

STUDENTS

Attendance and Excuses

In keeping with the approved policy, the following regulations and procedures are adopted for uniform use in all schools in Prince William County. Each school shall develop an individual plan for implementation of the regulations and procedures.

I. Virginia Law

- A. All children of compulsory attendance age shall be expected to attend school each day that school is in session unless otherwise provided for by School Board policy or Virginia law.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Emancipated students shall be responsible for their own school attendance.
- C. Married students are subject to the same rules and regulations as other students, including the requirement to attend school within the ages defined by law. Students are not automatically emancipated from the guardianship of their parents, but may be declared emancipated by a court of law.

II. School Accountability

- A. Teachers shall maintain an accurate daily record of the attendance of each student in their classrooms, including whether the absence is excused (EXA), unexcused (UAB), or unverified (UNV).
- B. Per individual school policy, homeroom teachers shall daily record in SASIxp the absences of students in their classrooms. In those schools utilizing period attendance, classroom teachers shall record in SASIxp each period the absences of students in their classrooms.
- C. Each school administrator shall establish a plan to assure that all students are accounted for during the school day. It shall be the responsibility of each teacher to follow the plan.
- D. The school plan shall include a procedure for notification of parents in case of student absence, and it shall include a plan for the discipline of students who absent themselves in violation of school policy.

1. Per §22.1-279.3 and the Prince William County Public Schools “Code of Behavior,” each parent of a student enrolled in a public school has a duty to assist the school in enforcing compulsory school attendance.
2. Notification when student fails to report to school.
 - a. Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the student’s parent is aware of and supports the absence, school personnel or volunteers organized by the school administration for this purpose shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent by telephone in order to receive an explanation for the student’s absence. Schools are encouraged to use noninstructional personnel for this notification.
 - b. Whenever a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year and no indication has been received by school personnel that the student’s parent is aware of and supports the student’s absence, and a reasonable effort to notify the parent has failed, the school principal or his/her designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact by the attendance officer is made with the parent, either in person or by telephone, in order to obtain an explanation for the student’s absence, and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. Notification to the attendance officer of the student’s fifth unexcused absence shall be by means of a completed Attendance Referral Form (Attachment I, p.1). The attendance officer, the student, and the student’s parent shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the student’s nonattendance. The plan shall include documentation of the reason for the student’s nonattendance.
 - c. If the student is absent an additional day after direct contact with the student’s parent, and no indication has been received by school personnel that the parent is aware of and supports the absence, the attendance officer shall schedule a conference within ten school days with the student, the student’s parent, school personnel, and other community service providers as needed to resolve issues related to the student’s nonattendance. The conference is to be held

no later than fifteen days after the sixth absence and is to be documented in SASIxp.

- d. Upon the next absence by the student without indication to school personnel that the parent is aware of and supports the absence, the attendance officer, in consultation with the principal or his/her designee, shall enforce the provisions of this article by either or both of the following:
 - (1) Filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in §16.1-228 or
 - (2) Instituting proceedings against the parent pursuant to §18.2-371 or §22.1-262.
 - e. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this section. 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.
 - f. Attendance officers, other school personnel, or volunteers organized by the school administration for the purpose of seeking compliance with the compulsory school attendance law shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability in connection with the notice to parents of a student's absence or failure to give such notice as required by this section.
3. The Attendance Referral Form (Attachment I) shall be used to document the efforts of school personnel and of attendance officers to comply with the provisions of this section.

III. Classification of Absences and Tardies

- A. Absences shall be classified as excused or unexcused.
- B. Students receiving in-school suspensions (ISS) shall be counted present at school, and work is to be made up in the in-school suspension location. Students receiving out-of-school suspensions (OSS) shall be counted absent from school.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete all assignments missed during the period of suspension. These assignments must be completed within a time frame established by the school.

- C. Students participating in school-sponsored activities, i.e., field trips, athletic contests as members of their school teams, or other school-related activities where attendance is required shall not be counted as absent from school. However, they shall be counted absent from any class that is missed. An absence resulting from participation in a school-sponsored activity shall be recorded as an excused absence.
- D. Students receiving excused absences shall be responsible for contacting their teachers to make arrangements for make-up work within a time specified by the teacher. For absences excused and determined to have educational value under Section III. E. 9, make-up work is at the teacher's discretion.
- E. Absences shall be excused on the basis of verified contact with the parent and for the following reasons:
 - 1. Personal illness of the student. A doctor's note may be required by the school principal after a student has accrued ten or more absences for the school year.
 - 2. Medical and dental examination and/or treatment of the student when such appointments cannot be scheduled other than during school hours.
 - 3. Death in the family of the parent or guardian.
 - 4. Observation of a religious holiday.
 - 5. Emergency conditions in the student's home which require help from the student in caring for the sick or injured; however, regular use of this excuse or requests for absences for more than five consecutive days shall be referred to the Office of Student Services for evaluation.
 - 6. Principals shall note that parents retain the option of not permitting their child to attend school when, in the judgment of the parents, the roads or walkways in their neighborhoods are too difficult to use. In such cases, the child shall be given an excused absence but shall be required to make up the work missed.

