

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Students who are absent must bring a valid note stating the reason for absence upon returning to school.
4. Absences are excused for personal or immediate family illness, death in the family, medical or dental appointments, court appearance, religious holiday or instruction, emergency that, in the judgement of the principal, requires a school absence, or a trip that extends or enhances education, when the trip is approved in advanced by the principal.
5. Students shall be allowed to make up any work missed due to an absence or tardy and shall not be penalized academically for an absence.
6. Students shall attend school for a full day unless excused by the principal. High School students shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work-study program. All other exceptions to a full day schedule must be approved on an individual basis by the Superintendent or designee.
7. Each school shall maintain a record of all absences and tardies for each student and shall provide information to parents on the report card or progress report.
8. Each school shall establish 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.

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II. Compulsory Attendance Procedures

Procedures required by the Code of Virginia for Compulsory Attendance include the following and have been adapted for use in Charlottesville City Schools:

1. Each school shall have a staff member who is responsible for monitoring attendance of all students.
2. Each school shall also have school-based procedures for attendance and may develop plans for communication with parents that go beyond the required process described below.
3. Each principal is encouraged to meet on an ongoing basis with the attendance officer assigned to the school to monitor and develop plans to improve attendance before truancy regulations apply.

A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

1. 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 designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, either in person or through telephone conversation, by the attendance officer to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The principal, principal's designee or 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.
2. The plan will be maintained in the student's scholastic record and reviewed as needed until the attendance has improved.

B. Upon Sixth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

1. If the pupil is absent an additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent and the attendance officer has received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's sixth absence, the principal, principal's designee or attendance officer shall schedule a conference within ten school days, which must take place no later than the fifteenth school day after the sixth absence. At the conference, the pupil, his parent, and school personnel, shall meet to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance.

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Other community service providers may also be included in the conference.

- C. Upon Additional Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support
1. Upon the next absence after the conference without indication to the attendance officer that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the Principal or designee shall notify the attendance officer or Superintendent who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules by either or both of the following: (i) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in § 16.1-228 or (ii) instituting proceedings against the parent pursuant to § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts already undertaken to resolve the pupil's absence. If the student's parents have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody arrangement, then both parents shall be notified at their last known addresses.
 2. The attendance officer shall also determine the appropriateness of -referring the student to the Children in Need of Services (CHINS) team for review and multi-agency planning .
 3. The attendance officer shall also collaborate with the CHINS team and the juvenile and domestic relations court regarding a referral for services for students who have accumulated more than 10 unexcused tardies during one school year.
- D. Parental Cooperation in Remediating Excessive Unexcused Absences
1. It is expected that parents will cooperate with the attendance officer and other school officials to remedy the student's attendance problem. Where direct contact with a parent cannot be made, despite reasonable efforts, or where parents otherwise fail to cooperate in remediating the student's attendance problem, the Superintendent or designee may seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance laws. The attendance officer, with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent, shall institute proceedings against any parent who fails to comply with the requirements of the compulsory attendance laws. Where the

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complaint arises out of the parent's failure to comply with the requirements of § 22.1-258, the attendance officer shall document the school division's compliance with this Code section.

- E. Each principal may have individual school attendance procedures which do not conflict with the division policy. Individual procedures will be included in student handbooks, school websites and available to parents or guardians upon request.

Report for Suspension of Driver's License

1. In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to these regulation, 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

Attendance Reporting

1. Student attendance shall be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At the end of each school year, each public school principal shall report to the Superintendent the number of pupils by grade level for whom an attendance conference was scheduled. The Superintendent or designee shall compile this information and provide it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Dismissal Precautions

1. Principals shall 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.
2. Students shall be released only on request and authorization of parent or guardian and that information shall be located on the emergency card and available to staff working in the office and responsible for the student.
3. For students who are not under the supervision of a parent or guardian, the student shall report to the office to get approval prior to leaving the school. The student shall explain to the principal or designee the reason for the dismissal.
4. The principal has the authority to approve or deny the request. If the request is denied, the student shall not leave the school. If the student leaves the building without permission, the absence of that part of the school day will be unexcused.

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5. The burden of proof on the authority of the person to receive the student is on the requesting party. The principal or designee shall request identification for any person seeking dismissal of a student if the person is not known to the school official.
6. A formal check-out system shall be maintained in each school.
7. If a person seeking release of a student is unwilling to comply with the check-out system of the school, the school official may report it to law enforcement.

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8 VAC 20-230-20.
8 VAC 20-730-10.

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