

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Definitions

- A. **Instructional school day** includes the entire day and/or periods within a regularly scheduled school day for an individual student.
- B. **Excused absence** is an absence of an entire instructional day with a reason, as outlined in this regulation, provided to the school administration by the parent/legal guardian. The parent/ legal guardian should provide the school administration with the reason for the nonattendance prior to the absence or no later than three days following the absence. Excused absence records are maintained for the purposes of Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) reporting.
- C. **Unexcused absence** is an absence where (i) the student misses their scheduled instructional school day in its entirety and (ii) no justification has been received by school personnel within three days of the absence, or the parent/legal guardian provides a reason for the absence that is not outlined in this regulation. The school administration may change an unexcused absence to an excused absence when the parent/legal guardian has provided an acceptable justification. Notification must be received within 10 school days of the absence. Unexcused absence records are maintained for the purposes of VDOE reporting.
- D. **Excused period absence** is an absence of a single class period with a reason. Depending on the cause of the period absence, the reason should be provided by the school administration or by the parent/legal guardian. The school administration/parent/legal guardian should provide the school with the reason for the nonattendance prior to the absence or no later than three days following the absence. Excused period absence records are maintained for the purposes of improving student engagement and reporting to parents/legal guardians.
- E. **Unexcused period absence** is an absence where (i) the student misses a single scheduled instructional class period and (ii) no justification has been received by school personnel within three days of the absence, or the parent/legal guardian provides a reason for the absence that is not outlined in this regulation. The school administration may change an unexcused absence to an excused absence when the parent/legal guardian has provided an acceptable justification. Unexcused period absence records are maintained for the purposes of improving student engagement and reporting to parents/legal guardians.
- F. **Unverified absence** is one for which there has been no contact from the parent/legal guardian. Unverified absences are considered unexcused absences if no contact is received within three days of the absence.
- G. **Verified absence** is one for which a parent/legal guardian has contacted the school and given an explanation for the absence.

- 47 H. **Chronic absence** is the accumulation of excused/unexcused absences that occur for
48 any reason to a total of 10 percent or more of the school year.
49
- 50 I. **Truancy** is the accumulation of five or more unexcused or unverified absences within
51 an academic year. The Commonwealth of Virginia's truancy laws specify that all
52 children must attend school every day.
53
- 54 J. **Tardy** is a term used to describe arriving at school, or to a classroom, after the start of
55 the day or class period.
56
- 57 K. **Attendance conference** is a face-to-face meeting or an interaction that is conducted
58 through the use of communication technology. A conference must be held after the
59 sixth unexcused absence, and must involve, at a minimum, the school principal or
60 designee, the parents/legal guardians, and the student, where appropriate. The
61 conference may also include the school counselor, school social worker, school
62 psychologist, intervention specialist and community representatives, if appropriate, for
63 resolving issues related to nonattendance and revisions to the current attendance plan
64 if necessary.
65
- 66 L. **Attendance plan** is a plan developed jointly by a school representative, such as a
67 school principal or designee, and the student to resolve the student's nonattendance and
68 engage the student in regular school attendance. An attendance plan shall be developed
69 if the student has five unexcused absences or an established pattern of unexcused period
70 absences. Interventions and/or meetings are documented in the student information
71 system.
72
- 73 M. **Court referral** means filing a complaint to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
74 after direct contact has been made with the student's parents/legal guardians and the
75 student has an 11th unexcused absence. Documentation of interventions regarding the
76 student's unexcused absences, such as copies of the attendance plan, documentation of
77 conference meetings, and compliance with § 22.1-258 of the Code of Virginia must be
78 provided to the intake officer.
79
- 80 N. **Multi-disciplinary team** is a school-based team that may be convened to review
81 student records and to participate in prevention, early intervention, and provision of
82 support services to address excessive absences/period absences, including school-
83 based case management. These services should address academic, social, emotional,
84 and familial issues in order to improve regular full-day school attendance. Team
85 members may include, but are not limited to, the following: an administrator, school
86 counselor, school social worker or school psychologist, special education and general
87 education teachers, and attendance officer. Community providers may also attend, as
88 appropriate.
89
- 90 O. **Parent/legal guardian** means the parent(s), legal guardian(s), legal custodian(s), or
91 other person(s) having legal control or charge of the student.
92

