



Attendance Handbook





Glossary of Terms

Unexcused Absence – When a child is absent from school and the parent has no knowledge of and is not in support of the absence.

Child In Need of Supervision Petition (C. H. I. N. S.) – A child who, while subject to compulsory school attendance, is frequently absent without justification (see page 16 for extended definition).

C. H. I. N. S. Team – An intervention that provides the parent and child an opportunity to avoid having a formal C.H.I.N.S. Petition filed with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Attendance Officer – Personnel who assist with attendance related interventions such as home visits, calls to parents, submission of court referral packages, and attendance at court hearings. Specific *Reports are completed as identified on pages two and three.*)

Please Note - Excused absences in excess of eight (8) days should be reported to **Student Services** using form found on page 16 of the handbook.

Portsmouth Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, disabilities, or national origin in employment or its educational programs and activities.

Office of Student Services
3561 Hartford Street • Portsmouth, Virginia 23707
(757) 393-8354

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

PARENT CONTACT SHOULD BE MADE WHEN A CHILD:

- Fails to report to school, and the parent has failed to provide written documentation explaining absences.
(PLEASE NOTE: Upon return to school following an absence written documentation must be provided whether or not the child is accompanied by a parent/guardian.)

SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS:

- Make reasonable effort to contact parent/guardian to verify awareness of absence whenever a student fails to report to school.
- Make direct contact with the parent/guardian following any absence by telephone, mail, or home visit **when there has been no parental response to previous contact attempts.**
- The Principal/designee shall participate in an attendance conference with the parent/guardian, student, and teacher following the 4th **unexcused absence** to identify possible interventions.
- Initiate building level interventions following the 4th **unexcused absence and required conference** (ex. CHINS Team referral, Child Study, home visits, telephone calls, parent support initiatives).
- Provide a complete court action package to the Attendance Officer/Student Resource Liaison with written documentation to support proper implementation of identified interventions following the 4th **unexcused absence.**

TEACHER OBLIGATIONS:

- Timely conduct and post daily and/or period by period (secondary schools) attendance.
- Initiate attendance referral and forward to attendance clerk.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CLERK OBLIGATIONS:

- Following the 2nd and 3rd **unexcused absences**, contact parent to:
 - ✓ give notification of the number of unexcused absences
 - ✓ request explanation/documentation of unexcused absences **(in writing)**
 - ✓ remind parent/guardian of legislative requirements and the need to improve attendance
- Following the 4th **unexcused absence**, forward an attendance referral to the Principal/designee (complete the front in its entirety and **pay special attention to parent contact information**).
- Provide Principal/designee with written documentation needed to complete court package.
- **Provide written documentation to the Attendance Officer/Student Resource Liaison if absences continue to accrue after initiation of court package.**

ATTENDANCE OFFICER OBLIGATIONS:

- Make home visits, assist with parent/guardian calls
- **Acknowledge receipt of Court Action Referral package**
- Contact the parent/guardian regarding referral
- Identify Learnfare students
- Assist with CHINS Team process
- File court referral package following an investigation
- Forward court referral information to the appropriate sources
- **Give feedback to referring school regarding disposition of court case**

Attendance Legislation Code Requirements and Procedures



CODE - ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS (2.1-258)	PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURES
1. Any unexcused absence – Parent/guardian contacted.	1. Same as code. Make a reasonable effort to contact parent/guardian to verify knowledge whenever a student fails to report to school and maintain contact log information.
2. 1st unexcused absence – Direct contact to obtain explanation of absence and explain consequence of nonattendance.	<p>2. 1st unexcused absence – Teacher continues attempts to make contact with parent/guardian to give notification of the number of unexcused absences and obtain written documentation. This will be considered an informal assessment, and the basis for a plan to improve attendance.</p> <p>2nd unexcused absence – Attendance Clerk will send letter to parent/guardian informing them of the student's attendance record, possible consequences, and the need for a response (see Letter to Parent p.12).</p> <p>3rd unexcused absence – Teacher will initiate attendance referral and forward to Attendance Clerk. The Principal/designee will schedule conference with parent/guardian regarding unexcused absences and document on the back of the attendance referral: 1.) assessment of the problem -ex. lack of parental involvement and 2.) intervention recommendations - ex. CHINS Team referral, parent workshops, family support plan, etc.</p>
3. 4th unexcused absence – Principal/designee will schedule a conference within 10 days to be held within 15 days.	3. 4th unexcused absence – The principal/designee will ensure follow-up on identified building level interventions (see 5 th absence #2).
4. 5th unexcused absence – Complaint to intake (juvenile) or to Magistrate (parent/guardian)	<p>4. 5th unexcused absence – The principal/designee will begin the court referral process by ensuring completion of the court referral package, including the CHINS Team referral and forward to Attendance Officer/Youth Risk Prevention.</p> <p>5. Court package forwarded to Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court</p>



2019-2020 SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Number of Absences	Procedures
1 Absence	Teachers take daily attendance. Auto notifications are sent to parents via the messenger system. Teacher upon student returning from absent make sure student has a signed note from parent with parent number.
2 Absences	Auto notifications are sent to parents via the messenger system.
3 Absences	Teachers initiate attendance referral and forward to attendance clerk. Document both contacts in Powerschool.
4 Absences	Auto notifications are sent to parents via the messenger system.
5 Absences	Send an Attendance Letter and place a phone call. A MANDATORY Attendance Referral needs to be completed and submitted to the Attendance Liaison w/all documents contacts attached. This must take place before a home visit is conducted! *Home visit will be conducted. *Mandatory Parent Conference-CHINS Completed.
6 Absences	School Personnel call home and document phone call in Powerschool.
7 Absences	School personnel call home on the day of absence and also send an Attendance Letter. Document both contacts in Powerschool. *CHINS Submitted
8 Absences	Teacher phone call home and document call in Powerschool.
9 Absences	Teachers phone call home and document call in Powerschool
10 Absences	Send Final Attempt letter before court action and phone call to parent. *Court Action

A CHINS and Court Action cannot take place unless all attendance procedures are followed!

PORTSMOUTH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATTENDANCE REFERRAL

PART I: *To be completed by teacher*

Student: _____	DOB: _____	Age: _____	Sex: _____ Race: _____
School: _____	Grade: _____	Student Number: _____	
Teacher: _____	Special Ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Parent/Guardian: _____	Street Address: _____ _____		
Foster Care <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Case Worker _____	Apt. # _____ Zip Code _____		
Home Phone _____	Work Phone _____ _____		
Emergency Contact Person _____	Emergency Number _____		

A. Attendance Information *(This information must be completed prior to submission to Student Services).*

Days in membership _____

Days absent this year _____

Number unexcused absences _____

(do not include suspensions)

Number of excused absences _____

Number days suspended _____

B. Parent Contact *(This information must be completed to show proof of intervention should court action become necessary)*

Date(s) attendance letter mailed

Date(s) home visit(s) SRL/SSW/AT

Date(s) of telephone contact

Results of contact:

Referred by

Telephone

Teacher Signature

Title

Date

PART II: (To be completed by Principal/Designee)

Parent Conference Held

_____ *Date*

ASSESSMENT OF PROBLEM (*What factors contributed to truancy?*)

INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS (*include timeframe for achieving compliance*)

COMMENTS *(include performance requirements that constitute compliance)*

Principal/Designee

Date

Parent/Guardian

Date

***** Parents must receive a copy of this page*****

An Equal Opportunity Employer



PRINCIPAL'S REQUEST FOR COURT ACTION

ATTENDANCE LAW VIOLATION (Code of Virginia §22.1-258)

TO: Office of Student Services

FROM: School _____

Address _____

RE: Student Name _____

DOB _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Student Number _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

Membership	_____	days
Present	_____	days
Excused Absences	_____	days
Unexcused Absences	_____	days (w/o suspensions)
Number of Suspensions	_____	days

Signature of Principal

Date

SRL/SSW Signature

Date

Notification of request for court action sent to parent:

Date _____ Coordinator's Approval _____

Coordinator's Signature

An Equal Opportunity Employer

PRINCIPAL'S COURT REFERRAL CHECKLIST

Re: _____ Membership _____ Days
_____ Address: _____
_____ Age: _____ Present _____ Days
Birthday: _____ Excused Absences _____ Days
(w/o suspensions) _____
Number of Suspensions _____ Days

Contacts

Dates

Principal (verbal)

Unexcused Absences _____ Days

Teacher (verbal)

School Social Worker

Student Resource Liaison

Other

Principal's Letter to Parent

Teacher's Letter (s) to Parent:

Witnesses to be subpoenaed:

1. Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
2. Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Principal's Signature

Date

DATA FOR COURT REFERRAL

Student's Name _____

DOB _____

_____ School

Date of Enrollment _____

Days in Membership _____

Excused Absences _____

Unexcused Absences w/o suspensions _____

Number of suspensions _____

Attach The Following:

- A. Copy of attendance record (log) kept by the teacher _____
- B. Copy of parent/guardian contacts documenting unexcused absences _____
- C. Report of Youth Risk contacts with student, parent and outside agencies _____
- D. Copy of Principal's Attendance letter to parent _____
- E. Copy of Teacher/School Social Worker letter of attendance _____
- F. Copy of Coordinator's letter to parent _____
- G. Copy of Teacher, School Social Worker, Resource Liaison, and/or School Psychologist referrals for services this school year _____
- H. Copy of any other information that may be used at the court hearing (outside agency data) _____
- I. A list of **interventions and outcomes** documenting compliance/non-compliance _____
- J. Copy of CHINS Team referral _____
- K. Summary of attendance history, if applicable _____

Portsmouth Public Schools

Office of the Principal

Everyone's Elementary School
1502 World Place • Happy Haven 67890
(377) 999-0000 • Fax (377) 999-0078

SAMPLE

Counselor's Report on:

Student Number: 0000000

Date: February 20, 2018

_____ is a seven year old First Grade student who has **currently missed 51** days of school. Of her 51 days absent, 26 have been excused (all 26 days due to head lice) and 25 days have been unexcused (12 days due to head lice). She has been out with head lice six times this year.

_____ is currently in her third year of First Grade. She has repeated the past two years because the number of days absent prevented her from mastering all of the First Grade objectives.

During the 14-15 school year **she missed 60 days of First Grade.**

During the 15-16 school year **she missed 44 days of First Grade.**

During the 16-17 school year **she missed 56 days of Kindergarten.**

The school nurse has spoken to the parent/guardian on several occasions regarding the treatment of head lice. Parents did not attend a seminar offered on head lice treatment. Attempts have also been made to contact the family by the Assistant Principal.

Three Attendance referrals were turned in to the Attendance Officer/ Resource Liaison last year on the following dates: _____, _____, and _____.

Counselor

Everyone's Elementary School

SAMPLE

**PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TEACHER'S MONTHLY LOG OF PARENT CONTACTS**

TEACHER: _____ **SCHOOL:** _____

Date	Person Contacted (name/relationship)	Initiated by	Reason for Contact	Type of Contact	Results

Initiated by:
 1 –Liaison
 2 – Parent
 3 – Administration
 4 - Other - Specify

*** Reason for Contact**
 1-Attendance
 2-Discipline
 3-Other Specify

****Type of Contact**
 1-Telephone
 2-Letter
 3-Conference
 4-Other-Specify

Dear Sir or Madam:

On March 27, 2018, the General Assembly of Virginia passed into law new legislation governing school attendance. This communication serves to inform you of that legislation and corresponding procedures developed by Portsmouth City Public Schools.

In summary, the legislation states the following: Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and there is no indication that the parent is aware of the absence, reasonable effort will be made to contact the parent and obtain an explanation for the absence.

When a student is absent from school for a total of **five scheduled school days** for the school year and there is no indication that the parent is aware of the absences and a reasonable effort to notify the parent has failed, an attempt to make direct contact by telephone or in person will be made to obtain an explanation for the absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued non-attendance. At this time the parent, the student and the attendance officer will develop a plan to resolve the non- attendance.

If the student is absent an additional day (**day six**) after direct contact with the parent and there is no indication that the parent is aware of the absence a conference will be held within fifteen days to resolve issues related to the non-attendance. If there is another absence (**day seven**) and there is no indication that the parent is aware of or supports the absence the school principal will proceed with one or both of the following actions: 1) **filing a complaint** with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision (petition against the child) or 2) **instituting proceedings** against the parent. If both parents have been awarded joint physical custody and the school has received notice of such, both parents will be notified.

