

**Date Approved
April 2, 2019**

Virtus Academy of South Carolina Student Absences and Excuses

VASC believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. However, the Board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable.

Any student in grades K through 12 who misses school must present a written excuse, signed by his/her parent/legal guardian or health practitioner. VASC's administration will keep all excuses confidential.

If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school within the student's third day back, he/she will automatically receive an unlawful absence. If a student brings a false (or forged) excuse, the teacher will refer the student to the school administration for appropriate action.

Students will be considered lawfully absent under the following circumstances:

- They are ill and their attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
- There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family.
- The student has a doctor's appointment.
- There is a recognized religious holiday of their faith.
- Prearranged absences for other reasons and/or extreme hardships at the discretion of the Principal. Principal approval for prearranged absences will consider the number of other lawful or unlawful absences on the student's record for that school year as well as the reason for the impending absence.
- A child in foster care who must be absent due to a certified court appearance or related court ordered activity including, but not limited to, court ordered treatment services.

Students will be considered unlawfully absent under the following circumstances:

- They are willfully absent from school without the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian (ex., skipping school).
- They are absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of their parent/legal guardian (ex., oversleeping, missing the bus, vacation).

Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.

If a student accrues three unlawful absences in a row or five total unlawful absences within a school year, the student is considered truant, and the school will initiate an attendance intervention plan to determine the reason for the absences and solutions to improve attendance. If attendance is not improved, the parent/legal guardian may face court intervention and a referral to the Department of Social Services.

If a student in grades K through 12 goes beyond the 10 days of absences, the Principal will make the decision on the student's promotion or retention based on the student's academic achievement, attendance history, and any other pertinent student records.

VASC will utilize a written intervention plan for improving student attendance. The purpose of the plan will be to link students with attendance problems and their families to all appropriate school and community resources.

VASC will be responsible for implementing and expediting medical homebound instruction for students experiencing a prolonged illness or injury requiring them to be absent from school.