93 P. **Principal or designee** means the school principal, other administrator or other school
94 official designated by the principal to meet the requirements of this regulation.
95

96 **Attendance Coding**

97
98 Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) strictly adheres to the Commonwealth of Virginia’s
99 Compulsory Attendance Law (22.1-258) and the Virginia Administrative Code (8 VAC 20-730-
100 10), to establish and enforce attendance guidelines. These attendance regulations implement
101 Policy JEA - Compulsory Attendance and JED - Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals.
102

103 One of the attendance codes listed in Regulation JEA-R2/JED-R2 - Attendance Codes must be
104 entered for each student in every period, every school day.
105

106 **Procedures**

107
108 **A. Attendance Record Keeping**

109 Principals must arrange to have verified absences entered into the student information
110 system no later than the first hour of the school day in elementary schools, and by the
111 end of first period in middle and high schools. All assigned classroom teachers, school
112 registrars, or administrative assistants assigned to manage attendance are required to
113 accurately code student attendance each class, each day. School Administrators are
114 responsible for monitoring this activity.
115

116 Parents/legal guardians will be notified each day via text, email, and phone when
117 necessary when students are absent from school without parent/legal guardian
118 notification, and reminded of the need to contact the school as soon as possible.
119

120 Parents/legal guardians of secondary students will be notified if the student was absent
121 from any classes without parent/legal guardian notification and will be asked to contact
122 the school.
123

124 Student attendance records may be amended from an unverified absence to an excused
125 or unexcused absence after parent/legal guardian contact has been made with
126 designated school personnel. A parent/legal guardian must contact the school within
127 three school days to request changes to student records.
128

129 1. VDOE Attendance Documentation Regulations

130 The VDOE monitors ACPS student attendance data and interventions, particularly
131 in cases of chronic absenteeism. Per the VDOE, ACPS’ method for reporting all-
132 day absences to the VDOE, particularly at the secondary level, are instances where
133 a student misses *all* periods within a given school day.
134

135 The VDOE collects information regarding unexcused absences at the following
136 intervals:
137

- 138 ● Fall semester: October 1

- 139 ● Spring semester: March 31
- 140 ● End of the school year: June 30
- 141 ● Summer semester: August 30

142
143 VDOE’s accountability measures include stringent monitoring of the Division’s
144 electronic documentation of attendance interventions in three specific areas:

- 145 ● Documentation of an Attendance Plan Code.
146 This field must be completed at the fifth unexcused absence.
- 147 ● Documentation of an Attendance Conference Code.
148 This field must be completed at the seventh unexcused absence.
- 149 ● Documentation of a Court Referral/Complaint Proceedings Code
150 This field must be completed at the 11th unexcused absence.

151
152 2. Documenting Ten Day “No Show” Procedures in September

153 The Virginia Administrative Code (8 VAC 20-730-30) states:

154
155 “Data collection shall begin on the first day students attend for the school year.
156 Each school division shall provide student level attendance data for each student
157 that includes the number of unexcused absences in a manner prescribed by the
158 Virginia Department of Education. A student's attendance is cumulative and begins
159 on the first official day of the school year or the first day the student is officially
160 enrolled. All nonattendance days are cumulative and begin with the first absence.
161 For purposes of this data collection, truancy shall start with the first unexcused
162 absence and will be cumulative.”

163
164 All students who are officially registered and actively enrolled in school division
165 records should be counted as absent for nonattendance until acceptable verification
166 stating otherwise is provided. Students who are absent due to extended vacations,
167 overseas travel, and matters that are otherwise defined as “unexcused” shall be
168 marked accordingly.

169
170 **B. All-day Absences**

171 In compliance with the Virginia Administrative Code, ACPS calculates all-day
172 absences at the secondary level to account for when a student misses *all* periods within
173 a school day.

