

What does Virginia law say about school attendance?

In brief, Virginia law:

- ☑ requires parents to send children to school;
- ☑ requires students to attend school;
- ☑ requires schools to take specific action when children are not enrolled or students fail to attend;
- ☑ authorizes law enforcement officers to pick up students who are skipping school; and
- ☑ authorizes juvenile courts to take action against parents and/or children for failure to attend school.

By making your child's school attendance a priority, you will be taking an important step in supporting your child's school success, and setting a good example.

Remember every day counts!

Attendance and Driving

Code of Virginia § [46.2-323](#) provides for the suspension of the driver's license of anyone under 18 years of age who has 10 or more unexcused absences from public school .

Notification of Social Services

Code of Virginia § [63.2-606](#). requires schools to report non-attendance of children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to local departments of social services. Families receiving TANF are required to comply with compulsory school attendance laws.

Attendance Statistics

~Poor attendance is highly correlated with dropping out of school.

~High school dropouts are 72% more likely to be unemployed as compared to high school graduates (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2003).

~Nearly 80% of individuals in prison do not have a high school diploma (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1995).

~In 2009, the average annual income for a high school dropout was \$19,540, compared to \$27,380 for a high school graduate (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2009).

~It is estimated that approximately 12 million students will dropout over the next decade or so costing the U.S. about \$3 trillion (AEE, 2007). Dropouts are far more likely to experience reduced job and income opportunities, chronic unemployment, incarceration, or require government assistance than the rest of the population.



**ATTENDANCE
MATTERS!**

21308 Monroe Road
Damascus, VA 24236
276.739.4000

Mrs. Kendra A. Honaker, Principal
Mr. Jackson Barker, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Turner, Secretary

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Students are expected to be in school every school day for the entire instructional day unless he/she is ill, has a family emergency, or has an extenuating circumstance which warrants the administration's approval.

ABSENCES:

~Parent/Guardian must call the main office in the morning on the day that student will be absent. Otherwise, you may receive a call from the school to notify you that your student is not in school and inquire about the absence.

~All absences are marked unverified/unexcused until confirmed otherwise by the parent or guardian.

~Students are allowed a maximum of seven (7) **parent notes/excuses** for the *entire* school year. Beyond that, all absences need to be excused per school board policy.

~After three (3) unverified/unexcused absences, administration will meet with your student and a letter will be sent home notifying the parent/guardian of the absences.

~After six (6) unverified/unexcused absences, administration will send a letter home requesting a parent conference at the school to resolve attendance issues/problems.

At that point, your student may be seen by a Highlands Community Services counselor to determine if there are extenuating issues that may be causing your student to be truant.

~ After seven (7) unverified/unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home and the parent/guardian and the student will be referred to the 28th District Court Service Unit for truancy charges.

EARLY DISMISSALS:

~Students must be checked out through the Main Office by a parent or guardian. Regardless of age, a student is not allowed to check him/herself out without parent/guardian consent.

~Students wishing to be dismissed from school early need to bring a parent note stating the reason for early dismissal. Students will need to give the note to the Secretary in the Main Office upon their arrival to school. It may be necessary for the Secretary to speak directly with the parent/guardian regarding the early dismissal.

~An early dismissal will count as an absence from class. **Early dismissals are limited to three (3) unexcused per semester.**

~During final exam time at the end of the school year, students will need to bring a parent/guardian note to be dismissed early after their exam. Due to the number of dismissals, **phone calls WILL NOT be accepted.** *Note: early dismissals for final exams occur only at the end of the year, not the end of the first semester.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

TARDIES:

~A student tardy to 1st period must obtain a tardy slip from the Secretary before being admitted to class. For all other classes, the student must present teacher with note/explanation.

~On the 3rd unexcused tardy, disciplinary action will take place.

~Disciplinary actions include: after school detention, loss of driving privilege to school, denial of participation in extra-curricular activities, referral to School Discipline & Attendance Committee.

~If a student misses an entire class period (checks in during 2nd period), that will count as a class period absence in addition to a tardy.

~A student must be in attendance for at least **half of the instructional day** (11:40 am) to participate in extra-curricular activities (band, athletics, games, dances, etc.)

~A student will **NOT BE** allowed to miss **more than five (5) days in a block class and or more than ten (10) days in a year-long class.**

~Class period absences may constitute truancy, and will be handled as such.