7. Seniors shall be excused for the purpose of college admission visitations or to apply for post graduation jobs. In each instance, prior approval of the principal or his/her designee shall be obtained by the student.
8. Required court appearance.
9. Prearranged absence. The principal uses professional judgment in making a determination based on the reasons stated in the written request for the prearranged absence. The educational value of the proposed experience and the impact of the absence on the student's academic progress shall be given consideration in determining whether a prearranged absence request is approved or disapproved. In order for any prearranged absences to be classified as excused, principals shall be notified in writing at least five school days prior to the absence.

Due to the varied demands on teachers for make-up work, teacher discretion shall determine whether students shall make up work for approved prearranged absences. Teachers shall not be required to provide assignments in advance of the absence; however, assignments requested in advance may be provided at the teacher's discretion. Students shall not be exempt from nine-week tests, semester examinations, or SOL exams.

10. Reasons of extenuating circumstances shall be judged by the principal.
- F. Absences shall be classified as unexcused based on the following reasons:
1. All-day truancy.
 2. Class truancy.
 3. Missing a ride or a bus.
 4. Disapproved prearranged absence.
 5. Failure to produce an appropriate explanation for an absence.
 6. Out-of-School Suspension.

- G. A written statement which provides the reason for the absence and is signed by the parent is the preferred verification of an absence. Alternate means of notification shall include telephone contact with the parent, parent conference, or other methods judged to be adequate by the principal.
- H. All explanations of absences shall be received by the school no later than the second day after the student returns to school, and changes, as necessary, made in SASIxp. Failure to produce an appropriate explanation for an unverified absence by the second day (UNV) shall result in an unexcused classification (UAB).
- I. Except for out-of-school suspensions, a student who is absent for a reason that is determined to be "unexcused" (according to the guidelines outlined in this regulation) would receive a "0" for any graded work which occurred during the day of the unexcused absence. If evaluated work did not occur during that day, then the student would receive no grade penalty.
- J. Students in grades K-8 who miss 10 or more days of school, excused or unexcused, for which little or no make-up work is completed, may be considered for retention. Students in grades 9-12 who miss 10 or more class periods in any one class for the year, excused or unexcused, and who have completed little or no make-up work, may fail that class for the year. Exception: Certification by a physician.
- K. Tardies to school shall be excused for the following reasons:
 - 1. All items for excusing absences as listed in Section III. E.
 - 2. Emergency situations arising from unusual weather conditions.
 - 3. All tardies resulting from late buses shall be excused. Tardies to school due to the late arrival of buses shall be recorded separately from tardies for other reasons.
- L. In schools where students make class changes during the day, tardies to class shall be handled by the school administration according to school procedures.
- M. Those schools adopting an outstanding attendance award shall not exclude students from receiving such awards due to absences related to religious holidays.

- N. Students may be suspended or expelled from attendance at school for sufficient cause; however, in no cases may sufficient cause for suspensions include only instances of truancy.
- O. In unusual circumstances, e.g. pandemic, the Superintendent of Schools may change the classification of absences and tardies.

IV. Court May Suspend Driver's License Issued to Certain Minors

- A. Virginia law requires that every application for a driver's license submitted by a person less than 18 years old and attending a public school in the Commonwealth shall be accompanied by a document signed by the applicant's parent or legal guardian, authorizing the principal, or his designee, of the school attended by the applicant to notify the juvenile and domestic relations district court within whose jurisdiction the minor resides when the applicant has had 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days. Attached to this Regulation as Attachment II is an authorization form which may be used for this purpose.
- B. As provided by Va. Code § 46.2-334.001, upon notice and opportunity to be heard, and the failure of the student to show cause for the license not to be suspended, the court may suspend the minor's driver's license for any period of time, until the minor is 18 years old. The juvenile and domestic relations judge may determine that suspension is not appropriate under certain circumstances where the student has withdrawn from school for reasons beyond the student's control, has transferred to another school, or where the parent expresses in court his desire to allow the student to retain his license. In addition, the judge may grant a student whose license is so suspended a restricted driver's license in limited situations, as further provided by law.

V. Reports of Children Enrolled and Not Enrolled

- A. Within 10 days after the opening of school, each principal or designee shall report to the Superintendent:
 - 1. The name, age, and grade of each student enrolled in the school and the name and address of the student's parent or guardian; and
 - 2. To the best of the principal's information, the name of each child subject to the provisions of this article who is not enrolled in school and the name and address of the child's parent or guardian.