174
175 When a student engages in a pattern of unexcused period absences, the principal or
176 designee , along with the parent/legal guardian and other school support team members,
177 will develop a plan to resolve the situation as soon as possible. This includes:

- 178 ● Conferences with the student, parent/legal guardian, and school staff; and
- 179 ● Development of a plan to remove any barriers to regular attendance, including
180 facilitating connections to community resources and assistance.

181
182 **C. Excused Absences**

- 183 1. Per the Virginia Administrative Code (8 VAC 20-730-10), student absences may
184 be excused, pending verification from the parent/legal guardian and/or another

- 185 designated professional. Examples of excused absences may include, but are not
 186 limited to, the following conditions:
- 187 a. Medical Illnesses (Physical, Mental, or Substance Abuse). Injury.
 - 188 b. Legal obligations.
 - 189 c. Military obligations.
 - 190 d. Medical and dental procedures and/or examinations.
 - 191 e. Observance of a religious holiday.
 - 192 f. Student court hearings.
 - 193 g. Students who have been approved to participate in school sponsored activities
 194 (inside and outside of the school building).
 - 195 h. Students who have been assigned In-School (ISS), Alternate Instructional
 196 Support (AIS) Center or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS).
 - 197 i. Family emergencies (loss of a loved one, unexpected residence dislocation,
 198 critical injuries to family members, etc.). Parents/legal guardians are expected
 199 to plan extended travel and vacation days around ACPS scheduled breaks and
 200 approved holidays.
 - 201 j. ACPS transportation services related delays.
 - 202 k. For middle and high school students, one school day per school year to engage
 203 in a civic event.
 - 204 l. A maximum of five school days per academic year for participation in a 4-H
 205 educational program or activity; no credit will be provided for a student whose
 206 participation in a 4-H educational program or activity occurs during scheduled
 207 Standards of Learning assessments or during any period of time that the student
 208 is suspended or expelled from school; the student’s principal or assistant
 209 principal may request a representative of 4-H to provide documentation of a
 210 student’s participation in order for the student’s absence to be excused.
 - 211 m. Subject to guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Education,
 212 students who are members of a state- or federally-recognized tribal nation that
 213 is headquartered in Virginia shall be granted one excused absence per
 214 academic year to attend such nation’s pow wow gathering provided that the
 215 student’s parent provides the student’s school advance notice of the absence in
 216 the manner required by the school.

217
 218 2. Pre-Arranged Excused Absences

219 Pre-Arranged absences requests may be submitted in specific situations. Examples
 220 of activities that may constitute a pre-arranged excuse absence include, (with
 221 documentation), but are not limited to:

- 222 a. Visitation with family members deployed in the U.S. Military and Armed
 223 Forces
- 224 b. Visitation with incarcerated caregivers
- 225 c. Appointments with military recruiters
- 226 d. Appointments with college/university admissions departments
- 227 e. School students, ages 12 and under, who cannot be left at home
 228 alone/unsupervised, while a parent/legal guardian is on professional travel for
 229 employment related activities.

230

231 Pre-Arranged absences requests must be submitted at least five days prior to the
 232 scheduled absence and advance approval of each pre-arranged absence must be
 233 granted by the school administration. Documentation of a student’s participation in
 234 the above noted activities must be provided no later than three days after the event
 235 is complete.
 236

237 3. Medical Illnesses (Physical, Mental, Substance Abuse)

- 238 a. Parents/legal guardians may initially inform school staff of student illnesses via
 239 verbal or written notification.
- 240 b. When a student is unable to attend school due to illness, the legal guardian or
 241 physician must submit documentation verifying the incident prior to the
 242 absence, or provide written verification of the illness no later than three days
 243 following the absence.
- 244 c. When students are absent for three or more consecutive school days, or 10 or
 245 more absences within a given school year, due to illness an official note from a
 246 physician must be submitted to the school. Failure to present a doctor’s note
 247 after three consecutive sick days may result in an unexcused absence. The
 248 principal or designee must request the parent/legal guardian obtain this
 249 documentation from a physician.
- 250 d. The principal or designee must make reasonable efforts to support the family in
 251 obtaining supporting documentation from a physician validating the medical
 252 reason for the absences.
- 253 e. When illnesses occur in frequent or excessive patterns, school support team
 254 members may implement appropriate interventions of support, including a
 255 student Health Care Plan. A Health Care Plan should be considered after the
 256 student has accumulated 10 sick days within a school year.

