

**STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS**

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Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the Alexandria City School Board (Board) involves parents/legal guardians and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/legal guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for such child’s regular and punctual attendance at school as required by law.

Parents/legal guardians of students who are absent must inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than upon the student’s return to school. Reasons for excused absences are listed in Regulation JEA-R. Unexcused absences are handled in accordance with Regulation JEA-R.

The Superintendent, by regulation, establishes procedures for appropriate interventions when a student engages in a pattern of absences for less than a full day, the explanation of which, if it were a full-day absence, would not be an excused absence. These procedures are in Regulation JEA-R

The Superintendent’s regulations include procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations ensure that a student is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which the student missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner. These procedures are in Regulation JEA-R

Students must attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused by the principal or designee.

High school students may spend a maximum of 5 school days each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Virginia Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in Partnership programs will not be counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The Superintendent’s regulations implementing the High School to Work Partnership include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a Partnership.

An attendance officer, or the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee when acting as an attendance officer pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-258, may complete, sign, and file with the intake officer of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, on forms approved by the Supreme Court of Virginia, a petition for a violation of a school attendance order entered by the juvenile and domestic relations district court pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-278.5 in response to the filing of a petition alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the Superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

**Compulsory Attendance Procedures**

Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information has been received by school personnel that the student’s parent/legal guardian is aware of and supports the absence, or the parent/legal guardian provides a reason for the absence that is

49 unacceptable to the school administration, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance  
50 officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent/legal guardian by phone, email or  
51 other electronic means to obtain an explanation. A log of these notifications is maintained by the  
52 school. School staff record the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused." Early  
53 intervention with the student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) takes place for repeated unexcused  
54 absences.

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56 A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parent/Legal Guardian Awareness and Support

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58 If: (1) a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school  
59 year; and (2) there is no indication that the student's parent/legal guardian is aware of and supports  
60 the absence; and (3) a reasonable effort to notify the parent/legal guardian has failed, then the  
61 principal or designee makes a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the  
62 parent/legal guardian, either in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of other  
63 communication devices to obtain an explanation for the student's absence and to explain to the  
64 parent/legal guardian the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or  
65 designee, the student, and the student's parent/legal guardian jointly develop a plan to resolve the  
66 student's nonattendance. The plan must include documentation of the reasons for the student's  
67 nonattendance.

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69 B. Upon Additional Absences without Parent/Legal Guardian Awareness and Support

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71 If the student is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the student's  
72 parent/legal guardian and the school personnel have received no indication that the student's  
73 parent/legal guardian is aware of and supports student's absence; the school principal or  
74 designee schedules a conference with the student, the student's parent/legal guardian, and school  
75 personnel. The conference may include the attendance officer and other community service  
76 providers to resolve issues related to the student's nonattendance. The conference must be held no  
77 later than 10 school days after the 10th absence of the student, regardless of whether the  
78 parent/legal guardian approves of the conference.

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80 The conference team monitors the student's attendance and may meet again as necessary to  
81 address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In  
82 circumstances in which the parent/legal guardian is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory  
83 attendance requirements or the student is resisting parent/legal guardian efforts to comply with  
84 compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee makes a referral to the  
85 attendance officer. The attendance officer schedules a conference with the student and student's  
86 parent/legal guardian within 10 school days and may (i) file a complaint with the juvenile and  
87 domestic relations district court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in  
88 Va. Code § 16.1-228, or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent/legal guardian pursuant to Va.  
89 Code § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer  
90 provides written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this Policy. In the  
91 event that both parents/legal guardians have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va.  
92 Code § 20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents/legal guardians  
93 will be notified at their last known addresses.

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97 **Report for Suspension of Driver’s License**

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 99 In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, if a student who is under 18 years of  
 100 age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days, the principal or  
 101 their designee may notify the juvenile and domestic relations court, which may take action to  
 102 suspend the student’s driver’s license.

