

Elementary Attendance Regulation

Approved by the Rockbridge County School Board - August 13, 2024

Generally

School attendance is critical for academic achievement and the preparation of students for the world of work. Each parent/guardian, having charge of a student within the compulsory attendance age, shall be responsible for the student's regular and punctual attendance at school as required by Virginia law. Regular student attendance is necessary for a student's overall success in school. Student attendance shall be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. Attendance will be recorded and will be noted on the student's report card each nine weeks.

Parents of students who are absent must promptly inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than upon the student's return to school. 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, either the school principal, principal's designee, attendance officer, or other school personnel shall notify the parent by phone, email, or other electronic means to obtain an explanation.

After a student has accumulated ten (10) full school days of absence in a school year, the parent must provide documentation from a licensed medical professional regarding additional full school day absences for that school year.

Absences

Excused Absences - The following reasons shall be acceptable for absence from class:

- a. Days 1-10 - illness of the student as verified by notification from parents;
- b. **After ten (10) days** - illness as verified by the student's licensed physician;
- c. Medical appointments that cannot be scheduled after school (All appointments must be verified by a doctor and a student is expected to return to school from early appointments, if possible);
- d. Death in the family;
- e. Court appearances as evidenced by a summons or other verification;
- f. One civic event per school year;
- g. Observance of a religious holiday; and
- h. Other extraordinary circumstances deemed acceptable by the principal.

Unexcused Absences - Absences shall be recorded as unexcused for the following reasons:

- a. Absences after ten (10) days not otherwise due to an illness as verified by the student's licensed medical professional;
- b. Car trouble;
- c. Missing the bus;
- d. Personal business;
- e. Oversleeping;
- f. Needed at home;
- g. Working on a job; and
- h. Other reasons deemed unacceptable by the principal.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing ten percent (10%) or more of the academic year for any reason, including excused absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions. The following actions may be taken for students who are absent for unacceptable reasons or have chronic absenteeism:

- Conference with student and parent
- Referral to counselor/Student Support Team (SST)
- Referral to Attendance Officer, School Resource Officer, or Court System
- Retention - not moving on to the next grade level

Make-Up Work Due to Absences

If a student is absent for any reason, the student will be expected to make up all work. A student, or their parent/guardian, may contact the school to obtain missed work. Teachers may also be contacted through the school email system. If the student has not requested work during the absence, it is the student's responsibility to ask teachers for any assignments on the first day the student returns from the absence. The student will have one (1) day for each day absent to turn in missed assignments. The teacher will decide whether an extension of time will be granted. Any work assigned before the student's absence may be required to be turned in on the first day of their return to school (i.e., projects, tests, etc.).

Accumulation of Absences

Elementary School: Should a student accumulate more than seventeen (17) absences, the student may be denied promotion to the next grade level, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused. Letters will be sent home when a student has accumulated five (5), seven (7), and ten (10) total unexcused absences.

Tardiness

A tardy to class is defined as a student arriving late to their assigned classroom by the end of the ringing of the tardy bell. In elementary schools, this means a child has arrived after 7:55 am. Should this occur, the student will be marked tardy by their teacher. If tardies accumulate, parents may receive a letter or phone call from the principal to discuss negative impacts tardiness is having on their child. Tardies to school may also factor into accumulated absences. **When elementary students are regularly brought to school late and miss instructional time, this may be cause for grade level retention.**

Note - This document pertains to elementary school students and families. The full Attendance Regulation document, which includes middle and high school policies and guidelines, can be found at <https://www.rockbridge.k12.va.us/> in the RCPS Policy Manual in file: JED-R1.