



ROANOKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.rcs.k12.va.us

2017-2018 STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Daily student attendance is a key factor in student success in school. Being present each day contributes to a student's feeling connected to the school and to the student's learning. Roanoke County Public Schools (RCPS) takes seriously our obligation to provide high quality, engaging, and purposeful learning experiences designed to meet students' needs and to prepare them for future opportunities. Our goal is to create and sustain schools and classrooms to which students are eager to go and learn. RCPS welcomes you as a valued partner in supporting acceptable levels of school attendance for our students. We want to keep you informed of student attendance procedures that RCPS schools follow in order to support this cooperative effort.

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, RCPS schools will follow the procedures below for student attendance. The full version is located in Policy 7.07 and Administrative Regulation 7.07AR under School Board Policies on the RCPS website: www.rcs.k12.va.us.

Thank you for your support of our joint efforts to promote student learning through good student attendance. If you have any questions, please contact your school's principal, school counselor, or school social worker. You may also contact me at 562-3900 x10120.

Sincerely,

Ken Nicely, Ed.D.

Director of Administration

Excused Absences and Tardies

Parents of students who are absent or tardy must inform the school **in writing** of the reason for the absence or tardy no later than upon the student's return to school (emailed message is acceptable). School staff records the student's absence or tardy for each day as "excused" or "unexcused". **Please be aware that, if absences and tardies that are excused solely by parent explanation become excessive, the school will require additional documentation in order to ensure compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.**

Acceptable Excuses

1. Absences and tardies are excused for the following reasons with **written explanation** from the parent:
 - a. illness of the student
 - b. approval from administration prior to the absence
 - c. death in family/funeral and
 - d. school-sponsored activities
 - e. observance of a nationally recognized religious holiday if such holiday is verified and the school is notified in advance.
2. Absences and tardies are excused for the following reasons with appropriate **written documentation**:
 - a. hospitalization or extended illness (with documentation from physician)
 - b. doctor or dental appointment (with documentation from physician's or dentist's office)
 - c. mandatory court appearance (with court documentation)
3. A student whose absence is excused due to the observance of a nationally recognized religious holiday 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 the student missed by reason of such absence.
4. Absences and tardies that do not meet the criteria for being excused absences or tardies are considered unexcused absences or tardies. Students in grades 9-12 may be denied full credit for assignments missed due to an unexcused absence or tardy.

- 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.

Excessive Absences or Tardies Without Adequate Written Documentation

If absences or tardies excused solely based on parent explanation become excessive, the school will require additional documentation in order to ensure compliance with the compulsory student attendance law. Such additional documentation may include written documentation from a physician treating the student for a chronic or extended illness or court documentation resulting from student involvement in a legal matter.

School principals and school counselors regularly collaborate with school social workers to monitor student attendance and communicate with students, parents, and families regarding excessive absences unsupported by adequate documentation.

For the purposes of avoiding excessive tardiness to school that results in frequent loss of instructional time, **five (5) tardies to school without adequate written documentation will be considered the equivalent of one (1) absence.**

The following procedures are followed when a student has been absent excessively without adequate written documentation:

First Notification Letter

- Within the first semester, if a student accumulates five absences excused solely based on parent explanation, the school will notify the parent of the student (First Notification Letter) and list the dates the student has been absent.
- During the second semester, if a student accumulated fewer than five (5) absences excused solely based on parent explanation within the first semester, but the student subsequently accumulates ten (10) such absences during the second semester, the school will notify the parent of the student (First Notification Letter) and list the dates the student has been absent.

Second Notification Letter

- Within the first semester, after the First Notification Letter has been sent to a parent as required in section (a)(i), the school will send a Second Notification Letter to the parent if the student accumulates ten (10) absences without adequate documentation. The Second Notification Letter will list the dates the student has been absent and the parent will be advised that the matter may be referred to the 23rd District Court Service Unit / 23rd District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.
- During the second semester, after the First Notification Letter has been sent to a parent as required in section (a)(ii), the school will send a Second Notification Letter to the parent if the student accumulates an eleventh (11th) absence without adequate documentation. The Second Notification Letter will list the dates the student has been absent and the parent will be advised that the matter may be referred to the 23rd District Court Service Unit / 23rd District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Student Support Meeting

- Within the first semester, after the school has sent the First and Second Notification Letters and upon the eleventh (11th) absence without adequate documentation, the school will schedule a mandatory Student Support Meeting with the parent to address the excessive number of absences and develop a plan of support. The Student Support Meeting will include the parent, student, school-level administrator, school counselor, and school social worker.
- During the second semester, after the school has sent the First and Second Notification Letters and upon the twelfth (12th) absence without adequate documentation, the school will schedule a mandatory Student Support Meeting with the parent to address the excessive number of absences and develop a plan of support. The Student Support Meeting will include the parent, student, school-level administrator, school counselor, and school social worker.
- If the parent has been adequately notified of the Student Support Meeting but fails to attend the meeting, the meeting will be re-scheduled at the central administrative building with the Director of Administration or the director's designee.

Complaint filed with 23rd District Court Service Unit / 23rd District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

After conferencing with the parent, if a student accumulates three (3) additional absences without adequate documentation, the school social worker will file a complaint with the 23rd District Court Service Unit / 23rd District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.