

## **ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

### **Absences - Call Line: 703-533-2626**

#### **Keep in Touch (KIT) Attendance Messages**

If you receive a KIT phone call and/or email message notifying you of an absence and you know the reason, please call the Longfellow 24-hour Attendance to leave a message stating the reason.

If you do not know the reason for the absence, or if you believe you received the message in error, please ask your child(ren) for an explanation. Then please email or call the Longfellow staff member who would best be able to verify the reason. The staff member could be a teacher, a counselor, an administrator, the clinic aide, or another appropriate adult. The staff member will let you know if the absence can be verified and will pass the information on to the Attendance Secretary. If you have questions, please contact Ann Vari, the Longfellow Attendance Secretary, by email ([Ann.Vari@fcps.edu](mailto:Ann.Vari@fcps.edu)) or phone (703-533-2601).

#### **Excused - versus - Unexcused Absences**

Our policy on whether an absence is excused or unexcused is based on the law of the State of Virginia.

Absences are excused **ONLY** for the following reasons: illness, medical appointment, death in the family, observance of a religious obligation, and suspension from school. Reasons such as missing a bus, traffic, and family trips are not valid and are not excused. On rare occasions we will excuse travel if you present a verifiable itinerary that includes experiences that are truly educational based on the curriculum of FCPS (e.g., guided tour of a national park, including learning about plant and animal species and geology). Travel, in general, though possibly educational, will not be excused. Family trips should be planned during the roughly ten weeks of vacation your child has each year.

Regular attendance is important for successful progress. We are being rather strict about this policy because of the emphasis on SOL tests and FCPS promotion benchmarks. In the past, regular attendance would have assisted a few students in passing (instead of failing) their SOLs and benchmarks. There is no substitute for regular attendance!

#### **Early Check-Out**

Parents who wish to check out students during school hours should send a note stating the time and reason. Students should take early check-out notes to the main office prior to 7:45 a.m. Please do not call the attendance line to arrange an early check-out. If a student is to walk, ride a bike, or take a cab, the parent-signed note must so state. If a person other than the parent is to pick up a student, a note must state the person's name. Students will come to the main office at the appropriate time and will only be released when the adult comes into the office to sign them out. Students who later return to school must sign back in at the main office and receive a pass to class.

## **Tardiness to School & Classes**

All students who report to school after the 7:45 a.m. bell must sign in at the main office and bring a note from home explaining the reason for tardiness. Tardies are excused or unexcused based on the criteria stated above. Repeated tardiness is disruptive to the educational process and will result in disciplinary action.

## **Unplanned All-Day Absences**

If some emergency requires absence from school, the parent should inform the school by calling the 24-Hour Attendance Line before 9:30 a.m. If the student is absent due to illness, the parent should include a description of the symptoms in the message. If the parent does not contact the school, the Keep in Touch system will attempt to contact the parent by automatic phone call and by email. If the Keep in Touch system is unsuccessful in contacting the parent, the student must bring a note from home to the main office specifying the reason for and the date of the absence. Parents also may leave a message on the 24-Hour Attendance Line.

## **Prearranged Absences**

Parents may sometimes request in advance that their child(ren) be excused from school for reasons listed above. When these occasions occur, students must bring a note from home to the main office or send the Grade Level Administrator (Ms. O'Hara-8th Grade; Ms. Padgett-7th Grade) an email with a copy to the Attendance Secretary (Ann Vari). The note or email should explain the circumstances and include dates of the departure and return, if known. If the absence is approved, the student will receive a prearranged absence form to take to all teachers. Requests for prearranged absences should be sent one week in advance of departure date. This may not be accomplished by calling the attendance line.

## **Homework During Illness**

Due to the high volume of requests (on one day it would have required Main Office personnel to make 476 individual teacher contacts), the parent is responsible for requesting assignments from individual teachers. The main office cannot assume this responsibility. You may contact teachers by referring to the email addresses at Communicating With Staff.

Short-term Illness of Three Days Or Less: Parents should review information on Blackboard.com. For excused absences of one to three days, students will be given ample time to make up the work missed upon returning to school (generally one make-up day for each day of absence).

Illness of More Than Three Days: For an excused absence, the parent may call the guidance office in order to request assignments.

Homebound: Homebound instruction is available to all students who anticipate an extended absence due to serious illness of at least four weeks. Medical statements indicating such an extended illness are required. As soon as there are indications of a prolonged illness, please telephone the guidance counselor.