- B. At the end of each school year, each principal or his/her designee shall enter in SASIxp each student for whom a conference was scheduled as required by Va. Code §22.1-258.
- C. For the purposes of this section, each student shall present a federal social security number within 90 days of his/her enrollment. If a student is ineligible to obtain a social security number, pursuant to State Board of Education guidelines, or the parent is unwilling to present the student's social security number, the Superintendent or his designee may assign another identity number to the student or waive this requirement.

VI. Attendance Officer to Make a List of Children Not Enrolled: Duties of Attendance Officer

- A. The attendance officer shall check the reports submitted pursuant to subsection A of Va. Code §22.1-260 with the last school census and with reports from the State Registrar of Vital Records and Health Statistics. From these reports and from any other reliable source, the attendance officer shall, within five days after receiving all reports submitted, make a list of the names of children who are not enrolled in any school and who are not exempt from school attendance.
- B. The attendance officer shall investigate all cases of nonenrollment and, when no valid reason is found, notify the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child to require the attendance of such child at the school within three days from the date of such notice.

VII. Complaint to Court When Parent Fails to Comply With Law

A list of persons notified shall be sent by the attendance officer to the appropriate school principal. If the parent fails to comply within the time specified in the notice, refuses to comply with the provisions of §22.1-254, or refuses to participate in the development of the plan to resolve the student's nonattendance or in the conference provided for in §22.1-258, it shall be the duty of the attendance officer, with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent or designee, to make complaint against the student's parent in the name of the Commonwealth before the juvenile and domestic relations district court. If proceedings are instituted against the parent for failure to comply, the attendance officer shall provide documentation to the court regarding the School Division's compliance with §22.1-258. In addition, such child may be proceeded against as a child in need of services or a child in need of supervision as provided in Chapter 11 (§16.1-226 et. seq.) of Title 16.1.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for reviewing this regulation in 2012.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of Student Services

ATTENDANCE REFERRAL FORM

TO _____ DATE _____

FROM _____ SCHOOL _____

REASON FOR REFERRAL _____

Student's Name _____ Birth date _____ Sex _____ Age _____

Social Security Number _____ Grade _____ Spec. Ed. Program _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

Father's Name _____ Work Phone _____ Cell/Pager _____

Mother's Name _____ Work Phone _____ Cell/Pager _____

Days Membership _____ Days Absent _____ Unexcused _____ Excused _____

ACTION TAKE BY SCHOOL PRIOR TO REFERRAL AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

Unexcused Absence #1	Date of Absence _____	Contacted By _____	Intervention		
			Date of parent notification: _____		
			By: Phone _____ Letter _____ Conference _____		
			Reason for absence: _____		
			Referred to: (opt.) _____		

Unexcused Absence #2	Date of Absence _____	Contacted By _____	Intervention		
			Date of parent notification: _____		
			By: Phone _____ Letter _____ Conference _____		
			Reason for absence: _____		
			Referred to: (opt.) _____		

Unexcused Absence #3	Date of Absence _____	Contacted By _____	Intervention		
			Date of parent notification: _____		
			By: Phone _____ Letter _____ Conference _____		
			Reason for absence: _____		
			Referred to: (opt.) _____		

Unexcused Absence #4	Date of Absence _____	Contacted By _____	Intervention		
			Date of parent notification: _____		
			By: Phone _____ Letter _____ Conference _____		
			Reason for absence: _____		
			Referred to: (opt.) _____		

Unexcused Absence #5	Date of Absence _____	Forwarded to Attendance Officer on _____		Forwarded to Administrator on _____	

Administrator Signature, if required per school procedure _____ Date _____

ATTENDANCE REFERRAL FORM
First Direct Contact by Attendance Officer

Date of parent notification of 5th absence: _____ By: Phone Letter Conference

Reason for absence: _____

Action Plan _____

Developed by: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Attendance Officer

Truancy Conference For Improved Attendance

Unexcused
Absence # _____ Date of parent notification: _____ By: Phone Letter Conference

Reason for absence: _____

Date of Truancy Conference: _____

Review _____

Revise _____

Action Plan _____

Signature of Student _____ Signature of Administrator, if appl. _____

Signature of Parent _____ Signature of School Counselor, if appl. _____

Signature of Attend. Officer _____ Other _____

Other _____ Other _____

Attendance Officer use only

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of Student Services

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

As the parent or legal guardian of _____, (“the Student”) I hereby give my written consent to the Prince William County Public Schools, and the principal or his/her designee of any school attended by the Student, or any other employee of the Prince William County Public Schools charged with the responsibility of carrying out the notice requirements of Va. Code §§ 46.2-323 and 46.2-334.001, to notify the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles and/or the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of the Commonwealth of Virginia when the Student has had 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days. Prince William County Public Schools and its employees are also authorized to provide the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court with any other information relating to the Student which the Court might request, in determining whether the Student’s driver’s license should be suspended or the student should be granted a restricted driver’s license.

This authorization constitutes written consent for the release of information contained in student educational records within the meaning of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Virginia Code §§ 22.1-287.

Parent or Legal Guardian

Date