257
 258 **D. Unexcused Absences**

259 Per the Virginia Administrative Code (8 VAC 20-730-10) an unexcused absence occurs
 260 when (i) the student misses their scheduled instructional school day in its entirety and
 261 (ii) no indication has been received by school personnel within three days of the
 262 absence, or the parent/legal guardian provides a reason for the absence that is not
 263 outlined in this regulation.
 264

265 A student is considered truant at the accumulation of 11 or more unexcused absences
 266 within an academic year.
 267

268 **1. Consequences of Truant Behavior**

269 a. Student Consequences

- 270 i. Loss of critical instructional time
- 271 ii. Students may experience low academic achievement.
- 272 iii. Students may experience feelings of isolation and disengagement.
- 273 iv. Students may be officially withdrawn from school (after 15 consecutive
 274 days).
- 275 v. Students may be referred to the Alexandria Court’s Attendance Review
 276 Panel.

277 vi. Truant Outreach Specialists may file a CHINS (Child In Need Of
278 Supervision) Petition with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court as
279 defined in Virginia Code § 16.1-228 ,§ 16.1-241.2, 16.1-278.5 and 16.1-
280 278.4 and may result in:

- 281 ● Students may be sanctioned to participate in juvenile probation
- 282 monitoring and supervision.
- 283 ● Students may be sanctioned by the court to participate in community
- 284 service projects.
- 285 ● Students may be sanctioned by the court to participate in mental health
- 286 treatment.
- 287 ● The court may order placement in the Alexandria Sheltercare Program
- 288 of Northern Virginia or the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention
- 289 Center.
- 290 ● Students may be placed outside the home with a relative, child welfare
- 291 agency, private organization or facility, or in the care and legal custody
- 292 of a social service agency.
- 293 ● The Court may suspend or revoke a student’s driver’s license.

294
295 b. Parent/Legal Guardian Consequences

- 296 i. Referral to the Alexandria Court’s Attendance Review Panel
- 297 ii. The Truancy Outreach Specialist may file a complaint to the Alexandria
- 298 Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court against a parent/legal guardian,
- 299 pursuant to Virginia Code §§ 22.1-262, 16.1-228 , 16.1-241.2, 16.1-278.5
- 300 and 16.1-278.4, which may result in:
- 301 ● The parent/legal guardian may be required to participate in mental
- 302 health treatment.
- 303 ● The parent/legal guardian may be sanctioned to pay excessive fines.
- 304 ● The parent/legal guardians may be sentenced to jail (when court orders
- 305 are violated).
- 306 ● Children may be removed from the parents’/legal guardians’ physical
- 307 care and may be placed outside the home with a relative, child welfare
- 308 agency, private organization or facility, or in the care and legal custody
- 309 of a social service agency.
- 310 ● Missed time from work/lost wages.

311
312 E. **Early Release**

313 When a student leaves the school premises during regular school hours for any reason,
314 parents/legal guardians must provide advance notice and written permission.
315 Parents/legal guardians of elementary students must sign the school release log.
316 Parents/legal guardians of secondary students must arrange for early release through
317 the school attendance office and comply with release procedures.

318
319 A principal may not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized
320 to assume responsibility for the student. All students, including declared adult students
321 aged 18-years or older, must comply with established release procedures. Records of

322 early release will be maintained. If school staff identify a pattern of early release from
323 school, interventions may be required.

324

325 **F. Tardiness**

326 Although excessive tardiness to school is not specified in the Virginia Compulsory
327 Attendance Codes, it is a critical factor that impacts the overall academic experience
328 and success of students. Tardiness encompasses any variation of time that extends
329 beyond the principal’s documented start time for the school day or class period.