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 104 **Attendance Reporting**

105  
 106 Student attendance is monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At the end  
 107 of each school year, each public school principal reports to the Superintendent the number of  
 108 students by grade level for whom a conference was scheduled. The Superintendent compiles this  
 109 information and provides it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

110  
 111 **Dismissal Precautions**

112  
 113 Principals do not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the  
 114 student's parent/legal guardian to assume responsibility for the student. Students are released only  
 115 on request and authorization of a parent/legal guardian. When custody of a child is limited by court  
 116 order to one natural parent over the other, the child may not be released to the non-custodial parent.  
 117 The Superintendent establishes procedures for release of students who are not residing with or  
 118 under the supervision of a parent/legal guardian. The burden of proof on the authority of the person  
 119 to receive the student is on the requesting party. A formal check-out system is maintained in each  
 120 school.

121  
 122 **Parents/Legal Guardians with Joint Custody of Students**

123  
 124 If the student’s parents/legal guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the school  
 125 has notice of the custody agreement, then both parents/legal guardians must be notified of  
 126 attendance issues at their last known addresses and, if available, through other contact information  
 127 the parent/legal guardian has made available to Alexandria City Public Schools.

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 130 Adopted: December 5, 1996  
 131 Amended: June 18, 1998  
 132 Amended: June 23, 1999  
 133 Amended: June 21, 2001  
 134 Amended: June 4, 2004  
 135 Amended: June 18, 2009  
 136 Amended: January 8, 2015  
 137 Amended: September 10, 2020  
 138 Amended: October 21, 2021

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 141 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1- 254;  
 142 22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.01, 54.1-  
 143 3900.  
 144 8 VAC 20-730-10.

145		8 VAC 20-730-20.
146		
147	Cross Refs.:	IGAJ Driver Education
148		JEA Compulsory Attendance
149		JEA-R Attendance Regulations
150		JFC Student Conduct
151		JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct

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STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

**Student Attendance Policy**

Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the Alexandria City School Board (Board) involves parents/guardian/legal guardians and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/guardian/legal guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for such child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required by law.

~~A reasonable effort shall be made to contact a parent/guardian of each absent student every day, 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.~~

**Commented [1]:** Moved down into the procedures section to improve readability and align with the VSBA model policy.

Parents/guardian/legal guardians of students who are absent must inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than upon the student's return to school. Reasons for excused absences are listed in Regulation JEA-R. Unexcused absences are handled in accordance with Regulation JEA-R.

The Superintendent, by regulation, establishes procedures for appropriate interventions when a student engages in a pattern of absences for less than a full day, the explanation of which, if it were a full-day absence, would not be an excused absence. These procedures are in Regulation JEA-R.

~~The Superintendent's Regulation JEA-R regulations also includes~~ procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such The regulations ensures that a student is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which the student he/she missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner. These procedures are in Regulation JEA-R.

Students ~~shall/will/must~~ attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused by the principal or designee.

~~Secondary students shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work study program. All other exceptions to a full day schedule must be approved on an individual basis by the Superintendent or designee.~~

High school students may spend a maximum of 5 school days time each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Virginia Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in Partnership programs will not be counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. The sSuperintendent's rRegulations implementing the High School to Work Partnership will include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a Partnership.

**Commented [2]:** The VSBA model policy calls for ACPS to set a maximum here.

~~Student attendance shall be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations.~~

**Commented [3]:** Redundant with section IV Attendance Reporting

~~In addition, an~~ An attendance officer, or the Superintendent or ~~s~~Superintendent's designee when acting as an attendance officer pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-258, may complete, sign, and file with the intake officer of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, on forms approved by the Supreme Court of Virginia, a petition for a violation of a school attendance order entered by the juvenile and domestic relations district court pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-278.5 in response to the filing of a petition alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer or the Superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

### Compulsory Attendance Procedures

Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information has been received by school personnel that the student's parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) is aware of and supports the absence, or the parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) provides a reason for the absence that is unacceptable to the school administration, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) by phone, email or other electronic means to obtain an explanation. ~~A log of these notifications is maintained by the school.~~ School staff record the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused." Early intervention with the student and parent(s)/[guardianlegal guardian](#)(s) takes place for repeated unexcused absences.

Commented [MS4]: Added to ensure this data is tracked in a way that is easily accessible.