Portsmouth City Public Schools will begin the parent notification process leading to filing of a legal petition after the **fourth unexcused absence** by sending a letter to the parent/guardian or making a home visit to obtain a written explanation of the absence. If there is a **fifth unexcused absence** an attendance referral will be completed by the teacher and sent to the Principal. A **conference** with the student, parent, and appropriate school staff will be held within fifteen days to make recommendations for assessment/resolution of the problem. If there is a **sixth unexcused absence** the school principal will review the recommendations from the conference to ensure implementation. If there is a **seventh unexcused absence**, the school principal will initiate a petition with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court against either/or both the child and the parent.

If you need further information call Youth Risk Prevention at (757)-393-8411.

SAMPLE LETTER #1

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Days in membership _____
Days absent this year _____
Number of excused absences _____
Number unexcused absences _____
Number of suspensions _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please contact _____ at _____ upon receipt of this letter to address your child's school attendance. As shown above your child has accumulated _____ unexcused absences; state law requires your child to attend school regularly. Please provide your school with written documentation verifying knowledge of each day your child was absent. Failure to comply with this request **may** result in court action as required by the Code of Virginia § 22.1-258.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Teacher

*To be placed on letterhead

Portsmouth Public Schools

Office of Student Services

3651 Hartford Street • Portsmouth, Virginia 23707
(757) 393-8411 • Fax (757) 393-5140

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Days in membership _____

Days absent this year _____

Number of excused absences _____

Number unexcused absences _____

Number of suspensions _____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child has been referred to Youth Risk Prevention due to the number of unexcused absences from school he/she has accumulated. Attendance laws for the Commonwealth of Virginia require that your child attend school regularly. After numerous attempts we have been unable to obtain a response from you regarding this matter.

Please contact _____ at _____ upon receipt of this letter to address this very important issue. **Failure to comply with this request will result in court action as required by the Code of Virginia § 22.1-279 and a fine up to \$500.00.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Attendance Liaison

Student Services Coordinator

Summary of Attendance Legislation

22.1-258. Appointment of attendance officers; notification when pupil fails to report to school.

Every school board shall have power to appoint one or more attendance officers, who shall be charged with the enforcement of the provisions of this article. Where no attendance officer is appointed by the School Board, the division superintendent shall act as Attendance Officer.

Whenever any pupil fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, a reasonable effort to notify by telephone the parent to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence shall be made by the attendance officer, other school personnel, or volunteers organized by the school administration for this purpose. Any such volunteer shall not be liable for any civil damages for any acts or omissions resulting from making such reasonable efforts to notify parents and obtain such result of gross negligence or willful misconduct. This subsection shall not be construed to limit, withdraw, or overturn any defense or immunity already existing in statutory or common law or to affect any claim occurring prior to the effective date of this law. School divisions are encouraged to use non-instructional personnel for this notice.

Whenever any pupil fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year and no indication has been received by school personnel that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, and a reasonable effort to notify the parent has failed, the school principal or his designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent, either in person or through telephone conversation, by the attendance officer to obtain an explanation for the pupil's absence and to explain to the parent the consequences of continued nonattendance. The attendance officer and the pupil's parent shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the pupil's nonattendance.

If the pupil is absent an additional day after the direct contact with the pupil's parent and the attendance officer has received no indication that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the attendance officer shall schedule a conference within ten school days with the pupil, his parent, and school personnel, which conference may include other community service providers, to resolve issues related to the pupil's nonattendance. The conference shall be held no later than fifteen school days after the sixth absence. Upon the next absence by such pupil without indication to the attendance officer that the pupil's parent is aware of and supports the pupil's absence, the school principal or his designee shall enforce the provisions of this article by either or both of the following (i) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the pupil is a child in need of supervision as defined in 16.1-228 or (ii) instituting proceeding against the parent pursuant to 18.2-371 or 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this section. In the event that both parents have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to 20-124.2, and the school has received notice of such order, both parents shall be notified at the last known addresses of the parents.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or division superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law as set forth in this article.

Compulsory Attendance Information

22.1 – 254. Compulsory attendance required; excuses and waivers, alternative education program attendance; exemptions from article.