330

331 Any student arriving after the official start of the class or school day will be considered
332 tardy. When students arrive tardy to school they must adhere to the appropriate school-
333 based check-in procedures, as outlined by the school administration. Records regarding
334 tardiness will be maintained in student records.

335

336 Parents/legal guardians are expected to provide verbal and/or written notification to
337 designated school personnel each time a student is tardy to school.

338

339 Examples of **excused tardies** may include, but are not limited to, the following:

340

341 Medical and dental examinations

- 342 1. Student court hearings
- 343 2. Students who have been approved to participate in school-sponsored activities
344 (inside and outside of the school building)
- 345 3. Critical or isolated family emergencies (death of a loved one, unexpected residency
346 dislocation, critical injuries to family members, etc.) Parents/legal guardians are
347 expected to plan extended travel and vacation days around ACPS scheduled breaks
348 and approved holidays.
- 349 4. ACPS transportation services related delays.

350

351 Tardies to class during the school day will be excused at the discretion of the principal
352 or designee. When students have accrued an excessive number of unexcused or
353 unverified tardies, the principal or designee, along with the parent/legal guardian and
354 other school support team members, must develop a plan to resolve the situation as
355 soon as possible.

356

357 **G. Fifteen Consecutive Absences**

358 Any student who is absent from school for 15 consecutive days will be officially
359 withdrawn from school, per the compulsory attendance expectations noted in the
360 Virginia Code 22.1-254. In such cases, the school principal, or designee, must alert
361 parents/legal guardians in writing at such time that a student is withdrawn from school
362 records. Students who have been withdrawn from ACPS due to 15 consecutive
363 absences are still required, per Virginia Code 22.1-254, to attend another school every
364 day and will be subject to intervention for violation of such laws. When students have
365 been withdrawn from school due to accrual of 15 or more consecutive days absent, the
366 school support staff must make every effort to ensure that the following interventions
367 have occurred:

- 368 1. Re-engagement of the student and parent/legal guardian to confirm the whereabouts
369 of the youth.
370 2. Confirmation of the educational plan for the student.
371 3. Collaboration with the Alexandria Court Services staff regarding interventions and
372 sanctions for students under 18 years of age.
373

374 H. Family Emergencies

375 Students are excused from school when serious family emergencies arise. Examples of
376 such emergencies may include, but are not limited to:

377
378 Death of/funeral services for immediate or close family members;

- 379 1. Impending or immediate loss of housing and family dislocation/displacement;
380 2. Severe medical trauma of immediate family members; or
381 3. Other; including unanticipated/required travel related to the adoption of a child.
382

383 Students who are absent for three or more consecutive school days for a family
384 emergency must provide supporting documentation no later than three days after the
385 absence has occurred.

386
387 Family emergencies do not include family travel, vacation activities, non-ACPS
388 sponsored recreational activities, or personal appointments to accompany parents/legal
389 guardians.
390

391 I. Visitation of Family Members and Caregivers

392
393 Students are excused for activities related to visitation with family members deployed
394 in the U.S. Military and Armed Forces, or visitation with incarcerated caregivers.
395 Students absent for more than three days, either consecutive or cumulative, under this
396 provision must provide proof of the family member deployment or caregiver
397 incarceration.
398

399 J. School Activities

400 School activities include approved and verifiable activities related to campus sports,
401 band, ROTC, choir, or other official academic clubs sponsored by an ACPS staff
402 member. Activity sponsors or department chairs must verify and communicate
403 activities to designated teachers and staff that are responsible for managing student
404 attendance records before or immediately following the school activity. Additional
405 examples of excused school activities may include (with documentation):

- 406 1. School based meetings with ACPS staff (with documentation)
407 2. Appointments with military recruiters (with documentation)
408 3. Appointments with college/university/other school admissions departments (with
409 documentation)
410
411
412
413

K. Family Travel

Parents/legal guardians are expected to plan extended travel and vacation days around ACPS scheduled breaks and approved holidays. Students who are absent due to vacations or family travel will be marked as “unexcused,” even if it is prearranged.

