

Battenkill Valley Supervisory Union
Arlington Town School District
Sandgate Town School District

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
Code F2

Philosophy/Beliefs

Regular school attendance is essential to learning. Attendance is critical in successful school performance and in ensuring each student reach his/her greatest potential. Research has, for years suggested that student academic performance corresponds significantly to attendance: the more a student is in school and the more a student is exposed to quality teachers, the better the chances are for the student to be successful. As we challenge our students to reach their potential, school attendance is an important ingredient in success. We also realize that significant absenteeism in a class by individual students also affects other students in that class as the teacher must spend added time with students who have been absent or tardy and have missed lessons or work.

With the above as a solid philosophical and practical base, the Arlington School Board has adopted a mandatory attendance policy as outlined below. The intent, and the intent of Vermont State Law, is to ensure that students are in school and learning. Therefore, regular daily attendance takes precedence over other situations, such as vacations and personal appointments.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Arlington School District to encourage attendance for the full number of days during which school is held for all students enrolled in Pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.

Legal Citation: VSA T.16 §1121, 1122.

Procedure for Absences

These Administrative Procedures are intended to support the efforts of administrators in each of the schools of the Arlington School District as they work with their communities and staff to establish positive attendance patterns for each student in their respective districts. Administrative attention to establish positive attendance patterns for students with a tendency to poor attendance will be a priority.

I. Definition of Absences

A student not present in class for any reason is considered absent. An absence is classified in one of four categories:

1. **Excused and doesn't count toward accumulated absences:** Illness with medical note from doctor, death in the family, medical appointments, court, and religious holidays as well as college visits with documentation from the college.

2. **Excused /School-Sponsored Activity** doesn't count toward accumulated absences: Field trips, athletics events, music events, and all other school-approved activities. Students may lose this privilege if not in good academic standing.
3. **Excused by parent but counts toward accumulated absences:** Notes from home verifying the absence are required
4. **Truancy** consists of:
 - Being absent from school without the authorization of parent/guardian and/or school authorities. An unexcused absence is considered a "cut."
 - Excessive absenteeism is defined as cumulative absences above 20 days.

Procedures.

I. Reporting of Absences

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school, either through a note, phone call or through email in the case of planned and unplanned absences giving the child's name, date of absence, and reason for the absence. If the school is not notified, the absence will be deemed unexcused.

It must be clearly understood that simply notifying the school of an absence does not automatically excuse the absence. School officials reserve the right to check out the validity of the note, phone call, or email and whether the reason for the absence denotes an excused absence.

In a normal school year, the maximum number of days of absence from school is 20 days. At the elementary school level, absences beyond this number may result in the student being considered for retention if the student's performance does not meet grade level learning benchmarks, as well as for any other legal actions. At the middle and high school level, absences beyond this number may result in a loss of credit, as well as for any other legal actions.

II. Fisher Elementary School Actions.

After a student is absent a total of **5 days** cumulatively from school, the following will occur:

- personal contact with parent/guardian
- appropriate support services offered to parent/guardian and student
- documentation maintained at school level with copies to guidance and teacher.

After a student is absent a total of **10 days** cumulatively from school, the following will occur:

- letter to parents from the principal;
- copy of letter to classroom teacher, guidance counselor and school nurse;
- follow-up telephone call from the principal to the parent.

After a student is absent a total of **15 days** cumulatively from school, the following will occur:

- letter to parents from the principal;
- copy of letter to classroom teacher, guidance counselor and school nurse;
- copy of letter to superintendent
- mandatory parent meeting with the principal. (If parent does not come to scheduled meeting with the principal, a letter will be sent to the police/sheriff/SRO with the request to contact the parent.)

After a student is absent a total of **20 days** cumulatively from school, the following will occur:

- letter from the superintendent to the parents;
- copy of letter to principal, classroom teacher, guidance counselor and school nurse;
- copy of letter to the police/sheriff/SRO;
- copy of letter to the Arlington School Board chairperson;
- mandatory parent meeting with Superintendent–and Principal; the Superintendent will then make a determination relative to further legal action and other steps (e.g. referral to police, state’s attorney, court of action, possible retention and future action schedule as appropriate).

Tardiness

Tardiness to school is also an area of concern. Students who come late to school are affected negatively, themselves, and add disruptions to the classroom. Students need to arrive to school on time and ready to learn. If a student does not take the bus, parents are responsible for getting their children to school on time and we ask that every effort is made in this area.

After being tardy **5 times** during a month, parents will receive a reminder from school about the importance of being on time to start each day.

III. Arlington Middle/High School Actions

A student is allowed 10 absences in a semester course and 20 absences in a full year course. All school related excused absences (i.e. Field Trips, Sports, etc.), do not count toward the total number of absences. All other unexcused absences, including excused absences, will count toward the total number of absences. Absences beyond the allowed number will result in a loss of academic credit as well as other legal actions.

If a student exceeds the number of allowed absences due to extenuating circumstances, he/she can appeal the loss of credit to the Principal by providing documentation for their absences.

A parent/guardian may appeal loss of credit to the Principal, Superintendent or School Board when excessive absences are due to extenuating circumstances.”

Students who are absent from school or from any class without permission will be considered truant and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Make-Up Work

- Students who have an excused absence, have the same number of days they were absent from school to make up the work missed. Failure to make up work may result in academic penalties.
- It is the student's responsibility to request missing assignments. Parents may request assignments for a student who will be absent for illness by calling the school office.

Tardiness

Students who accumulate 5 tardies in a quarter will receive a Principal's Assistance. Every other tardy thereafter will result in a Principal's Assistance.

Family Vacations

Family vacations during the regular school year are discouraged as students will be forced to miss valuable class time. If a student is going to be absent, he/she is responsible for all work missed. Arrangements should be made in advance with each teacher. Absences due to family vacations count toward accumulated absences.

Replaced former policy F2 Updated September 28, 2011

	Date Adopted	Replaces Policy	Policy Updated
Battenkill Valley Supervisory Union	August 25, 2004		8/17/2016
Arlington Town School District			9/14/2016
Sandgate Town School District			10/13/16