



## Attendance Guidelines for Henderson Elementary and PWCS

### Notification Of Absence

Parents are notified daily when students are absent from school and the school has not received prior notification of the absence. Text messages are sent to elementary school parents in the morning.

- Parents are to contact their child's school within five school days of the student's absence. Student attendance records are updated from unverified to excused or unexcused after the school receives parent verification of the absence.
- Unverified absences are changed to unexcused if the school does not receive parent verification within five school days.
- Attendance letters are sent to notify parents of truancy status when students accrue three unexcused absences. Letters are also sent to notify parents of excessive excused absences and if their student becomes chronically absent. Learn more about attendance letters at [WWW.PWCS.Edu](http://WWW.PWCS.Edu)

### Report Absence to School

Parents should notify the school before, or at the start of, the school day when their child will be absent. Parents must **send written or electronic communication** citing the reason(s) for the absence to the school no more than five school days following the date of the absence. Student attendance while participating in school-sponsored activities will be updated by the school.

### Excused Absences

Examples of an excused absence may include, but are not limited to, the following reasons:

- Illness, isolation, or medical exam or treatment
- Mental/behavioral health illness, disorder, or disturbance
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious, faith, or commemorative observances
- Family emergencies with student's home
- Hazardous conditions to get to school
- Postsecondary exploration (seniors)
- Court appearance
- Visiting active-duty parent/guardian
- Suspension
- Other reasons deemed acceptable by the principal

### Unexcused Absences

Examples of unexcused absences include but are not limited to, the following reasons:

- All-day truancy
- Class truancy
- Missing a ride, a bus, or car trouble
- Prearranged absences without proper prior notification or justification and prior approval
- Failure to timely produce an appropriate explanation for an absence or requested documentation

### Prearranged Absences

Parents are encouraged to minimize absences during school hours and to plan any family trips and vacations when school is not in session.

- Requests for prearranged absences for longer than one school day should be for extenuating circumstances and must be submitted in writing to the principal within a reasonable time for the school to review, approve, and assign the absence type of excused or unexcused.
- **Prearranged absences for longer than five school days must also be reviewed by the Student Health and Wellness Department.**

- Prearranged absences that are **beyond 15 consecutive** school days **will result in the withdrawal** of the student from school (which is required under Virginia law).
- Teachers shall have discretion to decide the type and amount of work and when students shall make up work for preapproved absences. **Teachers are not required to provide assignments in advance of the absences but may do so at their discretion.** Parents and students are encouraged to work with teachers before the absence to develop a plan for making up missed work, including expected deadlines.

### **Late Arrival of Students (Tardy)**

It is important to attend school every school day and arrive on time. Students arriving after the official start of the class or school day will be considered late. When students arrive late at school they must be escorted by a parent to the front office. Records regarding tardiness will be maintained and appropriate discipline imposed for recurring tardiness.

### **Early Dismissal of Students**

Parents must provide advance notice and permission and comply with the school's release procedures when a student leaves the school premises during regular school hours for any reason. **Henderson Elementary does not release students between the hours of 3:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.** This is done for the safety of all students. The principal shall not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized to assume responsibility for the student.

### **Mandatory Withdrawal**

**Students will be withdrawn from PWCS student membership rolls after 15 consecutive days of absence regardless of whether their absences are excused or unexcused (as required by the Virginia Administrative Code).**

- Withdrawn students are not excused from compulsory school attendance requirements and are expected to re-enroll as soon as possible.
- Students who withdraw to attend a non-PWCS school should notify the previously attended school as soon as possible and make reasonable attempts to follow the withdrawal procedures.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

Chronic absenteeism is when a student misses 10% or more of school, excused or unexcused.

- For example, if by the end of the first quarter, which is typically about 40 days long, a student has missed 4 days of school, that student has been chronically absent from school.
- If your student **misses just two days of school per month**, by the end of the school year, they will have been **chronically absent** from school.
- If your student is chronically absent from school, you may be contacted by school staff to discuss ways to get your student back on track. You may also receive a letter regarding absences. Learn more about PWCS Attendance letters on the PWCS website.

### **Truancy**

Truancy is when students incur multiple unexcused absences. **PWCS addresses truancy following Virginia Department of Education regulations.**

- When a student incurs **three unexcused absences**, a letter is sent to the parent/guardian.
- At **five unexcused absences**, students and parents/guardians are required to attend an Initial Conference to create an attendance plan to decrease the number of absences.
- If students **continue to incur unexcused absences** after the Initial Conference, the student and parent/guardian will **need to attend a subsequent meeting** (Interagency Team Meeting) to review the attendance plan.
- If the student or parent/guardian is **noncompliant with compulsory attendance** requirements, the school **attendance officer may contact the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Intake** to file a complaint alleging that the student is a child in need of supervision or to initiate proceedings against the parent.

More information concerning attendance may be found:

[https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/student\\_services/attendance/guidelines](https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/student_services/attendance/guidelines)

**\*Please retain this letter for your information.**