

# KING WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE POLICY

## **Compulsory School Attendance** from *Code of Virginia* §22.1-254

Every parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year shall send such child to a public school or otherwise provide the child with an education in accordance with state law unless the child is exempt from the state's compulsory attendance requirement.

Further, in the case of any 5 year-old child, the requirements of this policy may be alternatively satisfied by sending the child to any public educational, pre-k program, including a private, denominational, or parochial educational pre-kindergarten program.

The requirements of this policy apply to any child in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections who has not passed his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; and any child whom the Superintendent has required to take a special program of prevention, intervention or remediation as provided in the *Code of Virginia* §§22.1-253.13.1C and 22.1-254.01.

The requirements of this policy do not apply to any person 16-18 years of age who is housed in an adult correctional facility when such a person is actively pursuing the achievement of a passing score on a high school equivalency examination approved by the Board of Education but is not enrolled in an individual student alternative education plan and any child who has obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent, a certificate of completion, or who has otherwise complied with compulsory school attendance requirements.

## **School Attendance Policy**

Attendance on a daily basis is a mandatory requirement for all students and is the responsibility of students and their parent(s) or guardian(s). When a student accumulates more than 6 unexcused absences in an academic year, assigned school staff will enforce the *Code of Virginia* §22.1-254 by either or both of the following: (1) filing a complaint with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision (CHINS), or (2) instituting proceedings against the Parent for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Additionally, school attendance is tied directly to reception of course credit and grade-level advancement.

## **Number of Allowable Absences**

The following attendance requirements apply in order for students to earn passing credit or grade-level advancement:

**High School:** In order to earn course credit, students are limited to nine (9) absences (excused or unexcused) per class. Students exceeding nine (9) absences per class may forfeit credit regardless of course grade, but may earn credit through one of the following recovery options:

- a) Repeat the course successfully in summer school, or
- b) Repeat the course successfully in a subsequent school term, or
- c) After-School makeup program, Saturday school, online credit recovery, or other options as agreed upon by administration

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**Middle School:** In order to earn course credit and/or be promoted to the next grade level, students are limited to nine (9) absences (excused or unexcused) per class. Students exceeding nine (9) absences per class may forfeit credit regardless of course grade, but may earn credit through one of the following recovery options:

- a) Repeat the course successfully in summer school, or
- b) Repeat the course successfully in a subsequent school term

**Elementary School:** In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students are limited to seventeen (17) absences (excused or unexcused) for the entire school year. Students exceeding seventeen (17) absences may earn grade-level promotion through one of the following recovery options:

- a) Attend summer remediation, or
- b) demonstrate successful academic achievement as determined by scholastic records, or
- c) Repeat the grade level successfully in a subsequent school term.

### **Absences**

Students are expected to be in school every day. Parents are expected to contact their child's school on the day of the child's absence to inform the school of that absence. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of pre-arranged appointments as soon as the dates of such appointments are known. When such notification is made, the parent need not contact the school on the first day of the absence.

Additionally, a written note from the parent or official documentation from a state/local agency or medical professional providing the dates of and reasons for the child's absence is requested.

### **Excused Absences**

In support of the mandatory attendance law, KWCPs defines excused absences. The following conditions provide the only acceptable reasons for a student's absence from school.

**Illness** - When a student is unable to attend school due to an illness, a note written by the parent or a physician will be accepted as evidence of the illness.

**Court or Agency/Healthcare Provider** - For appointments with the court, social services or other state agencies, or appointments with health care providers, official documentation must be presented to the school.

**Family Death or Emergency** - For absences because of a death in the family or an emergency beyond the family's control, the parent/guardian is asked to notify the school in writing.

**Religious Observances** - Absences as a result of observances of religious holidays should be pre-arranged by the parent/guardian, who is responsible for notifying the child's school of the religious holiday(s) to be observed. If the parent/guardian is unable to prearrange the absence, a request for exemption must be filed upon the student's return.

**Exclusions/Suspensions** - For absences because of an exclusion or suspension, the parent/guardian will be notified of the exclusion/suspension and the date when the student will be expected to return to school. The student must return on the indicated date.

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**Chronic/Extended Illness** - For students who are absent because of chronic illnesses, or because of a need for homebound services, the parent/guardian must notify the Principal at the beginning of the enrollment of the student in school or upon the onset of the student condition that affects regular attendance. School-based staff will meet with the parent/guardian to develop an appropriate plan. ***Documentation from a physician will be required.***

**If the parent/guardian does not provide documentation from a physician of a chronic or extended illness, the Principal will review the child's attendance for needed services and/or applicable sanctions of the attendance law (*Code of Virginia §22.1-258*).**

**Exceptional Circumstances** - The Principal may approve prearranged absences for situations in the best interests of the student and his/her family.

Prior to the student's absences, the parent must notify the Principal in writing to document the request and include the rationale for the absence and the dates of absences. The Principal must provide a response to the parent.

For those circumstances which cause the student to be absent and prior request for approval is not possible, the parent/guardian must notify the Principal in writing (documenting the rationale and dates of absence) upon the student's return to school..

### **Parent Notification Procedures**

**Excused and Unexcused Absences** - For all absences, the school will contact the parent/guardian on each day of the child's absence from school using the automated notification system.

In compliance with §22.1-258 of the *Code of Virginia*, KWCPs has established procedures that school division personnel are required to follow when a student fails to report to school and no indication has been received by school personnel that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the student's absence.

**Unexcused Absences** - The following procedure will be implemented when notifying the parent/guardian of an unexcused absence:

The law mandates that whenever any student fails to report to school and no indication has been received by school personnel that the parent is aware of the student's absence, a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian by telephone to obtain an explanation for the student's absence(s) will be made by school staff.

### **Whenever a student fails to report to school:**

#### **For a total of 5 unexcused days in a school year**

- designated school staff shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/guardian, whether in person or through telephone conversation to obtain an explanation for the absence and to outline the consequences of continued nonattendance

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- school staff, the student, and the parent/guardian will jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance, including interventions and alternative education options for a student who fails to make academic progress as a result of attendance problems

### **For a total of 6 unexcused days in a school year**

- designated school staff shall conference with the parent within 10 school days to resolve the issues related to the student's nonattendance. This conference must occur no later than 10 school days after the 6<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence

### **For a total of 7 unexcused days**

- assigned school staff is to be notified by the Principal/designee to enforce the provision of the *Code of Virginia* §22.1-258 **by referring the student's case as truancy to the juvenile and domestic relations court**

If a student who is under 16-17 years of age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days, the Principal may notify the juvenile and domestic relations courts; which may take action to suspend the student's driver license.