

## STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

### KGCS Attendance Procedures

In accordance with 8VAC20-730-10 and KGCS Policy JED, the following definitions apply:

**UNVERIFIED (UNV):** Any absence where the school has not received any information from the parent regarding the absence. Unverified absences may change to 'excused' or 'unexcused' according to the following definitions.

**EXCUSED (EXA):** An absence where the school has received documentation from the parent that explains the reason for the absence and the reason is acceptable to the school administrator or designee. Whenever possible, advance notice is requested for scheduled absences. Examples of absences which may be excused include:

1. Personal illness or injury of the student.
2. Medical and dental examination and/or treatment of the student (including mental health and substance abuse) when such appointments cannot be scheduled other than during school hours.
3. Funerals.
4. Observation of a religious holiday.
5. Court appearances or other legal obligations of the student.
6. Student out-of-school suspensions.
7. Military obligations.
8. Illness or injury of an immediate family member or other emergency situation or extenuating circumstance in the family which the administrator or designee determines an excused absence is warranted.
9. Other activities deemed by the administrator or designee to be of an instructional nature or to add educational value to a student's overall experience such as "Take your Child to Work Day," academic conventions and conferences, Congressional Page Programs, and so forth.

In addition, high school students may spend a maximum of 45 school days each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in Partnership programs are not counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The superintendent's regulations include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a High School to Work Partnership.

Seniors shall be excused for the purpose of college admission visitations or to apply for post-graduation jobs.

UNEXCUSED (UNX): An absence where (i) the student misses his school day and no indication has been received by school personnel within three days of the absence that the student's parent is aware and supports the absence, or (ii) the parent provides a reason for the absence that is unacceptable to the school administration or designee. Examples of unexcused absences include such things as family trips, vacations, car problems, missed bus, and so forth.

The school administrator or designee may change an unexcused absence to an excused absence when it determines that the parent has provided an acceptable reason meeting criteria for the student's absence or there are extenuating circumstances.

The school may place restrictions on the number of parent notes that are acceptable before requiring official documentation from physicians, attorneys, and so forth. In such cases, these absences may be unexcused if official documentation is not provided. This is determined on a case by case basis by the SBI Team and will be documented in the student's attendance improvement plan.

### Responses to Attendance Concerns

Although schools will continue to determine whether a student's absence should be "excused" or "unexcused," state and federal reporting does not differentiate between the reasons for absences. By the new accountability definition, any student missing 10% of the school year (18 days in a typical school calendar) will be deemed "chronically absent" regardless of the reason they are absent. Any missed instructional time, including absences, tardies, and early dismissals, can be detrimental to a child's success in school. Chronic absences or repeatedly missing instructional time will require intervention by the School Based Intervention Team.

Tardies and Early Dismissals: In accordance with 8VAC20-730-20, when a student engages in a pattern of absences less than a full day, the explanation for which, if it were a full-day absence, would not be deemed an excused absence, schools and parents must discuss, determine, and implement appropriate interventions.

Absences: In accordance with Va. Code § 22.1-258, 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 or designee, attendance officer, or other school personnel or volunteer will notify the parent by phone or email or any other electronic means to obtain an explanation. Upon obtaining an explanation, school staff shall record the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused." Early intervention with the student and parent or parents shall take place for repeated unexcused absences.

Fifth Unexcused Absence: When a student has received five unexcused absences, the school principal, or designee, or the attendance officer shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent. The parent shall be contacted in a

face-to-face conference, by telephone, or through the use of other communication devices. During the direct contact with the parent and the student (if appropriate), reasons for nonattendance shall be documented and the consequences of nonattendance explained. An attendance plan shall be made with the student and parent or parents to resolve the nonattendance issues. The student and parent may be referred to a school-based multi-disciplinary team for assistance implementing the attendance plan and case management.

**Additional Unexcused Absences:** The school principal or designee or the attendance officer shall schedule a face-to-face attendance conference, or an interaction that is conducted through the use of communication technology. This conference shall be held within 10 school days from the date of the student's tenth unexcused absence for the school year regardless of whether the parent approves of the conference. The conference shall include the parent, student, and school personnel (which may be a representative or representatives from the multi-disciplinary team) and may include community service providers. 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.

#### Noncompliance by Parent or Student

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 designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the pupil and his parent/guardian within 10 school days. The principal or designee may make a court referral with (i) the juvenile and domestic relations district court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in § 16.1-228 or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent pursuant to §18.2-371 or 22.1-262.

#### Perfect Attendance Recognition

In order to be eligible for any perfect attendance award, students must be in school every day, all day, without any tardies or early dismissals. The only excused activities for this award will be school related absences such as field trips, co-curricular activities, and athletic events; documented religious observances; documented court appearances for receiving driver's license or by subpoena in some circumstances (please contact the Office of Student and Family Services for more information on this exception); and documented college, military, and vocational interviews.

Adopted: March 8, 2021

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