

BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

AGENDA ITEM: INFORMATION {    }                      ACTION { X }                      CLOSED MEETING {    }

**SUBJECT:**                      **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT - ACTION**

**Consider Revision of School Attendance Regulations - BCHS**

**BACKGROUND:**                      **BCHS is working to ensure the success of all students in all areas, and Mrs. Rowe has proposed the attached attendance regulation to address the importance of attendance for the award of course credit. It also eliminates the confusion between excused and unexcused absences.**

**RECOMMENDATION:**                      **Your approval of the revised regulation would allow it to be communicated to parents and students at the beginning of the school year, however in keeping with the usual timeline for approving policy and regulation, you may wish to make your decision following a second reading on September 1, 2015.**

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS (JED-R)

### Bath County High School

Regular class attendance is considered by Bath County Public Schools to be essential to the educational process and to the satisfactory completion of the requirements of any class and subject offered. Regular school attendance also is directly related to the development of good habits, which are important in the world of work and in higher education. A ninety-five percent (95%) or better attendance rate is the goal. Students at the Secondary level must earn 140 clock hours to be award course credit in accordance with the Code of Virginia. Therefore the following changes have been made to ensure that your child is successful in meeting those requirements.

#### **Student Absences/Tardies/Early Dismissals**

Student absences, tardies, check-ins, and checkouts will be recorded on a daily basis for each class in the following manner: A daily record will be maintained for student absences, tardies, and early dismissals, noting the time and reason given by the parent/guardian. Parents or guardians will be notified in writing when tardies and early dismissals become excessive. Three tardies and/or early dismissals equal one absence.

When a student is absent from school, parents or guardians should call the school to report the student's absence by 10:00 am. When the student returns to school the parent or guardian must provide a written note stating the reason for the student's absence. Parents or guardians will be notified by telephone whenever a student does not attend school and the school is not aware of the reason for the absence.

#### **Documenting Absences**

School officials shall not consider absences as excused or unexcused. All absences shall be identified as documented (note/excuse received) or not documented (no note/excuse received). Each student should present to the main office documentation within 2 days of the absence.

Absences, check-ins, or checkouts for any of the reasons listed below ***shall not*** contribute to the maximum number of absences allowed by this policy.

1. state mandated testing or other school/division testing programs;
2. school-sponsored field trips or activities;
3. all VHSL activities;
4. late bus or buses which fail to run;
5. conference with guidance counselor, administrator, or other related staff members;
6. involuntary court appearance (copy of court order or subpoena required);
7. death in the family or household (verification may be required);

8. religious holidays (verification may be required);
9. College/Technical School visits (letter from Admissions office required)

Absences, check-ins, and checkouts for reasons other than those listed above shall contribute to the total absences allowed by this policy. For the purpose of record keeping in attendance at the secondary level, three (3) check-ins and/or checkouts shall be equal to one (1) absence towards the maximum number allowed. Any excessive check-ins, checkouts, or patterns of absences may result in a review of the attendance plan.

**A student is considered is Present if he/she:**

1. reports to the classroom or other approved area at the time of the tardy bell
2. attends a school sponsored event

**A student is considered Tardy if he/she:**

1. reports to school after 8:25
2. reports to class after the tardy bell

**A student is considered Absent if he/she:**

1. does not report to school
2. checks in late missing a class period or periods
3. fails to report to class (skipping) class during the class period
4. checks out early missing a class period or periods

Students and their parents/guardians shall be notified in writing by the principal or the principal's designee when a student's total absences in any courses have accumulated to the following levels:

**Five (5) Absences:**

1. five day notification letter
2. Credit review meeting with parent/guardian (s) and student
3. Creation of an Attendance contract including the consideration of Early Attendance Intervention

**Ten (10) Absences:**

1. 10 day notification letter
2. Credit review meeting with parent/guardian(s) and student
3. Review of attendance contract including the consideration of Attendance Probation
4. Beginning of documentation of referral to Juvenile Court

**Fifteen (15) Absences:**

1. 15 day notification letter
2. Credit review meeting including the consideration of an Hours of Reclamation Plan
3. Referral to Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

**Day 16: When a student's total absences exceed sixteen (16) days and parents/guardians shall be notified in writing of loss of credit and of the credit review process to create a plan for potentially avoiding a loss of credit if necessary.**

### **Credit Review Process**

Upon notification of a student's excessive absenteeism and possible loss of credit, the school administrator (principal or designee) initiate a credit review meeting to discuss the circumstances of the student's absences and any supportive documentation. The student's guidance counselor or teacher(s) may also attend this meeting to provide information concerning the student's attendance and academic standing to the school administrator for review prior to the meeting.

The outcome of the credit review process **may be** one of the following:

1. **Early Attendance Recovery** – Students whose absences have reached five (5) days will be required to attend homework club (2) weeks per month.
2. **Attendance Probation** – Students whose absences now reach 10 days will be required to attend five (5) sessions of Extended Evening School.
3. **Hours Reclamation Plan** – Student must fulfill the requirements of an “Hours Reclamation Plan” developed by the school administrator in order to make up time for days missed and earn credit in affected courses. Continued absences after the development of a plan may result in additional hours of reclamation or a loss of credit in affected courses.
4. **No Action – The school administrator may waive the need for a credit review meeting when he/she is made aware that the excessive absenteeism is due to legitimate chronic medical conditions, catastrophic illness, major medical injuries, or other catastrophic circumstances.**

**All decisions related to absences and credit will be reviewed each grading period. Failure to follow-through on any required stipulations will result in a loss of credit for affected courses.** Decisions made by the building principal should be appealed to the central office staff member charged with supervision of the attendance program whose decision will be final.

## STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

### I. Student Attendance Policy

Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the School Board shall involve parents and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age shall be responsible for such child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required under provisions of the law.

A reasonable effort shall be made to contact a parent/guardian of each absent student every day, and to obtain an explanation for the student's absence, where there is no indication that the student's parent is aware of and supports the absence. A log will be kept of call attempts.

Students who are absent must bring a valid note stating the reason for absence upon returning to school. Unexcused absences shall be handled according to regulations issued by the superintendent.

The superintendent's regulations will include procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations will ensure that a student is not 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.

Students shall attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused. Secondary 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 principal.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the division superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

### II. Compulsory Attendance Procedures

#### A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

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 his designee or the attendance officer shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, either in person or through telephone conversation, to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or his designee or the 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.

#### B. Upon Sixth Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

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 absence, either the school principal or his designee or the 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. Other community service providers may also be included in the conference.

#### C. Upon Additional Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

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 or his designee 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.

#### D. Parental Cooperation in Remediating Excessive Unexcused Absences

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 the superintendent's 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 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.

### III. Report for Suspension of Driver's License

In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, 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.

#### IV. Attendance Reporting

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 a conference was scheduled pursuant to Part II (B) above. The Superintendent shall compile this information and provide it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

#### V. Dismissal Precautions

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. Students shall be released only on request and authorization of parent or guardian. The superintendent shall provide procedures for release of pupils who are not residing with or under the supervision of a parent/guardian. The burden of proof on the authority of the person to receive the student is on the requesting party. A formal check-out system shall be maintained in each school.

Adopted: June 29, 2001

Revised: June 25, 2004; June 25, 2009; June 24, 2010; June 24, 2013

Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, 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.

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

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

### Elementary Schools

Regular school attendance is necessary for students to receive the full benefit of public education. In addition, state compulsory attendance laws mandate school attendance until age eighteen. As such, all parents and students must accept responsibility for regular student attendance in school.

When a student is absent from school, parents or guardians should call the school to report the student's absence by 10:00 am. If no telephone is available, then upon the student's return to school, the parent or guardian must send a written note stating the reason for the student's absence. Parents or guardians will be notified by telephone whenever a student does not attend school and the school is not aware of the reason for the absence.

All absences other than those listed below as unexcused shall be considered 'excused' if oral or written communication is received from the parent or guardian within two school days. Three types of absences are considered unexcused:

1. No oral or written communication regarding a student's absence is received from the parent or guardian within two school days
2. Skipping School
3. Out of school suspension

The following reasons given for excused absences will not affect a student's ability to earn course credit.

1. Medical/dental appointments or personal illness (medical documentation required)
2. Illness, death, or funeral in the family limited to parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents
3. Students sent home by the school nurse
4. Recognized religious holidays
5. Lawyer/court official meeting (court documentation required)
6. School-sponsored activities
7. Pre-arranged absences with prior approval of the building administrator

Attendance letters will be sent home to parents or guardians notifying them when a student has been absent a total of five and ten days during a school year. Upon accumulation of fifteen days of school absences, the principal will send a summary of absences and reasons given for the absences to the superintendent. Juvenile court officials will be notified of excessive student absences; court intervention will be sought after other strategies have proven ineffective.

A daily record will be maintained for tardies and early dismissals, noting the time and reason given by the parent/guardian. Parents or guardians will be notified in writing when tardies and early dismissals become excessive. Three tardies and/or early dismissals equal one absence.

## Elementary Schools, continued

Makeup work for absences will be due three days after the student returns to school (Example: If a student is absent on Monday, and returns on Tuesday, then makeup work is due on Friday). For absences of more than one day, students will be given an extra day (up to a maximum of five days) to complete makeup work for each additional day of absence. Grades for work turned in after that time will be reduced ten points for each day beyond the 'grace period.' The building administrator may make exceptions for extenuating circumstances (Example: hospitalization).

The following is used to define perfect and outstanding attendance.

### Perfect Attendance\*

Attending school all day constitutes perfect attendance. This includes no absences, no tardies, and no daily early departures during the school year.

### Outstanding Attendance\*

Students that miss three or less days during the school year have outstanding attendance. This may include full days missed and/or tardies or early departures.

Adopted: May 3, 2000

Revised: May 23, 2000; August 6, 2013

\*Modifications Adopted: August 2, 2005

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A daily record will be maintained for tardies and early dismissals, noting the time and reason given by the parent/guardian. Parents or guardians will be notified in writing when tardies and early dismissals become excessive. Three tardies and/or early dismissals equal one absence.

Makeup work for absences will be due two days after the student returns to school (Example: If a student is absent on Monday, and returns on Tuesday, then makeup work is due on Thursday). For absences of more than one day, students will be given an extra day (up to a maximum of five days) to complete makeup work for each additional day of absence. Grades for work turned in after that time will be reduced ten points for each day beyond the 'grace period.' The building administrator may make exceptions for extenuating circumstances (Example: hospitalization).

## Secondary Schools, coninued

The following reasons given for excused absences will not affect a student's ability to earn course credit.

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2. Illness, death, or funeral in the family limited to parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents
3. Students sent home by the school nurse
4. Recognized religious holidays
5. Lawyer/court official meeting (court documentation required)
6. School-sponsored activities
7. College/Technical School visits (letter from Admissions office required)
8. Pre-arranged absences with prior approval of the building administrator

Students absent from school more than five days for other than the above reasons during a semester will receive a maximum grade of 69.

### Perfect Attendance\*

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### Outstanding Attendance\*

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