

Attendance Policy

Student Absence/Excuses

Excused absence- the parent has communicated (in writing within three days of returning to school) to school officials the reason for the child's absence, and school officials consider the reason valid.

Excused absences include:

- Student illness - Student illness for more than three (3) consecutive days will require a doctor's note.
- Death or severe illness of a family member
- Doctor, dentist, or therapist appointment
- Pre-approved travel for family emergencies or vacation
- College visitations
- Subpoenas for court
- Religious observances
- Civic Engagement (1 per year; middle and high school only)
- 4-H Educational Programs (3 per year)
- Pow-wow Gathering (1 per year; students who are members of state or federally recognized tribal nations.

Reasons outside of those listed shall be subject to approval. If you know your child will not be present in school, please contact his/her school via telephone and submit a written note within three days after returning 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; childcare 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 **or email** from the 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 the parent/guardian

Late Arrivals/ Early Dismissals - Students may be excused for tardiness or receive early dismissal from school for the same reasons as those listed under excused absences.

All students are expected to arrive at school, homeroom, study hall, and class on time. Students who arrive late or leave prior to the regular dismissal time shall be required to sign in and/or out of the school office. High school students who have prior approval for an early dismissal need to sign out.

Written requests for early dismissal shall be submitted to the school office prior to the requested dismissal time. These requests shall be approved/denied by the principal or his designee. A parent or legal guardian may come to the school office and request the release of his/her child. The student is called to the school office to meet the parent, and a record of the early dismissal is signed by his/her parent.

Students shall attend school unless otherwise excused. Caroline High School students shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work-study program. A student who is approved to participate in a school-sponsored field trip or other activity shall be counted as present. The principal or designee must approve exceptions to a full-day schedule on an individual basis.

Perfect Attendance:

All students must be in school for a minimum of three hours to be counted as present. Students with five (5) tardies or (5) early dismissals during the school year will not be eligible for perfect attendance awards.

For perfect attendance, when students arrive after and leave before the following times, it will be counted against perfect attendance:

Level	Tardy: Arrive after:	Early Release: Leave before:
Elementary	9:00	3:10
Middle	7:40	2:00
High	7:45	2:10

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ATTENDANCE POLICY

Unexcused absences and tardiness (i.e., skipping school or skipping classes or excessive tardiness, etc.) are considered to be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Principals may consider the following guidelines when determining possible disciplinary consequences for violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Consequences may include:

- Counseling intervention
- Parental conferences
- Disciplinary consequence(s)
- Tasks assigned by administration
- Lunch detention
- Detention
- Professional family counseling
- **Retention for the following school year**

The consequences for high school students may also include:

- Suspension from extracurricular activities
- Loss of driving/parking privileges
- Suspension of driver's license
- **Loss of course credit**

Chronic Absenteeism:

The Virginia Department of Education considers a student who misses 10% or more school days to be chronically absent. Since learning is negatively impacted when a student misses 10% or more of the school year, CCPS will abide by the following policies in relation to chronic absenteeism:

Elementary:

Students who miss 10% or more of school will be at risk of being retained for the succeeding school year. When a student reaches this level, the school will:

- Hold a meeting that includes the parent and the school principal, assistant principal, school counselor, teacher(s), social worker, and/or family engagement coordinator to review the student's absences and academic progress.
- Based on the student's level of academic progress or extenuating circumstances, it will be determined whether the student will be promoted or retained for the next school year. Evidence of sufficient mastery must be fully documented.

Secondary:

Students who miss 10% or more of a class will not receive credit for the class. At the middle school level, this only includes classes that allow students to earn high school credit. When a student reaches this level, the school will:

- Hold a meeting that includes the parent and the school principal, assistant principal, school counselor, teacher(s), social worker, and/or family engagement coordinator to review the student's absences and academic progress.
- Based on the student's level of academic progress or extenuating circumstances, it will be determined whether the student will be allowed to earn the course credit, not be allowed to earn the course credit, or have the opportunity to complete seat time to make up for days absent.
- If seat time is granted, students may make up a maximum of 2 days of lost instruction due to absences. Seat time will be served after school due to the availability of activity buses.

All Levels:

Excused and unexcused are included in the 10% calculation. This does not include field trips or participation in school events, 1 Civic Engagement activity per year (secondary only), up to 3 4-H activities per year, or 1 Pow-wow Gathering for students who are members of state or federally recognized tribal nations.

Note: Student participation in class activities is an important component of the learning and grading process. Students who fail to attend classes on a regular basis will jeopardize their grades because they may lose the opportunity to fully participate.

Responsibilities

Parent/Guardian:

- To provide accurate information to the school staff regarding telephone numbers, current physical address, and any change of this information as it occurs.
- To notify the school office staff of 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.
- To document late arrivals (tardies) and early dismissals. The determination of excused or unexcused will be in accordance with this policy.
- To enforce and implement the Caroline County Public Schools attendance policies and regulations and apply them fairly to all students and parents.

Consequences:

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.

2) Upon the fifth unexcused absence:

- The principal or designee will contact the parent/guardian via face-to-face conference, phone, other communication devices, or home visit and:
 - 1) Discuss and document the problems causing the unsatisfactory school attendance;
 - 2) Create an attendance plan to resolve the nonattendance issues;
 - 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;
 - 5) The parent/guardian may be referred to a school-based multi-disciplinary team for assistance in implementing the attendance 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, and a third copy will be given to the School Social Worker.
- 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 the tenth unexcused absence:

- The principal or designee will schedule a face-to-face or virtual conference with the parent within 10 school days of the unexcused absence.
- Reasonable efforts will be made to contact the parent; if unsuccessful, the conference shall be held without parent approval.
- The conference will include the principal or designee and a representative from the attendance team.

4) Upon the twelfth unexcused absence, the division will have the option to recommend the family to participate in the Family Assessment Planning Team (FAPT) process:

- The School Social Worker will determine if a family should be recommended for the FAPT process. If such recommendation is deemed necessary, upon receipt of parental consent, the school division will begin the FAPT process. 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.
 - If the parent or guardian does not grant consent to participate in the FAPT process, the School Social Worker and/or school-based team will refer the case to juvenile intake for consideration of a CHINS petition or to the magistrate's office for action against the parent.
- At this conference, the parent/guardian and student (when appropriate) will be reminded about the provisions of compulsory attendance and the school attendance improvement plan. The parent/guardian and the student will be notified that continued failure to follow the plan will result in a violation of Virginia law and that a relevant legal proceeding may be instituted against the parent and/or student.
- Amendments to the plan are permissible upon the approval of the School Social Worker. All amendments to the school attendance improvement plan must be communicated in writing to all parties, including the School Social Worker, and filed according to regulations.

5) Upon the fifteenth 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 School Social Worker. The School Social Worker 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 Social Worker and/or school-based team will then determine an appropriate course of action as permitted under the law.

Excessive Excused Absences:

- 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 policy.
- The student's attendance record and information about the Caroline County Public School's attendance policy are 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 to be excused.

Family Travel:

- Request for family travel must be submitted to the principal or designee (7) seven days prior to the trip for these absences to be approved.
- Principals may place requirements upon students to complete missed assignments before such absences will be excused.