A. Except as otherwise provided in this article, every parent guardian, or other person in the Commonwealth having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday shall, during the period of each year the public schools are in session and for the same number of days and hours per day as the public schools, send such child *promptly* to a public school or to a private, denominational or parochial school or have such child taught by a tutor or teacher of qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent or provide for home instruction of such child as described in § 22.1-254. 1.

For the purpose of determining compliance with the requirements of this section that a child be sent to school promptly for the “same number of days and hours per day as the public schools,” the Board of Education shall promulgate regulation, pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§2.2-4000 et seq.), defining “chronically tardy” to identify those children who are in violation of this article by reason of being habitually and without justification absent from school for a substantial portion of the day because of routine and significant late arrival to school.

As prescribed in the regulations of the Board of Education, the requirements of this section may also be satisfied by sending a child to an alternative program of study or work/study offered by a public, private, denominational or parochial school or by a public or private degree-granting institution of higher education. Further, in the case of any five-year old child who is subject to the provisions of this subsection, the pre-kindergarten program, including a Head Start program, or in a private, denominational or parochial educational pre-kindergarten program.

Instruction in the home of a child or children by the parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of such child or children shall not be classified or defined as a private, denominational or parochial school.

The requirement of this section shall apply to (i) any child in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections who has not passed his eighteenth birthday and (ii) any child whom the division superintendent has required to take a special program of prevention, intervention, or remediation as provided in subsection C of § 22.1-253.13:1 and in § 22.1-254.01. However, the requirements of this section shall not apply to any child who has obtained a high school diploma, its equivalent, or a certificate of completion or who has otherwise complied with compulsory school attendance requirements as set forth in this article.

“Child in need of supervision”

1. A child who, while subject to compulsory school attendance, is habitually and without justification absent from school, and (i) the child has been offered an adequate opportunity to receive the benefit of any and all educational services programs that are required to be provided by law and which meet the child’s particular educational needs, (ii) the school system from which the child is absent or other appropriate agency has made a reasonable effort to effect the child’s regular attendance without success, and (iii) the school system has provided documentation that it has complied with the provisions of § 22.1-258; or

2. A child who, without reasonable cause and without the consent of his parent, lawful custodian or placement authority, remains away from or deserts or abandons his family or lawful custodian on more than one occasion or escapes or remains away without proper authority from a residential care facility in which he has been placed by the court, and (i) such conduct presents a clear and substantial danger to the child’s life or health, (ii) the child or his family is in need of treatment, rehabilitation or services not presently being received, and (iii) the intervention of the court is essential to provide the treatment, rehabilitation or services needed by the child or his family.

“The court” or the **“juvenile court”** or the **“juvenile and domestic relations court”** means the juvenile and domestic relations district court of each county or city.

“Delinquent act” means (i) an act designated a crime under the law of this Commonwealth, or an ordinance of any city, county, town or service district, or under federal law, (ii) a violation of § 18.2-308.7, or (iii) a violation of a court order as provided for in § 16.1-292, but shall not include an act other than a violation of § 18.2-308.7, which is otherwise lawful, but is designated a crime only if committed by a child. For purposes of §§ 16.1-241 and 16.1-278.9, the term shall include a refusal to take a blood or breath test in violation of § 18.2 or similar ordinance of any county, city or town.

“Delinquent child” means a child who has committed a delinquent act or an adult who has committed a delinquent act prior to his eighteenth birthday, except where the jurisdiction of juvenile court has been terminated under the provisions of § 16.1-269.6.

“Department” means the Department of Juvenile Justice and **“Director”** means the administrative head in charge thereof or such of his assistants and subordinates as are designated by him to discharge the duties imposed upon him under this law.

Report of Excessive Excused Absences

To: Student Services Coordinator

From: _____
Principal/Designee

Date: _____

Re: Excessive Excused Absences

To date the student named below has been absent from school _____ days. Documentation has been provided and **is attached** however an investigation is requested.

_____ Student

_____ School

_____ Grade

_____ Parent/Guardian

_____ Address

_____ Contact Number

Student Services Office Only

Contact Date(s):

Contact Results:

Assessment of the problem:

Recommendation(s):