

West Virginia Virtual Academy Attendance Policy and Instructional Time

Compulsory school attendance begins with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to July 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a full-time publicly funded kindergarten program and continues to the 17th birthday or for as long as the student continues to be enrolled in a school system after the 17th birthday. [ARTICLE 8. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. W.V. Code [§18-8-1a.](#)]

Since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) guidance has emphasized the importance of monitoring and recording student attendance/engagement for in-person and virtual learning scenarios. High-quality attendance data for all students is critically important.

As a reminder:

1. Schools, districts, and the WVDE are required to report attendance data for all students, including reports produced for state and federal purposes. Teachers and administrators need accurate and reliable data to help them monitor student progress and determine needed supports. Currently, we must rely on attendance data to determine students' eligibility for Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) benefits.

It is imperative that attendance data be recorded for all students in a way that provides accountability and recognizes student efforts to engage in the educational process. At this time, instead of focusing on physical presence during instruction, it is necessary to track meaningful engagement in the virtual learning environment. Virtual learning models provide more flexibility for students and more individual accountability for the completion of work.

Attendance Responsibilities

The following criteria are counted toward instructional time:

- Pupil attended a live lesson from the teacher.
- Pupil logged into a lesson or lesson activity and the login can be documented.
- Pupil and teacher engaged in online help sessions.
- There is documentation of an email dialogue between the pupil and teacher.
- There is documentation of activity/work between the learning coach and pupil.
- Schedules may be blocked or flexible; however, attendance in each course needs to be logged each week.

- Approximately 5-6 hours daily must be logged to meet the state’s hourly requirements.
- Extended family travel, except during normal school vacation periods, requires written notification and vacation contract approval by Executive Director or designee. This should be completed at least one week prior to the extended absence.
- All families must attend a Parent (Guardian) Orientation and the new students will attend “Introduction to Online Learning” course via the online school.
- The family must maintain regular communication with the West Virginia Virtual Academy teachers.
- Students and parents/guardians/learning coaches must check their email, and phone messages daily. Return response should be within 24 hours or on the next business day.
- Students must attend all Required Live Class Connect sessions, including remediation and small group, for direct instruction as directed by their teachers.

Elementary Addition

- Students must come to all daily required live sessions
- Students must log in to the OLS and access daily course materials
- Students must be appropriately responsive via chat and/ or microphone during class connect sessions
- Learning coaches are responsible for emailing the student’s teacher as well as the attendance office before each planned absence and after each unplanned absence (including relevant documents)
- Student must be in attendance within the first five minutes of each live session to avoid being marked tardy
- When a live session begins, the student will have the first five minutes to freely enter the classroom. After five minutes, the student will have to be admitted with a possible delay and tardiness will be recorded. Student's microphones will be muted, and cameras will be turned off when entering class late to avoid disrupting instruction.
- If tardiness becomes chronic, the teacher reserves the right to hold a meeting with the learning coach to create an action plan to discuss time management

Process for Attendance Monitoring

Students are required to follow the school calendar. Instructional time can be entered on any day (e.g., weekends, holidays, etc.). Students are expected to log into the OLS (K-5) LMS (6-12) each scheduled school calendar day.

School days in which students are working 100% offline must be communicated to his/her homeroom teacher or advisor to ensure proper attendance verification.

Tuancy: a student will be considered truant after ten (10) days of unexcused absences or lack of engagement.

Please Note: Due to the state's requirement to obtain specific "hours" and days of attendance, West Virginia Virtual Academy will be following up with families who fall behind in accrued academic hours based on the timelines above. In addition, West Virginia Virtual Academy Administrators reserve the right to remove logged attendance hours that cannot be supported by demonstrating course work, Class Connect attendance, or other criteria as indicated above. To avoid this, Learning Coaches should ensure communication to the school regarding absences and days spent on all "offline" materials with no online work. When a family does not respond, given all of the above-mentioned steps, it implies withdrawal.

Excused Absences: The school recognizes, with notice to the school, student illness, death in the family, prior permission to leave school by parents/guardian(s) and administrator, approved family vacations, approved college visitations, required court appearance, religious observations, family emergencies, counseling or administrative appointments can be excused.

Excused Notes for Absence: The parent or guardian has three calendar days from the date of absence to submit the excuse through email. In order for an absence to be registered as excused, a parent or guardian must submit a written explanation to the attendance office via email at wvvaattendance@westvaacademy.org; notes or emails must state the student's name, the date of the absence, and the reason for the absence.

