



STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Revised Attendance Policy

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, SCPS will implement new attendance reporting practices to meet compliance with Virginia Compulsory Attendance Law 22.1-254. The Virginia Department of Education has provided new directives for the reporting of student absences from school as follows:

- At **5 unexcused** absences, the school is required to initiate an attendance improvement plan.
- At **6 unexcused** absences, the school is required to have an attendance conference.
- At **7 unexcused** absence, SCPS is required to report whether legal charges were initiated against the student, against the parent, or if legal charges were not initiated because an improvement plan is in place and AND working.

As previously stated, these requirements apply only to **unexcused absences**.

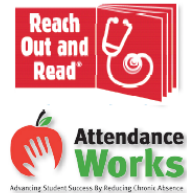
As a school system, we are working to explore and expand more ways for you to report your student's absences. We want to emphasize the importance of sending in notes or using your school's available attendance reporting options to excuse your student's absence. We want to work together to support you and your student and hope you will work with us in quickly identifying which students have attendance problems and need further intervention. Please ensure your student's school has your correct street address, phone number, and email address on file. Please ensure you familiarize yourself with the options you have available to communicate with your school about absences. Other attendance procedures will be followed for students with excessive excused absences.

In an effort to reduce unexcused absences, SCPS requests when your student is absent from school, an official notification shall be sent to your student's school explaining the reason why your student was absent from school.

Please review the [SCPS Code of Conduct](#) (pp. 4-11) for information about excused absences.

Thank you for your support in this area,

Stafford County Public Schools



Help Your Child Succeed in School: **Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early** School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org