L. School Transfers

All students assigned to a designated school per a transfer (administrative, programmatic, sibling, non-resident employee student) must adhere to all ACPS attendance regulations regarding absences and timeliness to school.

M. Homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness or long-term precarious housing situations are not excused from compulsory attendance laws. Students are expected to attend school while working with their assigned school social worker and/or Division homeless education liaison to address factors that may be impacting permanent shelter and basic family needs.

N. High School to Work Partnerships

Students participating in approved High School to Work Partnerships are not marked as absent.

Attendance Recording Related to Virtual Learning

Student attendance will be recorded in each class daily, whether teaching and learning occurs via in-person instruction, via live streamed content, or through other forms of student meaningful engagement. While maintaining consistency with Policies JEA and JED, methods of determining student attendance and/or meaningful engagement may be modified from traditional methods in the virtual-learning environment. Methods of determining student attendance in a virtual learning environment include:

- Virtual presence for a synchronous online lesson
- Login time to a learning management system
- Activity log on a learning management system
- Total time log on a learning management system
- Phone call or real-time online chat
- Timestamp for posts or submissions
- Participation in a synchronous online lesson
- Demonstrated evidence of engagement with peers for collaborative work
- Engagement on a discussion board
- Submission of task or assignment
- “View” tracker for asynchronous online lesson
- Other similar evidence of synchronous or asynchronous meaningful engagement

Attendance recording procedures for students participating virtually are the same as for students participating in person. Examples include but are not limited to:

- The compulsory student attendance requirements of Va. Code § 22.1-254 remain in effect for students participating in virtual learning.

- 460
- 461 ● In accordance with this regulation, parents/legal guardians will be notified when students
- 462 are absent (without prior parent/legal guardian notification to the school) and reminded of
- 463 the need to contact the school as soon as possible.
- 464
- 465 ● Excused absences will continue to be requested/reported through traditional channels by
- 466 contacting the school as outlined in this regulation.
- 467
- 468 ● Absences due to technology systems failures for virtual learning students (inability to log
- 469 in to the live stream, loss of internet connection, etc.), will be converted from an unexcused
- 470 absence to an excused absence once a parent/legal guardian has contacted the school and
- 471 given an explanation for the absence in accordance with this regulation.
- 472
- 473 ● Student support teams and administrators, in consultation with teachers, will provide
- 474 students who demonstrate a pattern of repeated absences with appropriate interventions.
- 475 Such interventions are outlined in Policy JED, and may include student and parent/legal
- 476 guardian conferences, referrals to community resources, engagement with the school's
- 477 Student Support Team, referrals to substance abuse supports, etc. Interventions are
- 478 individualized based upon the reasons for and frequency of the nonattendance.
- 479

480

481 Established: July 6, 2018

482 Revised: September 7, 2018

483 Revised: September 10, 2020

484 Revised: October 21, 2021

485 Revised: February 22, 2024

486

487

488 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, §§16.1-241.2, 16.1-254, 22.1-227.1, 22.1-254, 22.1-258, 22.1-

489 259, 22.1-260, 22.1-262, 22.1-265, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.01, and 54.1-

490 3900.

491

492 8 VAC 20-110-100.

493 8 VAC 20-110-130.

494 8 VAC 20-730-10.

495 8 VAC 20-730-30.

496

497 *Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools*, Virginia Department of Health (VDH),

498 (July 1, 2020),

499 [https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Final-Phase-Guidance-for-Virginia-Schools-6.9.20.pdf)

500 [virginia/pdf/Final-Phase-Guidance-for-Virginia-Schools-6.9.20.pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Final-Phase-Guidance-for-Virginia-Schools-6.9.20.pdf).

501

502 Cross Refs.: IGAJ Driver Education

503 JEA Compulsory Attendance

504 JED Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals

505 JEG Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance

506	JFC	Student Conduct
507	LBD	Home Instruction