#### A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parent/[GuardianLegal Guardian](#) Awareness and Support

If: —(1) a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year; and (2) there is no indication that the student's parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) is aware of and supports the absence; and (3) a reasonable effort to notify the parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) has failed, then the principal or designee makes a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#), either in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of other communication devices to obtain an explanation for the student's absence and to explain to the parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance. ~~Such~~The plan shall ~~must~~ include documentation of the reasons for the student's nonattendance.

~~If the student's parents/guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody agreement, then both parents/guardians shall be notified at their last known addresses. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to comply with the principal or designee's request within three school days, the principal or designee shall/will notify the attendance officer or Superintendent who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules.~~

Commented [5]: Moved down to it's own section and revised. The essential point here is that if there is joint custody we try to reach both parents. If the rest follows the regular process, there is no reason to repeat it here.

#### B. Upon Additional Absences without Parent/[GuardianLegal Guardian](#) Awareness and Support

If the student is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the student's parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) and the school personnel have received no indication that the student's parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#) is aware of and supports the student's absence; the school principal or designee shall ~~schedules~~ a conference with the student, the student's parent/[guardianlegal guardian](#), and school personnel. The conference may include the attendance

97 officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the student's  
98 nonattendance. ~~The conference, and must be held take place~~ no later than ~~10 the tenth~~ school days  
99 after the ~~10th tenth~~ absence ~~of the student~~, regardless of whether the parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian  
100 approves of the conference.  
101

102 The conference team ~~shall~~ monitors the student's attendance and may meet again as necessary to  
103 address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In  
104 circumstances in which the parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian is intentionally noncompliant with  
105 compulsory attendance requirements or the student is resisting parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian  
106 efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee  
107 ~~shall~~ makes a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer ~~shall~~ schedules a conference  
108 with the student and student's parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian within 10 school days and may (i)  
109 file a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations district court alleging the student is a  
110 child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228, or (ii) institute proceedings against  
111 the parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian pursuant to Va. Code § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a  
112 complaint against the student, the attendance officer ~~shall~~ provides written documentation of the  
113 efforts to comply with the provisions of this policy. In the event that both parents/~~guardian~~ legal  
114 guardians have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va. Code § 20-124.2 and the  
115 school has received notice of such order, both parents/~~guardian~~ legal guardians ~~will shall~~ be  
116 notified at their last known addresses.  
117

#### 118 Report for Suspension of Driver's License

119  
120 In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, if a student who is under 18 years of  
121 age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days, the principal (or  
122 ~~their~~ his/~~her~~ designee) may notify the juvenile and domestic relations court, which may take action  
123 to suspend the student's driver's license.  
124

#### 125 Attendance Reporting

126  
127 Student attendance ~~shall be is~~ monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At  
128 the end of each school year, each public school principal reports to the Superintendent the number  
129 of students by grade level for whom a conference was scheduled ~~pursuant to Part II (B) above~~. The  
130 Superintendent compiles this information and provides it annually to the Superintendent of Public  
131 Instruction.  
132

#### 133 Dismissal Precautions

134  
135 Principals do not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the  
136 student's parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian to assume responsibility for the student. Students are  
137 released only on request and authorization of a parent/~~or guardian~~ legal guardian. When custody  
138 of a child is limited by court order to one natural parent over the other, the child ~~may shall~~ not be  
139 released to the non-custodial parent. The Superintendent establishes procedures for release of  
140 students who are not residing with or under the supervision of a parent/~~guardian~~ legal guardian.  
141 The burden of proof on the authority of the person to receive the student is on the requesting party.  
142 A formal check-out system is maintained in each school.  
143

#### 144 Parents/~~Guardian~~ Legal Guardians with Joint Custody of Students

145  
146 If the student's parents/guardian legal guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the  
147 school has notice of the custody agreement, then both parents/guardian legal guardians must be  
148 notified of attendance issues at their last known addresses and, if available, through other contact  
149 information the parent/guardian legal guardian has made available to Alexandria City Public  
150 Schools.  
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164 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1- 254;  
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168 8 VAC 20-730-10.  
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171 Cross Refs.: IGAJ Driver Education  
172 JEA Compulsory Attendance  
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