- **Doctor/Medical Excuses:** Students must present doctor's notes when they are absent from school for three or more days consecutively due to illness. Parent should send doctor's notes to the assigned teacher through email.
- **Bereavement:** It is understandable that some students may require more time than others to heal from the loss of a family member or friend. If families feel as though more than 3 days are necessary for leave, they must contact their homeroom teacher to address the additional time needed and create a plan for makeup work.

Technology: Learning Coaches must submit a Tech Ticket number for technology issues related to Stride K12/West Virginia Systems and Technology concerns. 1-866-K12CARE. Please note that the school staff is unable to repair or resolve technology issues.

Unexcused Absences: An unexcused absence is an absence not recognized by state law or West Virginia Virtual Academy. Unexcused absences may result in loss of credit for assignments missed.

Makeup Work: Remember that regardless of the absence reason, students are expected to make up work in the

OLS/LMS according to individual class expectations.

Habitual Truancy: A truant is defined as a student who is willfully absent from school without the knowledge and consent of the parent and school, or the student is absent from school when there is an attempt to evade the West Virginia Compulsory Attendance Law. A “habitual truant” is defined as a student who is determined to be truant

three times during any semester. A truant absence is considered an unexcused absence.

Excessive Absences: Excessive absences adversely affect a student’s academic performance and relationship with the school. Students who amass excessive absences or have long periods of a lack of engagement will fall under the truancy policy and may be withdrawn from WVVA.

Pregnancy: Pregnant students are expected to attend classes daily as assigned unless they have a doctor’s note to indicate other needs. A team meeting will be planned prior to the student’s due date to prepare a return plan to transition the student back to classes within an acceptable amount of time with attention being paid to the unique needs of student mothers.

Student Maternity Leave: Students will be allowed to take time off of school for pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage, and/or recovery for as long as their doctor says is medically necessary. This includes absences for necessary medical appointments, or a longer leave of absence for a high-risk pregnancy or childbirth. WVVA will follow the recommended leave as stipulated by the student’s medical provider.

Pregnant students are expected to attend classes daily as assigned unless they have a doctor's note to indicate other needs.

Educational Leave: Pupils may be excused for educational trips not sponsored by the school according to the West Virginia School Code. Please understand that it shall be the family's responsibility to contact the teacher(s) to determine what obligations must be met as a result of this proposed absence. Further understand that:

- No more than ten (10) days of absence during the school year.
- No absence can occur in the last ten (10) days of the school year.
- Experiences such as "long weekends" and "vacations" will not suffice as valid justification.
- Request must be submitted to the school and approved 24 hours prior to the trip.
- Requests will not be approved for time off during the state testing window.

No Internet Access or Power Outage: Students who are unable to log into school or have a power outage must have an alternative plan to go to a public library/public location with computer access to do their schoolwork. If the student does not have a back-up plan and cannot go to the library, the student must notify his or her teacher in order to legitimize the reason for the absence. Please contact the office should extended internet access become problematic.

Withdrawing your student from WVVA: The process below applies to any kind of withdrawal. No matter the reason for withdrawal, the following actions *must* be taken.

- ***Before we can withdraw your student*** from WVVA, we will need a request of records sent to WVVA from the prospected school. They can fax it to us at 304-220-3104, or they can email it to wvvarecords@westvaacademy.org. This process is the same if transferring your student out of state, or to a private school.
 - **We ask that this process is completed as soon as possible.*
- **Without the request of records, we are unable to drop your student in the state WVEIS system**, for their new school to pick them up. Therefore, any absences accrued while your student is transferring schools, will follow their WVEIS account, and follow them for the remainder of the school year. Excuses for a missed day of school can be sent to

wvvaattendance@westvaacademy.org. After ten unexcused absences, the truancy process will begin. The attendance policy and responsibilities can be found in this handbook, above, on page 20. The policy does apply while transferring your student.

- ***If you intend to homeschool your student***, you will need to fill out an Intent to Homeschool form and file it at the corresponding county's Board of Education. **ONLY** the county superintendent has the authority to grant permission to homeschool. If you are granted permission to homeschool your child, the corresponding county's board of education will submit a request of records to the WVVA office, and we can then withdraw them from WVVA and drop them in the state WVEIS system. You can find more information about homeschooling your child here: <https://wvde.us/middle-secondary-learning/guidance-and-considerations-for-county-homeschool-policy/>.
- **After a successful withdrawal from WVVA**, you can expect an email from Customer Support within the following two weeks with shipping labels so you can return all materials to K12 at no cost to you. Please reach out to Customer Support if you have any questions about returning materials. More information about returning materials and laptops can be found at www.help.k12.com or by phone at 855-k12-help (855-512-4357).
- If you have any questions or concerns about the withdrawal process from WVVA, please contact the office via email at wvvaoffice@westvaacademy.org, or by phone at 304-807-9370.