

***ATTENDANCE RECORDING DURING THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

The compulsory student attendance requirements of Va. Code § 22.1-254 remain in effect for the 2020-2021 school year, whether teaching and learning occurs via in-person instruction or distance learning. See Regulation JEA-R for modified attendance reporting and procedures for students, families and staff.

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

I. Student Attendance Policy

Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the School Board ~~shall~~ involves parents/guardians and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age ~~shall be~~ is responsible for such child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required ~~under provisions of the~~ 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.

~~Students~~ Parents/guardians of students who are absent must ~~bring a valid note stating~~ inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than the student's ~~upon~~ returning to school. Unexcused absences ~~shall be~~ are handled ~~according to regulations issued by the Superintendent in accordance with Regulation JEA-R.~~

The ~~Superintendent's~~ regulations ~~will~~ 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. Regulation JEA-R also includes procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. ~~Such~~ The regulations ~~will~~ 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 he/she missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner.

Students shall 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 time each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the 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. Regulations implementing the High School to Work Partnership will include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a Partnership.

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

addition, an attendance officer, or the Superintendent or 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 ~~Division~~ Superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

II. 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/guardian is aware of and supports the absence, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent/guardian by phone, email or other electronic means to obtain an explanation. School staff records the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused". Early intervention with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) takes place for repeated unexcused absences.

A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parent/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/guardian is aware of and supports the absence; and (3) reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian of the absences have failed, then the principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/guardian, either in person, ~~or~~ through telephone conversation, or through the use of other communication devices by the attendance officer, to obtain an explanation ~~of for~~ the student's absence and to explain to the parent/guardian the consequences of continued nonattendance. The ~~attendance officers~~ school principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance. Such plan shall 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 notify the attendance officer or Superintendent who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules.

B. Upon ~~Sixth-Additional~~ Absences without Parent/Guardian Awareness and Support

If the student is absent for more than one an additional day after direct contact with the student's parent/guardian and the ~~attendance officer has~~ school personnel have received no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the student's absence, the ~~attendance officers~~ school principal or designee shall schedule a conference with the student, the student's parent/guardian, and school personnel. ~~within ten school days,~~ The conference may include the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the student's nonattendance, which and must take place no later than the ~~fifteenth-tenth~~ school day after the ~~sixth~~

~~tenth absence, regardless of whether the parent/guardian approves of the conference. At the conference, the student, his/her parent/guardian, and school personnel, shall meet to resolve issues related to the student's nonattendance. Other community service providers may also be included in the conference.~~

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

~~C. Upon Additional Absence without Parent/Guardian Awareness and Support~~

~~Upon the next absence after the conference without indication to the attendance officer that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the student's absence, the principal or designee shall notify the attendance officer or Superintendent who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules by either or both of the following: (i) filing a complaint with the juvenile and domestic relations court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in §16.1-228 or (ii) instituting proceedings against the parent/guardian pursuant to §18.2-371 or §22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts already undertaken to resolve the student's absence. If the student's parents/guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody arrangement, then both parents/guardians shall be notified at their last known addresses.~~

~~D. Parent/Guardian Cooperation in Remediating Excessive Unexcused Absences~~

~~It is expected that parents/guardians will cooperate with the attendance officer and other school officials to remedy the student's attendance problem. Where direct contact with a parent/guardian cannot be made, despite reasonable efforts, or where parents/guardians otherwise fail to cooperate in remediating the student's attendance problem, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee may seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance laws. The attendance officer, with the knowledge and approval of the Superintendent, shall institute proceedings against any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the requirements of the compulsory attendance laws. Where the complaint arises out of the parent's/guardian's failure to comply with the requirements of § 22.1-258, the attendance officer shall document the school division's compliance with this Code section.~~

III. Report for Suspension of Driver's License

In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, if a student who is under 18 years of age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days, the principal (or his/her designee) ~~of the school~~ may ~~petition~~ notify the juvenile and domestic relations court, which may take action to suspend the student's driver's license. ~~This provision shall not apply in cases where: (i) the student has withdrawn from school for reasons beyond the student's control; (ii) the student has withdrawn in order to transfer to another school, where that transfer is confirmed in writing by the student's parent or guardian; or (iii) the student's parent/guardian requests in court that the student's license not be suspended.~~

IV. Attendance Reporting

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

V. Dismissal Precautions

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

Adopted: December 5, 1996

Amended: June 18, 1998

Amended: June 23, 1999

Amended: June 21, 2001

Amended: June 4, 2004

Amended: June 18, 2009

Amended: January 8, 2015

Amended:

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1- 254-~~22.1~~; 22.1-258, 22.1-~~269~~260, ~~22.1~~, 22.1-279.3, ~~46.2~~, 46.2-323,
~~46.2~~, 46.2-334.001, 54.1-3900.

~~8 VAC 20-110-10 et seq.~~

8 VAC 20-730-10.

8 VAC 20-730-20.

Superintendent's Memo #188-20, Tracking Attendance for the 2020-2021 School Year (July 24, 2020).

Recover, Redesign, Restart 2020, Virginia Department of Education (Revised July, 2020).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Guidance for Schools (Updated May 2020), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Virginia Department of Health, Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools (July 1, 2020), <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Final-Phase-Guidance-for-Virginia-Schools-6.9.20.pdf>.

Cross Refs.: IGAJ Driver Education
JEA Compulsory Attendance
JEA-R Attendance Regulations
JFC Student Conduct
JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct