in school for these activities. Classes missed due to exam exemptions are also excused.

C. Religious Holidays

Students shall be excused for the observance of traditional religious holidays. The parent who is responsible for notifying the child's school of the religious holiday(s) to be observed should prearrange absences. Parent's notes shall specify:

1. the date(s) of the absences(s);
2. the name of the religious holiday; and
3. a statement that the absence is due to the exercise of the student' s bona fide religious beliefs.

If the parent is unable to prearrange the absence, a request for exemption must be received no later than the second day after the student's return to school from the absence occasioned by the religious observance. Students are responsible for contacting teachers for work missed.

D. Unexcused Absences

A student's absence shall be unexcused for the following reasons: verification for an absence, parent verification for personal illness (seven (7) or more per year at the elementary level; four (4) or more per semester at the high school level), skipping, truancy, suspensions, and other absences without prior school approval.

E. Parental/Guardian Notification of Absences

A documented attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian if a student is absent without administrative approval or knowledge.

F. Recordkeeping for Absences

Each principal is responsible for establishing a school recordkeeping system for all student absences.

Excused absences for school-sponsored/related activities, authorized visits of students with school personnel, and recognized religious holidays should be noted as such.

All absences can be verified via phone or written note.

Students who are absent from school may not participate in any extracurricular activities of the school that same day without permission of the administration. A student must attend a minimum of two (2) hours at the elementary level and two (2) blocks at the secondary level to be counted present for the day and to participate in any extracurricular activities.

G. Make-up Work

When a student is absent, he/she will have one school day for each day's absence to complete make-up work. If parents request make-up work on the day of the child's absence, this request must be made by 10:00 am. Any make-up work may then be picked up, at the end of the school day, in the front office to avoid interruption of class instruction. It is recommended that assignments or make-up work be picked up by an adult as opposed to being sent by students. Make up work not submitted on time will result in a grade of zero.

H. Excessive Absences

The following procedures shall be utilized as mandated by the Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-254 and School Board Policy JED in handling student attendance problems:

- If a student fails to report to school for a total of five (5) unexcused days for the school year, direct contact will be made with the parent to obtain an explanation for the student's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of non-attendance. The school principal, principal's designee, or the attendance officer shall jointly develop a plan to resolve student's nonattendance.
- If a student fails to report to school for a total of six (6) unexcused days for the school year, a conference with the student and his/her parents and school personnel will be scheduled to resolve issues related to the student's non-attendance.
- If a student fails to report to school for a total of seven (7) or more unexcused school days for the school year, compulsory attendance rules will be enforced through court action.
- A student who misses over twenty-five (25) days of school may be considered for retention.

1. Resulting Actions

Truancy interventions may include, but is not limited to, the following: parent conference; scheduled contact with parent; referral to the guidance counselor; loss of privileges and/or restricted participation in school activities; referral to alternative learning program; and recommendation to the administration for other consequences.

I. Student & Parent Annual Signatures

Each student and parent/guardian will be provided with a copy of the attendance regulations annual. The following will be signed and returned to the school and placed in the student's attendance file:

Statement of Understanding of the Patrick County Public School Attendance Policy

I have received and understand my copy of the Patrick County Public School Attendance Policy.

Student's Name

Student's Signature/Date

School

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date