

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

School Guidance and Counseling Services

ACPS commits to providing each student with a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate school guidance and counseling program that is aligned with state and American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. Through individual, small group, and classroom guidance, ACPS counselors assist students in their academic, personal-social, and career development. In addition, ACPS is committed to a student to counselor ratio that meets or exceeds the ASCA National Model.

The Alexandria City School Board affirms that parents and guardians are the student's first teachers and that the public schools should serve to strengthen family support. No student is required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parents/guardians object.

Each school provides the following guidance and counseling services to all students:

- a) **Academic Counseling (Academic Advising)** – Academic guidance which assists students and their parents/guardians to acquire knowledge of the curricula choices available to students, to plan a program of studies, to arrange and interpret academic testing, and to seek post-secondary academic opportunities.
- b) **Career Counseling (Career Advising)** – Career guidance which helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships, and post-secondary educational and career opportunities.
- c) **Personal/Social Counseling** – Counseling which assists a student to develop an understanding of themselves, the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflict and to define individual goals, reflecting their interests, abilities and aptitudes. Information and records of personal/social counseling will be kept confidential and separate from a student's educational records and not disclosed to third parties without prior parent/guardian consent or as otherwise provided by law. Parents/guardians may elect, by notifying their child's school in writing, to have their child not participate in personal/social counseling (opt out). Such counseling may be provided either (i) in groups in which generic issues of social development are addressed or (ii) through structured, individual or small group, multi-session counseling which focuses on the specific concerns of the participants.

Parents/guardians are notified annually about the counseling programs which are available to their children. The notification includes the purpose and general description of the programs, how parents/guardians may review materials to be used in the guidance and counseling programs at their child's school, and information about the procedures by which parents/guardians may limit their child's participation in such programs. No student is required to participate in any counseling program to which the student's parents or guardians object.

The guidance and counseling program does not include the use of counseling techniques which are beyond the scope of the professional certification or training of counselors, including hypnosis or other psychotherapeutic techniques that are normally employed in medical or clinical settings and focus on mental illness or psychopathology.

Employment Counseling and Placement Services

ACPS provides employment counseling and placement services to secondary students to furnish information relating to the employment opportunities available to students graduating from or leaving the schools in the school division. Such information includes all types of employment opportunities, including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, the military, career education schools and the teaching profession. In providing such services, ACPS consults and cooperates with the Virginia Employment Commission, the Department of Labor and Industry, local businesses and labor organizations and career schools.

Adopted: January 9, 1997
Amended: June 1, 2006
Amended: May 14, 2015
Amended: October 7, 2021 (reclassified from Policy JR to IJ)

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-23.3, 22.1-130.1, 22.1-209.

Standards for School Counseling Programs in Virginia Public Schools, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), January 2004.

8 VAC 20-620-10.

Cross Refs.: IGAD Career and Technical Education
JO Student Records