

HCS Guidelines for Student Attendance In a 100% Virtual Environment

FAMILY & PARENT INFORMATION



A WHOLE NEW ENVIRONMENT

The start of the 2020-21 school year will bring new challenges that impact all students, staff, and families. Schools are prepared and excited to work with families and students to ensure students have access to meaningful learning experiences.

DOES MY STUDENT HAVE TO “ATTEND” SCHOOL?

Yes. Virginia’s state code, [§ 22.1-254](#), requires all school-age children (those who have reached the 5th birthday on or before September 30 and not passed the 18th birthday) attend school unless the child is exempt from the state’s compulsory attendance requirement. Students may be enrolled in public, private, or homeschool programs. The word “attend” includes participation through a virtual environment.

HCS EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

HCS Policy JEA *Compulsory Attendance* will continue to apply. During a period of 100% virtual learning, HCS students are expected to attend each virtual class meeting unless there is an approved absence (e.g., illness, court appointment). If concerns arise regarding attendance, teachers will initiate communication with parents/guardians. Schools will work with families to combat chronic absenteeism.

WHY IS REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?

Regular attendance in learning sessions is essential to every student’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral growth. Students who actively attend school learn more, develop important social emotional skills, and have a better chance of future success.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO DO IN ORDER TO COUNT AS “PRESENT”?

Students must be connected on-line in order to be counted PRESENT. Teachers will use a variety of strategies to verify the student is the one actually present, engaged, and doing the work. Teachers and schools need to reinforce this to students and parents/guardians.

WHAT IF TECHNOLOGY IS NOT WORKING FOR MY STUDENT?

If a student experiences technology issues, parents/guardians can contact:

- the classroom teacher;
- the school administrator;

- the HCS Technology Help Desk @ (757) 850-6875.

WHO CAN WE CONTACT IF WE HAVE OTHER CONCERNS OR NEEDS?

If a student experiences access or learning issues as a result of additional concerns or needs, parents/guardians can contact:

- the classroom teacher;
- the professional school counselor;
- the school administrator;
- the HCS Student Services department (757) 727-2135;
- the HCSSchool Social Work department (757) 727-2440.

CAN SCHOOLS OFFER ALTERNATIVES FOR STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE CHALLENGES?

Yes. If unique circumstances make a student vulnerable and unable to participate or learn through a whole class virtual platform, school administrators can work with teachers and families to develop alternate plans for individual students. Schools will offer meaningful learning experiences appropriate to students' developmental needs, individual circumstances, and the content.

WHEN WILL TEACHERS TAKE/SUBMIT ATTENDANCE?

Beginning on the first day of school (September 8), teachers will submit student attendance for each day/session/class. All students are required to attend virtual sessions Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, attendance will default to Present and remain Present. Teachers will maintain records for students assigned to participate in small group or individual learning experiences on Fridays.

WHO SHOULD WE CONTACT TO REPORT AN ABSENCE, TARDY, OR EARLY DISMISSAL?

- Parents/guardians should contact the Attendance Designee by phone or email to communicate about student attendance unrelated to technology issues. Schools will post their attendance contact information on their school websites.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to submit documentation or notes via email when possible.
- Parents should communicate with the teacher about technology issues that impact a student's attendance or participation.

CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS USE "PERSONAL ABSENCE" AS AN EXCUSE?

Parents/guardians may use up to five (5) "personal absence" notes per semester. After five (5) "personal absences", all remaining absences must have appropriate documentation (e.g., medical notes, court documentation).

WHAT IF A STUDENT NEEDS AN EXTENDED ABSENCE?

The school principal/designee can approve up to five (5) days in advance. If more than five (5) days are requested, the school will forward the request to the Student Services office to review additional days. If the absence involves travel, parents/guardians are encouraged to have students take their devices with them so they can participate in virtual learning sessions as much as possible.

WHAT IF A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID OR HAS COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS?

If a student has tested positive for COVID or has COVID-like symptoms, the parent/guardian is asked to call the school daily to provide an update on the student's illness. Students are encouraged to participate when they feel well enough.

- If the student is able to and does participate virtually, he/she will be counted Present.
- If the student cannot participate because of severe symptoms, the student will be marked Absent Excused as long as the parent/guardian continues to communicate with the school until the student can return to active participation in virtual lessons.

The parent/guardian will need to provide medical documentation within the first ten (10) days of absence. Documentation may include notes from office visits, telehealth services, or test results.

DO STUDENTS HAVE TO KEEP THEIR CAMERAS ON?

Teachers will determine when students need to have their cameras on and when cameras can be optional. Teachers will define expectations for students and use cues to let them know when to have cameras on. Staff will be sensitive to the personal/environmental reasons why students may not want to be on camera. See also [Camera Considerations for Live HCS Zoom Meetings](#).

HOW CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS?

- Be aware of school start and end times.
- Be familiar with your student's teachers and subjects or classes.
- Provide a learning space with room to work and limited distractions.
- Communicate with the teachers if your student is experiencing frustration or difficulty.
- Contact the school's Attendance Designee for all absences, tardies and early dismissals.
- Create a routine that supports student learning, including sleep times, meals, noise limits.
- Talk to your student daily about his/her learning. Ask how he/she is feeling and what he/she is learning.
- Check that the school has your current contact information.
- Use a daily alarm to set reminders for getting up, attending class, etc.
- Ask teachers to set you as a guardian in Google Classroom so you can receive all emails and assignments will be added to your calendar.
- Contact the teacher(s) immediately to notify him/her/them of any technology issues.
- Ask the teacher for suggestions or other options if your student needs support.
- Contact the school counselor if there are any concerns with which the school or school division can provide assistance.

HOW WILL SCHOOLS ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM and TRUANCY?

Schools will continue to utilize their Combating Chronic Absenteeism (CCA) Teams to monitor attendance and address concerns. The team will collect daily attendance data identify students who have chronic absences and truancy concerns. The team will reach out and work with families to identify and address the causes for attendance concerns.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND LEARNING ARE A TEAM EFFORT!

HAMPTON CITY SCHOOLS

HERE! Attending to My Future

Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Contract

Student: _____ School: _____ Grade: ____ Teacher: _____

Regular school attendance is essential to academic, social, emotional, and behavioral growth. Schools will monitor student attendance and use proactive strategies to help families address the underlying problems that lead to absenteeism. Parents are encouraged to reach out to the school to share concerns or needs relative to attendance. Virginia defines “**Truancy**” as a single unexcused absence. Students who accrue more than two unexcused absences are considered “**Chronically Truant**”. The Compulsory Attendance law in the Code of Virginia, §22.1-254, requires all children attend school on a daily basis. Virginia considers a student “**Chronically Absent**” when his/her total absences exceed 10% of the total days he/she is enrolled. Attendance applies to face to face and virtual learning.

STUDENT COMMITMENT *In order to ensure my academic success, I agree to obey the following:*

- I will attend school everyday unless there is a valid reason for my absence (illness, court, emergency, pre-approved absence).
- I will report to school on time and ready to work each day.
- I will cooperate with all individuals who are involved with my attendance and overall academic success.
- I will follow all school rules so that I can remain in school.

The start time for my school is _____. Dismissal time is _____. *Student Signature* _____ *Date* _____

Violation of any of the above expectations could result in one or more of the following:

1. Referral to Attendance Recovery (alternative instructional session) opportunities
2. Parent conference
3. Referral to School-based Combating Chronic Absenteeism (CCA) Team/Administrator to develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP)
4. Referral to school administrator and/or intervention team to develop a Behavior Plan
5. Referral to school social worker (based on specific family needs) and/or community agency (if applicable)
6. Referral to the district-level Truancy Response Team (TRT)
7. Referral to Hampton Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (J&DR)

PARENT VERIFICATION *Please read and initial each statement below.*

- ____ 1. I have read and understand the above expectations. I understand school attendance is important to my child’s learning and success and know I am legally responsible for my child including his/her attendance.
- ____ 2. I understand it is important for my child to be on time to school in order to participate in activities that set the stage for the day.
- ____ 3. I understand the difference between excused absences, unexcused absences, tardies, and early dismissals.
- ____ 4. I will provide documentation from healthcare personnel for medical, dental, and mental health appointments, OR court personnel for court appearances, that result in an absence, tardy, or early dismissal for my student.
- ____ 5. I will provide written or verbal excuses for all absences, tardies, and early dismissals. (Note: Five (5) personal notes maximum per semester).
- ____ 6. I understand the steps the school will take to address truancy and chronic absenteeism including a referral to Hampton Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court at the seventh (7th) unexcused absence.
- ____ 7. I will communicate with the school nurse if my student is diagnosed with a chronic illness.
- ____ 8. I understand if there are events or concerns in the home interfering with my child’s school attendance I should seek assistance from my child’s school counselor who can assist me with the appropriate services.
- ____ 9. I agree to cooperate with school officials and community partners to ensure my child is present and prepared to learn each day.
- ____ 10. If eligible, I understand I may lose my Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) if my child does not attend school as required by law.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ *Date* _____