

# Bland County Public Schools

## Attendance Policy

### A. Generally

The primary objective of **Bland County Public Schools** Attendance Guidelines is to establish minimum attendance requirements to ensure the academic success of every student and to adhere to the **Code of Virginia** regulations that have been established for compulsory attendance.

When a student is unable to attend school, the parent/guardian's are requested to notify the school that their child will be absent and state the reason for the absence.

### B. Definitions

- **Absent** means a student not being in attendance in regularly scheduled classes. Approved school-related activities do not count as an absence.
- **Present** means a student being in attendance in regularly scheduled classes.
- **Tardy** means a student not being in his/her assigned class when the class begins.
- **Early dismissal** means a student leaving class or school early.

#### *Excused absences:*

1. An illness or incapacitating condition of the student or of immediate family member which requires the temporary help of the student. A written parental explanation is required.
2. A death in the immediate family. (Parents, step-parents, guardians, grandparents, brother/sister, step-brother/sister, aunt/uncle, husband/wife, child, or other relative living in the same household).
3. Recognized religious holidays/events. Parents must apply in writing to the principal ten days prior for a student to be excused. Such applications must include a statement from the church.
4. Required court appearance. A student may be excused from school for a required court appearance. A written note from appropriate authorities must be provided.

5. Extenuating circumstances. The principal has the authority to determine if a student absence was the result of an extenuating circumstance.

***Unexcused absences:*** Any absence not verified by a doctor's statement and not fitting the five definitions of an excused absence listed above. Absences for out-of-school suspension, or other non-educational activities are unexcused.

### **C. Make-Up Work**

Upon return to class after an excused or unexcused absence, students shall be informed of the work they missed, the teacher shall assign the make-up work, and determine when the work will be completed (generally three days). All graded work such as tests or quizzes that must be done at school shall be completed before or after school, during lunch, or during another appropriate time. At no time is a student to miss additional class time to make up missed work.

Failure of the student to make up work for either an excused absence or unexcused absence may result in the student not receiving credit for the work not completed.

### **D. Follow-Up of Absences**

1. Teachers will keep an accurate record of daily absences by students.
2. The school will make a reasonable attempt to contact a parent/guardian of each student who is absent everyday and to obtain an explanation for the student's absence where there is no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the absence. A log will be kept of call attempts.
3. After three (3) unexcused absences, the school will send a letter home reminding the parent/guardian of the number of absences and the importance of good attendance.
4. Upon a fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence, and in accordance with Virginia law, a parent conference will be scheduled to develop a plan to encourage student attendance.
5. If a sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence occurs, the school administrator will schedule a conference with the student and parent/guardian within a 10 day period in an attempt to resolve the student's noncompliance with the compulsory attendance law. The school may include community service providers to assist the student and family with the issue of noncompliance.

6. If a eighth (8th) absence occurs, the Principal shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules 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 proceedings against the parent pursuant to § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the Principal shall provide written documentation of the efforts already undertaken to resolve the pupil's absence. If the student's parents have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody arrangement, then both parents shall be notified at their last known addresses. The Principal shall contact the Superintendent when a student is referred to the court for failure to comply with the compulsory attendance regulations.
7. If a student is absent for more than eight (8) days and does not have a doctor's statement for the additional absences, the procedure for three (3) unexcused absences will be followed. The family will be invited to school for a conference. Additional absences will be considered unexcused and the procedures listed in (4.-7.) above will be followed. Extenuating circumstances will be considered in the application of this policy.

### **E. Tardies and Early Dismissals**

The student shall have his/her parents or guardians contact the school or send a note stating the reason for tardiness or for early dismissals. Excessive tardiness and early dismissals will be investigated and appropriate disciplinary action will be administered.

Parents will receive a letter when their student has five (5) tardies or early dismissals. If students have ten (10) tardies or early dismissals, a letter will be sent home and the procedure for three (3) unexcused absences will be followed. The procedures listed in (4.-7.) above will be followed for any additional tardies or early dismissals.