

# Attendance Policy

## **Student Absence/Excuses:**

**Excused absence-** the parent has communicated (with writing documentation within three days of returning back to school) to school officials the reason for their child's absence and school officials consider the reason valid. Excused absences include: student illness; death or serious illness of a family member; doctor, dentist, or therapist appointments; pre-approved travel for family emergencies or vacation; college visitations; subpoenas for court; religious observances; out of school suspension; reasons outside of those listed shall be subject to approval.

**If you know that your child will not be present in school; please contact his/her school via telephone and submit a written note within three days after return to school.**

**Unexcused absence-** the parent has NOT communicated to school officials in writing the reason for their child's absence; or the parent has communicated to school officials the reason for their child's absence and school officials consider the reason invalid. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to the following: oversleeping; tiredness; hair care appointments; shopping; recreational activities; child care issues; missed school buses; personal transportation problems; bus suspensions.

## **Documentation required for an excused absence- within three days:**

Note from a Physician or Court Documentation

OR

A note from parent containing the following:

- Date
- Date of absence
- The full name of the student
- The exact reason for the absence
- The student's grade
- The signer's phone number (home and work) where he/she can be reached
- The Signature of parent/guardian

## **Responsibilities:**

### **Parent/Guardian:**

- To provide accurate information to the school staff regarding telephone numbers and current physical address, and any change of this information as it occurs.
- To notify the school office staff the reasons for the absence of their child by written communication when the student returns to school within three days.
- To promote the proper attendance of their child by adhering to the Caroline County Public Schools attendance policies and supporting school officials in their efforts to enforce these policies.

### **Student/Parent:**

- To ensure the child is present for the entire instructional day. It is the goal of Caroline County Public Schools for every child to be in school daily for the entire school year.

### **Principal or Designee:**

- To attempt to make contact with the parent whenever their child is absent from school, and to document all methods used to reach the appropriate parent or guardian. The documentation of each accumulated absence shall be the responsibility of the principal or designee so long as the student is legally required to attend that particular school.
- To Document late arrivals (tardies) and early dismissals. The determination of excused or unexcused will be in accordance with state and county policy.
- To enforce and implement the Caroline County Public Schools attendance policies and regulations and apply them fairly to all students and parents.

## **School Attendance Regulations for Unexcused Absences:**

### **1) Upon the third unexcused absence:**

- An informational letter regarding the Caroline County Public Schools attendance policy and regulations and a copy of the student's attendance record will be mailed to the parent/guardian by the principal or designee.
- The student's attendance record and information about the county attendance policy is provided at the beginning of the school year (Handbook) in order to make the parent or guardian clearly aware of their responsibility under the law.

### **2) Upon the sixth unexcused absence:**

- The principal or designee will contact the parent or guardian by phone, letter, or home visit to schedule a parent conference to create a plan for improving the student's attendance.
- **The purpose of the Student's attendance improvement meeting is to:**
  - 1) discuss and document the problems causing the unsatisfactory school attendance;
  - 2) formulate reasonable solutions to those problems;
  - 3) assign responsibilities and requirements to the parent, student(when appropriate), and school officials for implementing the plan;
  - 4) outline the legal and educational consequences for failure to follow the attendance improvement plan.

- A copy of the Student attendance improvement plan will be given to the parent or guardian, another copy will be filed in the student's cumulative educational records, a third copy will be given to the Student Support Specialist.
- School attendance improvement plans remain in effect for the remainder of the current school year.
- School attendance improvement plans are transferable to others within the School Division.
- Students who are court ordered to attend school are placed under the attendance plan for the duration of their enrollment in Caroline County Public Schools.

**3. Upon continued unexcused absence the Family Assessment Planning Team (FAPT) will be utilized:**

- The parent or guardian and/or student will be contacted by the principal or designee to schedule a conference with representatives from other community agencies to be held as soon as reasonably possible.
- At this conference the parent/guardian and student(when appropriate) will be reminded about the provisions of the school attendance improvement plan, and warned that continued failure to follow the plan will result in a referral to the Student Support Specialist for the filing of a petition for a truancy hearing with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.
- Amendments to the plan are permissible upon the principal or designee's approval. All amendments to the school attendance improvement plan must be communicated in writing to all parties, including the Student Support Specialist, and filed according to regulations.

**4. Upon the next unexcused absence:**

- Following the conference for noncompliance with the school attendance improvement plan, all documentation related to the student's school attendance will be forwarded by the principal or designee to the Student Support Specialist. The Student Support Specialist will use the available documentation to ascertain the reasons for the noncompliance with the school attendance improvement plan in order to make a determination as to whether the parent/guardian, the student, or both bears primary responsibility for the continued failure to follow the plan.
- The School Division's Student Support Specialist will do either or both of the following:
  1. File a petition with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court alleging the student to be a child in need of supervision(VA Law 16.1-228)
  2. Initiate proceedings against the parent(s)/guardian(s)(22.1-261) and (22.1-258) or (22.1-254)

## **School Attendance Regulations- Excused Absences:**

- If the parent or guardian notify the principal or designee by written communication of the reason for their child's absence from school within three days upon students return to school, the absence will be excused by the principal or designee.
- Upon the tenth absence that is excused by the parent without third party documentation (doctor, dentist, therapist, funeral director, etc.), a documented reasonable effort of personal contact by the principal or designee, either by telephone, email, postal mail, school conference, or home visit, will be made.
- A copy of the student's attendance record will be provided to the parent or guardian as well as a copy of the Caroline County Public School's attendance regulations.
- The student's attendance record and information about the Caroline County Public School's attendance regulations is provided in order to make a parent or guardian clearly aware of their responsibility under the law.
- The principal or designee will require that any subsequent absences will need third party documentation in order to be excused.
- All school absences not properly documented will be considered unexcused, and the unexcused absences policy and regulations will apply.

## **Family Travel:**

- The School Division recognizes the highly occasional need of parents or guardians to have their children be absent from school due to travel for an out-of-town family emergency or family vacation.
- Prior approval by the principal or designee is required for these absences to be excused.
- Principals may place requirements upon students to complete missed assignments before such absences will be excused.