

BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

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

SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT - ACTION

School Attendance Regulations – JED-R

BACKGROUND:

Truancy actions come from amendments to § 22.1-258 and § 22.1-262. Much of the existing legislation remains intact. When a student is absent with no evidence that parents are aware of the absence, a reasonable effort to contact the parent by phone is still required to get an explanation. Under existing law, this effort can be made by the school principal or his designee, the attendance officer, other school personnel, or volunteers organized by the school administration for this purpose.

There is a change to the procedure to follow when a student has failed to report to school for a total of five (5) school days and there is no indication that parents are aware of the absences. Under the new legislation, the school principal or his designee must make a reasonable effort to make direct contact with the parent through the telephone or through the use of other communication devices to obtain an explanation for the absences.

When an attendance problem has been identified, a plan to resolve the problem remains in the law. The school principal or designee is responsible for developing the plan. If the student is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the parent is made and there is no evidence the parent knows, the school principal or designee shall schedule a conference with the student, parent, and school personnel. The conference may include the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve the issues.

The above is consistent with existing law. Amendments to the law include the following:

- The conference must be held no later than ten (10) school days after the tenth absence of the student, regardless of whether his parent approves of the conference.
- The conference team must monitor the student’s attendance and may meet again as necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve.
- In circumstances in which the parent is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the student is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or his designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer.
- The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the student and his or her parent within ten (10) school days and may file a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision or institute proceedings against the parent alleging that the parent is not following the law.
- In filing a complaint against the student, written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of the law must be provided. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known addresses of the parents.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of revised regulation JED-R to support policy JED as approved on June 28, 2018.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REGULATION

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~~ *contact* the school to report the student's absence by 10:00 am. If no ~~telephone contact is available~~ *made*, 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. Absences are excused for the following reasons:~~

1. Medical/dental appointments or personal illness (medical documentation required)
2. Illness, death, or funeral in the family or household (verification may be required)
3. Students sent home by the school nurse
4. Recognized religious holidays
5. Lawyer/court official meeting (court documentation required)
6. Pre-arranged absences with prior approval of the building administrator
7. State mandated testing or other school/division testing programs
8. School-sponsored field trips or activities, including all VHSL activities
9. Late bus or buses which fail to run
10. Conference with school counselor, administrator, or other related staff members
11. Involuntary court appearance (copy of court order or subpoena required)

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 absences, tardies and early dismissals, noting the time and reason given by the parent/guardian. Parents or guardians will be notified in writing when absences reach five (5), ten (10) and fifteen (15) days and when tardies and early dismissals become excessive.

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. School staff records the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused". Early intervention with the student and parent or parents takes place for repeated unexcused absences.

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, principal's 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 Additional Absence Without Parental Awareness and Support

If the pupil is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the pupil's parent and school personnel have received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the school principal or principal's designee shall schedule a conference with the pupil, the pupil's parent and school personnel. Such conference may include the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. The conference shall be held no later than ten (10) school days after the tenth absence of the pupil, regardless of whether his parent approves of the conference. The conference team shall monitor the pupil's attendance and may meet again as necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In circumstances where the parent is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the pupil is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the pupil and the pupil's parent

within ten (10) school days and may (i) file a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations district court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined by Va. Code §16.1-228 or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent pursuant to Va. Code §18.2-371 or §22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of policy JED. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va. Code §20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known address of the parents.

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, *September 4, 2018*

*Modifications Adopted: August 2, 2005